YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

World War II Veterans Project

Rifle Company Experience

O. H. 163

JULIAN FECYCH

Interviewed

by

Steven R. Ard

on

June 19, 1980

JULIAN FECYCH

Julian Fecych was born in Hubbard, Ohio on January 1, 1925, the son of John and Mary Fecych. He attended the Hubbard School System and graduated in 1942. He went to college one semester before he was drafted. Because his father needed him to help on the farm, Fecych was given a deferment until January of 1944. Once inducted, he was put in a rifle company and became very specialized in the use of the mortar. He saw much front-line action in Germany and was there up to the last ten days of the war in Europe.

After his period of service ended in May of 1946, Fecych took two years of engineering. He has always farmed as his father did but since 1965 he has also worked in the boiler house as a stationary engineer for U.S. Steel's Ohio Works.

Today Fecych and his family still live in the house where he was born. He and his wife Mary are raising two children Ellen and John. They attend Holy Trinity in Youngstown, Ohio. Fecych's special interest is woodworking.

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INTERVIEWEE: JULIAN FECYCH

INTERVIEWER: Steven R. Ard

SUBJECT: Rifle Company Experience--Front Lines in Germany in 1945.

DATE: June 19, 1980

A: This is an interview with Julian Fecych for the Youngstown State University World War II Project by Steven R. Ard at 3471 Schotten Road, Hubbard, Ohio on June 19, 1980 at approximately 9:35 a.m.

Okay, do you want to tell me when you were born and where?

F: I was born right here in Hubbard, right in this house on January 1, 1925. And I grew up here. And the only time I have left this area, home, here is when I was in the Army.

A: Did your parents farm?

F: Yes, they had a dairy farm. And my dad sold his dairy cattle in 1955. And we still farm, I do. I raise beef cattle, Hereford, white face beef. That's what I'm doing now. Besides doing this farming, I work at United States Steel, Ohio Works as a stationary engineer in the boiler house.

A: Did you go to school here in Hubbard?

F: Yes, graduated from Hubbard High School in 1942.

A: Can you recall some of your boyhood here on the farm?

F: It was very wonderful. We didn't have electricity out here, just like the Amish. We worked with horses.

And haying time in the summer was hard. All the kids had summer vacation from school as they do now. We did everything the hard way. We had to put the hay on the wagon by hand, and unload it with a harpoon hook, spread it in the mow. We had our good times. We had the swimming pool down on the creek. We'd go down there everyday swimming. We had fish down there. And we'd hike through the woods. And we'd walk all the way into Hubbard to see a movie. Sometimes they would have a good one like "Mutiny on the Bounty", "Captain Blood", "Prince and the Pauper", and even scary ones like "Frankenstein", "Dracula". We'd walk in. It was ten cents then to see the movie, ten cents. And we'd usually take fifteen cents, a nickel for an ice cream cone on the way home. (Laughter) One time my dog went in a movie theater with us. He got thrown out. (Laughter)

A: Do you remember anything from the Depression era?

F: Very, very little. I was just a little boy. But I remember almost everyday there were people that walked up and down the road here. They usually had a little case or a little gunny sack, men, men. And they would stop and ask for something to eat. And my mother always gave them something. And sometimes they'd offer to do some work, like splitting firewood or something. But very seldom would they work. They'd get their food and then they would be off on their way. And I never saw them again.

A: Now, were these people from around this area or just kind of passing through?

F: Just passing through. They were hungry of course, and they were numerous. In the summertime especially, you'd see everyday somebody walking along the road and he'd stop. And our house was right by the road here and he'd stop and he'd ask for something to eat. Soon as he got something to eat, he'd be on his way and I'd never see him again. But that's what I can remember about the Depression.

A: All right. You graduated in 1942, so the war had been going on. Did you volunteer or were you drafted?

F: Oh, I was drafted. I was drafted in January of 1944.

A: What were you doing up until that time?

F: Oh, I was going down at the Youngstown University there

for a semester. And then I got the notice to go into the Army. And so I dropped out for that. I was sorry I only went one semester. And then I was farming here, helping my dad on the farm. And then I was just biding my time because I knew I was going to have to go. In fact, I was supposed to go earlier, the following summer and my brother went in May and I was supposed to go in June and my dad, he wanted to get his hay in for the winter in the barn. So, he went up to the draft board and he got me deferred for a few months. In fact, it lasted more than I thought it would. It lasted till January. So, they granted that to me temporarily till we got the crops in.

A: Where did you do your training at?

F: Down in Mississippi, Camp Van Dorn and Camp McCain. I went into Fort Hayes, Columbus. In fact, I helped close the place up. I was the last inductee, I was with the last group of inductees that went through Fort Hayes. And we helped close the place up, folding up, folding up beds and storing things away.

A: Do you know why that camp was being closed down?

F: No, I don't. They had it all through the years, World War II and of course, it was World War I, too, and the Civil War. And it was a very famous induction camp. But why they closed it down just when I got there, I don't know. I don't know. Maybe their volume of inductees weren't as high. They didn't need it.

I went down to Camp McCain with the 94th Infantry Division. They put me right into a rifle company, Company I, 301st Infantry Regiment, the regular division. There was some basic training. And they put me right in with the regular division and I trained with them. But I only stayed there for, I think it was two months. The division was slated to go overseas with General Patton's Army. They were over strength. Luckily for me, the sergeant was from [around this area], North Jackson. His name was Wayne Follweiler and he put me on the shipping list to go out. So, I went down toward the other camp in Mississippi, Camp Van Dorn. It was the 63rd Infantry Division. And we had basic training down there and we trained throughout the area of their camp, their training camp there. Rifle range and all the ways of infantry fighting and the hikes. Some a bit boring.

A: Did you have time to go on any war problems in terms of training exercises?

F: Oh yes, you had your squad tactics and platoon tactics and then you went to battalion, regimental, in your regiment, yes. War games they called them, yes.

A: For these war games, did you have actual rifles?

F: Yes, but they were blanks. We used blanks. It was pretend. It was all pretend. You actually shot the ammunition at the rifle range. And you threw grenades, live grenades and the bazooka, you fired that. That was live ammunition. Mortar shells, and you fire them live, machine guns, too. Yes, but when you were actually one against the other in training like that, why, you didn't dare do that because you'd kill somebody. You had to do this out on a firing range where everything was protected and there was security around. You had guards out to watch that nobody would trespass, get hurt.

A: All right, from there, where did you go then?

F: Well, then we went to Camp Shanks, New York on a troop train and got on a ship, troop ship, and I was in with about 20,000 soldiers that went over on a convoy on different ships. And I guess they had supply ships with the convoy going overseas for the Army. The Navy escorted us, destroyer escorts and the blimps.

We went into Marseille, France through the Gibralter of course. From Marseille we went on a staging area up at the mountain there overlooking Marseille. And I would say that was the coldest night I ever spent in my life. I don't think I could ever even be as cold on the South Pole, that you would spend a colder night than that mountain. And it was December and the winds were whipping out of the ocean from the Mediterranean. They must have been going sixty miles an hour. And we just froze, we froze. I was never so happy to get out of there. I think we spent one night there or two nights.

We went on these forty and eight, French forty and eight boxcars. Well, they were famous for World War I, and they hold forty men or eight horses, whichever you want. They put about thirty soldiers in each car.

And then we went up France, up along the Rhone River through Arles, where Vincent van Gogh did a lot of his painting, and into Lyons. Lyons is the silk center of

France. This was all liberated country already. And I went into Alsace Lorraine over by Haguenau and Sarreguemines. We detrained at Sarrebourg. And we went up on truck part way and then we had to walk the rest of the way. And then we went up on line at Sarreguemines, which is by Saarbrucken, the biggest city. And Saarbrucken was one of the most heavily fortified places in the Siegfried Line along with Metz.

General Patton had taken Metz after six weeks fighting and he thought he could take Saarbrücken also, but it wasn't so. And at that time he was assulting Saarbrucken and the 7th Army that I was in was right on the extreme right of Patton's. In fact, at times, my company was right shoulder to shoulder with Patton's 70th Infantry Division that was attacking Saarbrücken. Well, that was a few months later that this was going on where I was right against the Patton's Army.

But where we got up on line it was sort of quiet there and the Germans weren't attacking us too much. So, I broke in easily, which is a good thing. And then the Battle of the Bulge took place and they pulled 25 men out of every company right away and they trucked them up as replacements for the infantry units up in the Bulge area.

But I ought to tell you about the infantry now. I was in the rifle company, Company E 253rd Infantry Regiment, also called a line company. And we had three platoons of riflemen and we have a weapons platoon. And in the weapons platoon you have two machine guns, 30 caliber, and three mortars, sixty millimeter mortars. I was in the weapons platoon and I was on machine gun and mortars. Most of the time I was mortar man. I was a gunner. I would fire the mortar and aimed it and fired it. I had a little sight in a case and the little sight would fit on the mortar and I would level the bubbles. And I got pretty proficient at it. I could drop a shell right into the German's foxholes at a moderate range. But of course, at a great distance, why the accuracy would drop. And they would fire a mile at least. You could follow the trajectory up in the sky, you could follow it all the way. Same thing with artillery shells, you see them flying, coming through the air and overhead and you could follow them all the way.

But anyhow, in each company they had three rifle platoons. And that is your line. We lived in the foxholes. We dug foxholes. And the riflemen are always

up there with the machine gunners spaced. They had two machine guns spaced wherever they needed them the best. Every rifle squad had a B.A.R. man, which is a Browning Automatic Rifle. It's like a machine gun, only you used a magazine clip instead of a belt. I didn't like it because it was a very bulky rifle. It weighed a lot of pounds. I think about 16 pounds with the magazine. The soldiers carried the big cartridge belt filled with these magazines and he was weighed down heavily. I just never could see being burdened like that. It was even bad to walk, let alone run.

A: What was his function?

F: Well, he was a support for the riflemen if the machine gunners couldn't give him fast firing immediately, why he would take over those duties. But it wasn't an accurate gun when you fired it fast. If you fired a single shot, why it was just like a rifle. But if you pulled the trigger down it would fire automatically. It wasn't that accurate. Although some claimed that they could shoot it accurately, but I disagreed with them. It was invented by Browning, who invented a lot of Army weapons like the pistol, the.45 pistol, he invented that, and machine guns.

A: Okay, where did you go from there then?

F: We stayed static for maybe ten days until the events turned at the Bulge and then we had orders to start attacking the Germans.

A: Now, is that the first time more or less you're going into combat?

F: This is the first time I experienced actual combat. At other times I was on the front, but it was static. The Germans did not attack us and we did not attack them and it was nothing but no man's land in between.

And I would go out on outpost duty at nighttime and did outpost duty on the machine gun out there in no man's land and had a little telephone that you could whisper in to call for supporting fire, like for mortar fire or artillery fire, if you saw Germans creeping up. That was the idea when you went out there. You'd go out there and you could hear the cats meowing. Well, right away you know it's Germans that are talking, sneaking up, crawling and they're signaling to each other that way. You'd hear--meow. So, I'd get on

the telephone, "Whit, whit, whit," and, "Germans, Germans, set up white phosphorous!" And we'd have the mortars back there and I was on the machine gun. We would fire on them, this would happen repeatedly at night. And we fired white phosphorous mortar shells and the Germans were deadly afraid of white phosphorous because it sprayed. And when it hit your skin, it would burn a hole right through your skin to your bone and you would get scarred for life. And you wouldn't want to get it on your face because it would scar your face. So, anytime we fired those white phosphorous shells, any Germans around would run. They would get up and run as fast as they could go.

So, we'd lay down a pattern of mortar fire usually. Very seldom we called for artillery fire. Well, first you'd call for a flare. You'd call for a flare, which had a parachute, a mortar flare, and they fire it up in the air. And you could see the Germans, usually see them laying down on the ground in a pattern and nearby, too. And you'd call for white phosphorous right away and they put down a pattern, usually about maybe nine rounds, sometimes 27 rounds. Anyhow, up to several, two or three dozens, spread them in a pattern and after the first one hit, the Germans would usually start tailing, go right back. But it was a sort of a static front.

And then we had orders to attack and we did. We moved down on the Germans and they were in a trench at the edge of a small airport and a wooded area. They had concrete bunkers by their trenches that they stayed in. That's why our artillery never eliminated them because they had good strong entrenchments there. The riflemen would do the attacking into the trenches. And I remember throwing mortar shells in. Two of us were throwing mortar shells, firing the mortars, and we must have fired 200 shells in a half an hour in those trenches and the wooded area. The Germans were in foxholes, too.

That fire fight lasted about a half an hour, I think. And we drove the Germans out across the Saar River, down over the hill into Germany. And we were right at the Sarr River there, Sarreguemines, but it was still called Alsace, but the other side of the Saar is Germany. All right, we drove them down. They went across the Saar River into the wooded area into Germany. And we moved into the point of the woods, and we knew, in the Army, that anytime we attacked the Germans, they always counterattacked before night, before it gets dark; at dusk they would always counterattack. And why they had

that idea inbreded in them, I don't know, but it was a disaster for them. So, we moved into the point of woods and dug in and we waited for dusk to come around and for their counterattack.

This was the first actual push that we had in our area so everybody was active and alive. And we were waiting and here they come. They're coming out of the woods. And there's a whole battalion of Germans, 800 of them are coming at us. They're coming out of the wooded area into the open fields, down to the Saar River and getting ready to cross the Saar River, wade across, swim across, and come up at us. But here comes our artillery, all the way back to Corps artillery, two forties and you got 155 "long toms" and you got 155's and then you got the 105's and you got cannon company. And we were using the proximity fuse that burst in the air. And they also had the time fire and the First Corps would fire and the 155 "long toms" would fire a few seconds later. All these shells would merge, come at once. And you could see them in the air, just like crows, darken the sky, put out the sun. It seemed like probably around a hundred coming with all the guns, all the way to Corps. And they would all explode at one time. And it was devastating.

I never saw anything like that in my life. And out of those 800 Germans, if a dozen of them lived, I do not believe it. I don't believe that more than a dozen lived. The German Red Cross soldiers were picking the dead and wounded out for three days. I assume most of them were dead, but they got this barrage for about a half an hour. And these two-forty aerial bursts just cracked! The whole valley and hills would shake and the air. And you had all these shells exploding at one time. And the Germans, you could see them laying all over, dead, and then we were firing at them with machine guns and the mortars, throwing mortar shells at them.

And a few of them got down to the Saar River and started swimming down river and they got away. And we were machine gunning them in the river. Some of them did get away. But I don't think that more than a dozen of those 800 lived through that. It was absolutely fantastic in a way, but it was tragic.

A: When the German Red Cross came in, or our people came in, did we call a truce at that point?

F: No, they just walked in.

A: You just don't fire?

F: They had the Red Cross arm bands and Red Cross helmets and they're regular soldiers. And they had the litter bearers, stretchers and you see them taking out any wounded. So, you don't fire at them. Just leave them do their business. They let our Red Cross go down, too, like after a battle into an area where there was an easy shot for the Germans and they didn't bother us. I've never seen any firing at Red Cross soldiers, never, we never fired at them.

We had the zigzag trenches in the Siegfried Line area and we moved up in another area after that. And there were these old trenches there. I think some of them were from World War I yet, the old zigzag trenches. We moved through there and we went into another point of woods. But as we were going in this point of woods, we came across a body of German soldiers. There must have been a hundred of them, dead, laying along the road there, just in a little small area. And here, one of our infantry companies that went ahead of us were hidden there and they caught these Germans coming down marching on the road and they didn't have any scouts out, so the GI's deployed on either side of the road. And of course, the Germans were all bunched up together. They weren't spread out and they didn't have any scouts out. The GI's opened fire on them. And out of the German company, maybe 160 men, why, they must have killed 100. There were a hundred of them laying dead, dead on both sides of the road there. It was sort of a gruesome sight.

Then we went in a point of woods. This was part of the Siegfried Line. And we had to go through shoe mine fields to get there. And this was covered with German artillery and mortars. They fired on us. And we had to go through a small point to get to this point of woods and small neck of land like, open road, and it was all mined with shoe mines.

A: What is a shoe mine?

F: It's just a little box and if you just touch it with your foot, actually touch it, just even tap it, it explodes and you'll lose your foot. And we had some of those soldiers that accidentally stepped on them and lost their feet. Usually it would blow the foot right off. But you had to step carefully. You could see them lying on the ground. And then later on we had

the German prisoners and they flipped the lids on them and that would deactivate them.

Anyhow, we got down on this point of woods and the Germans found out we were there right away and they, of course, threw in artillery on us and that was the most terrible thing of being a soldier, the artillery barrages that you had to live through and mortar. They attacked us there and they had Tiger tanks this time. The Germans used Tiger tanks on us. And I guess they considered that area that we took very vital to them for their defense, so they wanted it back; and they went through a lot of effort to try to get it back. We held the German infantry off and, of course, the German Tiger tanks couldn't go into the wooded area because of the trees. But they stayed out at the edge of the trees and we held the German infantry off. But we had to eliminate the Tiger tanks, and they were firing at us.

The German 88 shell was a deadly shell. It fired like a rifle. There was no trajectory to the shell. It was just a straight shot, like a rifle. An artillery shell has a trajectory arc, but the velocity of the 88 was 3,300 feet per second, where a U.S. Army Rifle 3006 was a 2,900 feet per second. So, you can imagine how fast the bullet travels. You just had time to jump in your foxhole or something. You hear the shot and then boom, whit, bang! And then one second later the shell was on you, and where artillery would take longer. You had a few seconds to dive in the hole. So, if you weren't on the alert and heard that gun go off, chances are you could lose your life, quickly. The Germans had us cut off for four hours here. We called out the Air Force fighter planes which destroyed the tanks with rockets. The German infantry then retreated.

A: How deep did your foxhole have to be before you could be safe?

F: It was usually about chest high, so you could stand up up in it and fire out, maybe neck high at times. You dug it yourself. You had a little shovel. And I must have dug a hundred of them through my time in Europe. And it was either you dig it or you die because the shells hitting the ground throw shrapnel. And if you weren't protected by earth, why chances are very, very good that you wouldn't last long at all.

And tree bursts was another thing, shrapnel, of course, would rain down. The shell would hit a tree branch or a tree trunk and explode. That was deadly. It would just rain down on you. A lot of soldiers died from artillery fire, a lot of them, a lot of casualties. I must say that ninety percent of the dead of World War II were infantry. If you look at your government statistics. I was in a place where you died, that's the only way you either die or get wounded. That's the only way you get out of it.

This was in the Siegfried Line that we were still in and we moved to another area. The Germans were doing attacking mostly, but we were jockeying back and forth is what we were doing. We were attacking with tanks and a few infantry companies and then the Germans would counterattack. It seemed like we were always pushing forward. We were taking land and driving the Germans back. And then we moved up along that Saar River and then by Saarbrucken at Gudingen, I could see General Patton's 70th Division attacking the Germans up along this great big hill that over-fronts Saar-brucken.

And General Patton doesn't say anything about this 70th Division in his autobiography except he used it as a reserve occupation division, but he pushed that division for two months trying to take Saarbrücken by a frontal assualt and his losses were so devastating that he had to pull that division off the line and they would never fight again. But it was a new division and he just kept pouring replacements in it. He figured if he could take Metz, he could take Saarbrücken. And it didn't turn out.

And I hate to think how many American soldiers are dead for that disaster that took place there. Vanity? I watched them soldiers attacking. And you could see them falling. I had binoculars and I could even see better than you can with a naked eye. And he did this for two months, trying to do it and it was impossible. It was one of the strongest fortified sections in the Siegfried Line.

Well, then came March 15, Patton was already moving down through the Moselle Valley. He's getting ready to go down there and cut the Germans off behind the Siegfried Line, which he did. March 15 was the big 7th Army push on the whole sixty mile front.

Our job was go to two miles behind the German lines.

We went at night and we had a big artillery bombardment on the Germans; very, very severe. And there was a little town called Feshingen that we were supposed to go through. And of course, the artillery from Corps all the way up just devastated and they stunned this whole area, the German area. Feshingen was gone. And the Germans were so stunned by the artillery bombardment that they wouldn't even try to think of staving you off, giving you a defense. There was no problem just to go right through the German line at that time.

And then we had other units from other battalions and our artillery would swing their fire through another village or wooded area or open field and devastate that area and that column would go through. We were all sending columns down through the German lines. And we had gone down two miles, two miles on a knoll. And we dug in on a knoll.

This is a true story. Our company got replacements in for this attack and I had this soldier sent into my squad. He was down in the dumps. He was solemn and he was almost in tears. Of course replacements, they're scared. But he was really sad. So, I went to talk to him and I told him he would be a veteran pretty quick and it will pass off. And he says, "I want to tell you something." So, I lent an ear. And he says, "I had a dream last night. I dreamt my family had a party for me. I had another dream like that only the party was for my brother and the next day my family got a telegram that my brother got killed in the war. Only this time the party was for me." So, he was afraid of that. And you know, when we went up on the knoll two miles behind that German line, the next day that boy was dead. Artillery shells came on his foxhole and killed him. And that actually is true. He was dead within less than 24 hours after he came in as a replacement. I still can't remember his name, but you could probably find it through Army records where he got killed. Henry Houseman of Chicago was in the same foxhole with him. Henry was wounded.

Anyhow, the big offensive worked and the Germans just collapsed. The front just collapsed. They were in turmoil. And Patton was in the rear and coming through the rear and he cut them off. And the whole Saar area collapsed there. The Germans surrendered there and the war came to a conclusion in the Siegfried Line area in Saar Palatinate, they called it. And we just occupied St. Ingbert. I remember staying in a town, Hamburg.

We occupied those towns.

A: Did you find the Germans had much motorized equipment? Now, you talked about the Tiger tank; did you see a lot of motorized equipment with them?

F: Oh, they had a lot. They had quite a bit. Not as much as we did, but they had quite a bit. In fact, they were in the Saar there and when they were retreating there after Patton cut them off from the rear and there were columns for miles and miles that were shot up, the Air Force fighter planes had shot up. Columns would wind up around Saarbrücken and Kaiserlautern. There was one, I think, about six miles long, German motorized column that was shot up by the Air Force fighter planes. I saw this.

A: Did you have a chance to go through and look at the Siegfried Line after you had taken it?

F: Well, I didn't go down into their big bunkers, no. I went across the dragon's teeth and then there were these smaller bunkers and they were more numerous of course, and you'd look into them and they have a little thing, stack, out of them and they had the slits where you could fire. They fired machine guns at you. But I didn't go into their major fortifications. They had them in the underground tunnels. I didn't see any of that, no. I didn't have time or it wasn't available to me. If I knew about it I'd have probably gone, but it wasn't accessible to me. I couldn't venture away from my area to go look at something.

A: The towns that you occupied, how did the German people treat you?

F: Good, of course, they were subservient to us. That's the way, say obsequious, because we were their masters then. The soldier had the rifle and he was the master. So, they treated us good. Very seldom did we had trouble from the civilians.

A: Did you have any personal contact with some of the civilians?

F: Oh yes, we talked to them. Yes, we talked to them We stayed in their homes in their villages. Had a lot of contact with the Germans.

A: What did you talk about?

F: We talked about the war and we would say how futile it was and they agreed with us. But, I look back and I think like when France fell, how they cheered because France fell. And they were really elated. And they should have cried right along with the French, really. But now they dance a different tune because the shoe is on the other foot. They were good to us. They even helped us. If we wanted something, they helped us to a certain extent.

A: Did you ever pick up any souvenirs?

F: Oh yes, I've got souvenirs.

A: What did you bring back?

F: At Heidleberg I went into Gastapo Headquarters and I got some Nazi arm bands and a swastika flag that they fly off of a tank. And I brought a sword, German sword, back, an Alles Für Deütschland sword. And I have it loaned out now. I've got to get it back. I don't have it with me here. Medals, I've got medals, German iron crosses and purple heart. My boy has it somewhere in a box upstairs. I'll show them to you after while. I've got a German Army uniform hat. But I could only carry what you could carry on your person, on body, because I had no bag. Infantrymen can't carry a bag. And I had a 42 pound mortar to carry; 42 pounds it weighed. And of course, all the accoutrements with it, the mortar sight and I had binoculars that you could watch your shell. And you had this trenching shovel. I had a trench knife, a hatchet, a .45 pistol.

I carried that. That came with the mortar because I'm carrying the mortar I can't carry a rifle. So, they gave you a pistol. I carried a .45. And a machine gunner carried a pistol also. And you had these heavy weapons, why you had a side arm they called it, .45 and the canteen. And of course, on your field jacket you had your K rations that fit in the pockets and then you had grenades. And usually grenades were through the button holes and we would take friction tape and we'd tape the lever. When you pull the safety pin, there's a little lever on the grenade that flies off when it's thrown and so that you hold that lever when you pull the safety pin. But we usually didn't trust the safety pin so we put one or two rounds of tape on the lever. And then if you wanted to throw the grenade then you just tore the friction tape real fast.

And of course, we were carrying these grenades, some of them in our pockets. And I usually carried a white phosphorus grenade and a shrapnel grenade. I usually carried two. More were accessible all the time if you needed more. If you need a whole box, the jeep or somebody would go back and bring up the whole box of grenades. But usually the riflemen, they carried maybe a half a dozen grenades. But I had to carry the mortar and then I had ammo bearers that carried mortar ammunition. They usually carry about sixteen rounds.

A: How many pounds of equipment do you suppose you had on you?

F: Quite a bit. And then you had a raincoat tied to your cartridge belt. Of course, the helmet was heavy, about three pounds. It wasn't as burdensome as you would think, but the mortar was heavy, forty-two pounds. And I carried that quite a ways. And I grew up on a farm and I was tough. I was young, I was tough. And that was no burden for me really. I could carry that thing all day long and never get tired. I would change shoulder to shoulder. No problem for me really. Some of the city fellows that weren't hardened as I was, muscularly, it was a little harder for them to carry that thing around. But I grew up with hard work on a farm and it was easy for me.

A: Where did you go from there?

F: By that time Patton put up a bridge at Worms and we got on trucks and we drove over the Rhine River. We went into Mannheim and it was devastated. There wasn't a house left standing. It was all rubble, the whole greater area of Mannheim even. And then we went to Heidelberg. We had to occupy Heidelberg. And my company had the duty to occupy the downtown section. And we had another company that was to occupy the university area and the hospital area which is up river from downtown Heidelberg. So, we got into the castle side and detrucked, main Heidelberg being across the Neckar River. And the Germans declared Heidelberg an open city. It wasn't bombed.

They were retreating of course. And there weren't that many soldiers around Heidelberg area. So, I figured it was easy going and kind of relieved. We didn't have to face the enemy at bay all the time. And they had the old fourteenth century stone bridge across the Neckar

from the main proper medieval Heidelberg city. You crossed that stone bridge and then the old castle was on the other side of the Neckar River. The Neckar is quite wide. It's about as wide as the Ohio River at East Liverpool, quite wide, because a few miles down river, it flows into the Rhine. Heidelberg is quite a ways down river on the Neckar.

And then they had, I remember, this row of mansions. It was beautiful, beautiful homes, mammoth homes, all ornate; and the elite of Heidelberg lived there. And I remember going into those mansions and I had my first real bath in two months. And I remember taking a cold bath in this long tub. It must have been eight feet long, and boy, I laved in luxury. (Laughter) I really felt good. The owners, the people that owned the place, they were very nice to us. Of course, we were the masters. We just looked around all we wanted anyhow.

A: The Germans that you came in contact with, did many of them speak English?

F: Oh yes, quite a few. They learned this language, English language, from the first grade. They teach it in school. And I say quite a few of them. And they spoke good English, good, correct English, better than the Americans speak. They pronounced every word correctly. And there was no slang talk, of course. They don't say words like "ain't", like we do, colloquialism.

We were supposed to get across the Neckar River and occupy downtown Heidelberg, but the stone bridge had been blown and the middle section fell inside the river and was missing. The Germans are wailing because their beautiful bridge is gone. The German Army blew it up or Hitler ordered it blown up. All I heard was wail from the Germans because their beautiful bridge is gone. But the pier sections were still there and they've rebuilt it. You can't even tell, since after the war.

Anyhow, the only way to get across the river there was on a rowboat. The German Army had a trench running down to the old stone bridge on the Neckar from where we were. So, we got down in the trench area along the shore and some of the men went over on rowboats. And I got on a rowboat with three other men, four to a boat.

As we started out from shore, a Messerschmitt came overhead, German Messerschmitt fighter plane, and he spotted

us on the river. He spotted the G.I.'S in the trench there. And the whole column, most of the company, there were about 180 men to a company. Only a few boats went over, so there must have been 150 of us laying in the trench area. Some of them were outside walking around on shore. Anyhow, we spotted the Messerschmitt and I hollered out, "Let's get back to the trench men, fast!" And we paddled that boat fast and we could see the Messerschmitt turning and down he comes at us. And we got to the shore and just as we dived into the trench, he sprayed the whole area. He must not have taken a good aim, because nobody got killed or wounded. He sprayed that whole area and I think he had about eight machine guns firing at us out of that Messerschmitt. And then he took off, flew off, and we didn't see him anymore.

So, we got on the boat and we rowed into Heidelberg. And the whole company got over. And I was right in downtown Heidelberg, right in the main heart of the city that my company occupied. And I remember walking into the Hotel Schroeder, which was their Waldorf Astoria there, and going into the lobby and looking around to see if we could find any German soldiers. There were just civilians and they were going about their business and quite busy.

The streets and sidewalks were plentiful with people. Of course, there were no automobiles moving. They had streetcars, but there were numerous people walking around. You'd see nurses and people in some kind of a uniform, servile work. And the hotel lobby was busy and they were going about their business, just kind of ignoring us and we weren't bothering them.

But up on top of the hill above Heidelberg is a 600 foot elevation. And the Germans were up there sniping at us. They weren't trying to kill us really because no one got hit. I think they were just trying to harass us, because the civilians were right amongst us and I guess they wanted to make sure they didn't kill any German civilians. But we had orders to flush them out, go up and flush them out.

We stayed in Heidelberg that night and I think we stayed in an opera house, but I'm not sure. But it was a big hall like, I remember. And it was on the main road there along the base of the hill. It's a beautiful city; beautiful architecture in the old homes and buildings. There weren't too many homes there, mostly apartments,

stores, and buildings. So, we stayed in this, I think it was an opera house, I can't remember. Anyhow we had to go up this winding road that goes up to the Hotel Schloss and past it. The Hotel Schloss today is a U.S. Army Headquarters in Germany and a very beautiful big hotel up on top of the hill. There was an elevator that went from the base of the hill all the way up. That's the way you get up there so you don't have to take the winding road up.

But we had to march up this winding road. It was tedious and it was hard. And I carried a 42 pound mortar up this hill. It was like trying to climb a mountain, only the pathway was smooth. It took us a couple of hours to get up to the top. After we got up to the top, we didn't to into the Hotel Schloss. We just kept on going and I never did get to go inside of the building.

And this is the building that Mark Twain stayed in. He stayed at this Hotel Schloss for a couple of months. And he wrote a book, I have it over here, Tramp Abroad, and he mentions staying there. Anyhow, he took walks around the wooded area. The road winds down to another little German town right over the crest of the hill and it's all wooded. And Mark Twain writes about walking every morning, listening to the birds singing and taking strolls in the forest. I think he was down in this little village, too, which is only a kilometer.

The Germans ran into this little village. So, we got to the edge of the town and I was throwing mortar shells in. And I think that that was the first actual firing that the Heidelbergers ever heard, artillery firing or mortar firing withing ear shot of them. We had three mortars firing at the Germans. We'd see them in the streets there in the little village. And then we called for artillery fire and artillery sent in shells. And houses were burning and the Germans started running out of the village into the open area and the road and the fields. They were running away. And of course, we were throwing the mortar shells right on them. And as they advanced, why one shell after another were thrown down on them expending all our ammunition. And they surrendered, we took about 90 prisoners, 90.

Later, one of our soldiers goes down in the schoolhouse cellar. This is where he finds all the liquors. All

the best liquors of Europe is in this schoolhouse cellar. And there's just all this cognac, champagnes, wines, the Rhine, the Moselle, the best that Europe has to offer, it was all in there. So, the General heard about it and he says, "We're going to have a feast with that after the war is over." And he kept his word. And it took four Army trucks to haul that out, four, six by six Army trucks. And he gave the division three trucks and he commandeered one truck for officer's exclusive use, which was all right with us. (Laughter) He kept his word and after the war we had our little gasthouses, which was like a little beer garden in whatever town we stayed in. You just went in there and you had all you wanted, all the Rhine wine you wanted, champagne. You just asked, "Give me cognac," or whatever you wanted. The bartender would bring out the whole bottle and he'd set it out on the table for you. Some of the fellows drank heavily. I didn't. I would drink wine or champagne, a little every once in awhile. You didn't have to pay for any of it. It was all there available for you.

Anyhow, getting back to the war, the next day was Easter Sunday and by that time, half the company is drunk. (Laughter) We stayed in the town that night and today we had to keep chasing the Germans. The captain is hollering, he says, "We've got to keep flushing the Germans over the hills and across the streams!"

Beautiful country, and you have the church with the steeple and you have a medieval castle, picturesque town in the valley and one up on the hill and this rolling hilly country, I think it is Baden. There it was Baden, and we got into Bavaria and Wurttemberg later. Southern Germany is beautiful, breath-taking. It's a beautiful place.

And we started out and the soldiers can't go. They kept dropping out and they won't go. And the captain is swearing in his typical soldier vocabulary and calling us all kinds of names. He said, "You fellows throw those cognac, champagne, wine bottles away! I don't want to see one of them! I'm going to court-martial everyone I catch! All I want to see is ammunition on you." So, the fellows, they had to throw them down and we couldn't go anyhow because too many fellows were inebriated and they just had to sleep it off. So, the captain, he called Army trucks out and they hauled us to some little village nestled in the valley and

sort of secure. And he says, "You fellows sleep it off" And of course, I think he grinned, kind of a sly grin and said, "Don't let it happen again," because we were a good company.

My company, I would say, suffered the most dead and the most casualties wounded in the whole division. And we were always spearheading for the battalion. Any time there was an attack, usually my company did the attacking, usually spearheaded. We did the hardest work. And the captain wasn't afraid to tackle anything no matter how severe it was. "My men will do it. My men will do it. We'll take care of it."

A: Who was your captain?

F: His name was Angelo Pilla and he was from Boston. He was severe, very severe captain, strictly business. And he didn't talk to the men hardly at all, very little communication. Strictly Army communications, there was no buddy-buddy like getting friendly and patting us on the back, none of that. None of that at all, no sir, not with him. He was the extreme of the other way. I had the severe captain and men were actually afraid of him. He always threatened to court-martial and he did. He wasn't too well liked. He wasn't well liked at all. And he was shot in the throat and I'll tell you about it in another battle here. Oh, it's coming up here. It's on the next battle that we have.

And so, we're flushing the Germans through the woods after we spent the night sleeping it off. And we figured things are going pretty good and we get up here towards Heilbronn area and what do we run into? The 17th SS Panzer Division. And they were tough and they were at full strength with young recruits. And this is the division, the 17th, that spearheaded Hitler's drive into Russia. And it was a tough outfit. And it was one of the best known divisions in the whole German Army. When the German army wanted something done, they would call the 17th SS.

And we ran right into it and we spent five days with them and it was terrible. It was terrible. It was a hard battle. There were just continuous shelling and fire fighting, and jockeying around and shooting at each other. I remember, we had a severe battle for three days at Untergresheim and they they pulled us

off the hill; and the next day we went to attack the Germans at Stein just about a mile from where we had been with them for three days. And I was exhausted. I was never so tired and lucky to be alive.

At Untergresheim our Air Force fighter planes were overhead from daylight to dusk attacking anything that moved. I was forward with the riflemen directing mortar fire. It was dangerous just to look out of the foxhole, for bullets would come flying at you. We left a lot of dead here.

We spent the night at the rear and attacked in the morning. This was the SS Troopers and of course, they had Tiger tanks, but they were on the defensive. They were holding, stopped us from advancing. They were not trying to advance. So, bright and early in the morning, we attacked with tanks. We were supposed to have an artillery barrage on the Germans, but didn't get any. And the whole company was walking through this yet small wheat field and we got caught in cross fire with four German machine guns. And it was tragic. The whole company was almost wiped out, the whole company. Our tanks retreated after taking 88 shell fire.

Thirty-three men left, that's all we had left in a half an hour. We were going in single file with my mortar squad and the boy in front of me is dead, the boy behind me is dead. The bullets are spraying around my feet. And we're running and I see these bullets spraying around my feet and one goes through my pant leg, and one goes through my canteen and one goes through the mortar base plate and none went through me, luckily; because I hit the ground and I just played dead like I got hit, because the first fellow in front of me dropped and he's dead the the fellow behind me is dead. And then more soldiers ahead of me are dead. But I lay there about a minute. And all acts of bravery, all kinds of acts of bravery. There should have been a lot of silver stars given out. They only gave out one.

But anyhow, there were four German machine guns. And German guns, they fire fast, rapid fire. They go prrrt, prrrt, prrrt, where American machine guns go bub, bub, bub, bub, slow fire. The Germans could spray an area, but they're not that accurate. That's

probably one of the reasons I'm still alive because he sprayed at me, he was firing right at me. And he sprayed me and the bullets, you could see them just hitting the ground, prrrt, digging up the dirt in the wheat field. Prrrt, like that, all around me. And I laid down on the ground and he shifted his fire to the rifle platoon. He pinned them down.

And three of the machine guns got eliminated by bravery. The main German riflemen were over a crest of the hill. These four advanced machine gunners were supposed to hold us at bay or devastate us so very few of us could get over the top. The German machine gun was firing at the rifle platoon. He was picking the fellows off that hit the ground. He had them all laying down, thirty men. They hit the ground because they couldn't advance, it was suicide. So, they laid on the ground and tried to survive as they could.

And in the meantime, I could see the German machine gunner and the assistant gunner that was feeding the belt. He wasn't that far away from me. But I got up and ran to a little dip like in the ground, and I was on my knees, and I put the mortar up. I didn't take my gun sight out. I just did dead reckoning firing. I called to Eddie Kowalski of Bethel, Connecticut to bring up the ammunition. He came right up. I dropped one shell down in the mortar and it went over. Well, I corrected the adjustment. I dropped the second shell in right by the foxhole. It went off, and the two Germans died just like that, instantly.

So, I hauled the platoon up the I said, "Let's go men." "Okay." Then we came up and went over the crest. And in the meantime, some of our other riflemen were eliminating them. The way you usually eliminate a string of enemy riflemen in a foxhole is to take a machine gun and you fire over the foxholes because nobody is going to stick their head out of a hole if the machine gun bullets are going overhead. Bullets are flying overhead, so you're going to stay right in the hole. So, you lay down a base of fire over the hole and a rifleman comes up with a grenade, sometimes they crawl, other times they creep on their knees and they throw the grenades in the foxhole and one after the other. And they go right down the line and you eliminate the whole line. And that's the way it's done.

So, they eliminated a lot of them Germans. And they

were tough SS. They were tough. They were young and they were big. And a lot of them died. And that battle lasted about half an hour. After the battle the Germans, they stayed in Stein, Germany. And what was left of them, they retreated into that town. And we took over a draw area, sort of like a road; a dip or cut in the road. And we took over that area. And so, we stayed there that night.

But anyhow, after the battle, we only had 33 men left. And my sergeant, a buck sergeant and he was the company commander and I was kind of despondent and disappointed because we had a regular master sergeant down with headquarters. He was with the kitchen or something, and he never came up. He couldn't lead the men anyhow, because he was more administrative. And they didn't send anybody to oversee us. We just took over. We didn't have any officers left. All our officers were killed or wounded and the captain was shot in the throat. He was walking back to the rear holding his throat. I don't know how he came through, whether he lost his voice. I did hear, after the war, that he lost his voice. I don't know for sure.

A: Who got the silver star?

F: A man by the name of Clarence Gerity. He took over the company and he did a very good job. And he commanded the company. He was just a buck sergeant. He was a mortar man like me. I think he was the mortar section sergeant at that time. And his name was Clarence Gerity and he was from Detroit. And a real nice fellow. And after the war, they gave him a silver star. We had a little battalion paraye for him. And there should have been a lot more that got the star besides him, but what he did was very good.

A: What did he do?

F: Well, he actually advanced on the Germans and he eliminated them in the foxholes, and I think he took over the machine gun. I didn't see this part because he had gone over the crest of the hill and I was firing at this other German machine gun with my mortar and I was busy with that job. And in the meantime, all this happened. He had taken over and eliminated all these Germans. I think he took over a machine gun a fellow got killed on. He fired at the Germans. I think he just actually walked up along the foxholes

and was shooting into them and killing the Germans. Acts of bravery; and it's amazing he lived through it, amazing. And the SS were tough. They were good fighters. You didn't play around with them. It was just no kid stuff. But he was the only one that got a medal in that whole battle. The only one our company ever awarded.

Then we got all our replacements in the next day, I think. We got another 150 men or something. There were only, like I said, 33 men left in the company. Then, after this five-day battle, the 17th SS was eliminated. You could see this arrow on the book, it says it's crushed.

We left Stein with new replacements to attack Crailsheim. Here the Germans had many tanks and self-propelled 88's. We could not take the town. So, we pulled back and our artillery shelled the town throughout the night with massive bombardment leveling the town completely. The next morning, we attacked Crailsheim only to find not one German soldier there. We walked right through.

So, that ended all the resistance. From here it was easy-going. We went down through towns and through Bavaria and Württemberg and Baden, I think, and down to the Danube River. Günzberg on the Danube is where we crossed. There was a bridge there. It was blown, but it was still standing like the Remagen. And we crossed over there and it was between Ulm and I can't think of the other town--Augsburg. The German Autobahn goes right near Augsburg now; well, it did then, too. It goes down into Munich. Later we went to the outskirts of Munich.

We got on trucks and tanks and we captured Günzberg. I remember taking that and that wasn't much of a job We crossed the bridge on foot and we had a little bit of a fire fight. The Germans all surrendered and some of them ran into the next town, and we had to go into the next town to get them. Here we lost our new company commander. He was killed by a German mortar shell. I can't remember his name.

A: Well, here's Günzberg that you're talking about, right here. (Looking on map)

F: Yes, that's it, Günzberg. That's where we crossed the Danube. And then we got on trucks and we went to Landsberg. We were at Landsberg and there's the German concentration camp, the famous Landsberg concentration camp. We had an armor division with tanks and, of course, our infantry are on trucks and some are riding on the tanks and some are riding on the scout cars and half tracks and whatever you could ride on. And the whole column is moving as one. It was a convoy. And we were just going and going. It was easy. There was no resistance. It was just like driving down these roads there today, nothing to stop you.

And we got into Landsberg and there's this concentration camp and we were right there. We take all these SS, the guards, the officers, we take them prisoners. And the camp prisoners were all in striped suits, thing shirts and pants. And they have oats in their pockets. And they are all emaciated and bony. They had nothing to eat. One pulls his oats out of his pocket and in broken English he says, "This is what we eat. Oats, what you feed a horse." That's all they ate. And of course, they probably cooked maybe a little bit.

A: What kind of people were they?

F: They looked mostly Frenchmen. Most of them were French, surprisingly. I didn't see any that looked Jewish. They must have eliminated them already. And what they probably had there were the French resistance fighters, but most of them were French, but they had others. And there were a few blacks, Senegelese, I think, from the African-French colonies. I'd say 90% of them were French.

So, we stayed there at Landsberg and I'm in the burgomeister's house and I didn't know it, the mayor of Landsberg. And so, when there's no activity you just look around and see what's around. So, I look around out in back and there's some kind of a factory building in his back yard. And I look around more and it's a cheese factory. And these great big wheels of cheese are stacked in this cellar. And these poor prisoners from the Landsberg concentration camp, they're starved. We gave them all our K rations and cigarettes and they're still hungry. I'm calling them over and I said, "Come here, come here!" And they're

carting out these great big wheels of cheese. They're just carting them out like ants, like a colony of ants. And the whole concentration camp is coming over.

And of course, we opened the gates and they just infiltrated into the town and on the roads and they just didn't know what to do. They were just waiting for some authority to tell them what to do and feed them and send them back home or something. They were happy because they were free at last. And they were carting these big wheels of cheese out and I was glad that they had something to eat.

And so, this burgomeister comes to me because at that time, I had advanced to acting mortar section sergeant. I was the head of the mortar section at that time, and he wanted to know who the man in authority was and a soldier sent him to me. He gives me this bill for his cheese. I was really stunned. (Laughter) The audacity of that man to ask me to pay for his cheese to feed them poor starving people. That was exactly the attitude of these SS police who watched them. You can see, they had ingrained even him to think exactly like they think. You would think that he would be grateful that he's alive and his home is safe and he survived. What's a few wheels of cheese that he had in his cellar, even a hundred wheels? So, it's trivial. He's worried about his bill, his cheese money.

So, Norman Katz was there and he was from Coyville, Kansas and he was one of our machine gunners. He must have had thirty, forty Germans to his credit. If he had notches on that gun it would be . . . I figure, a minimum, thirty. It might have gone up to fifty. I wasn't with him all the time. In five months on the front line, why he had quite a few Germans to his credit. He was tough. He was a farm boy and he was tough and he was young like me at that time. He wasn't a big man, a out an inch taller than I was.

I told Katz, "The burgomeister, he wants paid for that cheese." Katz was furious. (Laughter) He pulls out his trench knife and he grabs this German by the hair and he sticks this trench knife at his throat and the German thought he was going to kill him. Katz says, "You got schnapps?" And he says, "Jah, jah, jah, jah! I've got schnapps." And Katz says, "You get schnapps," in English. Of course, the German understood what he wanted. He gets on his bicycle and he's shaking and

he's nervous and he pedals away and he's back a few minutes later with this bottle of schnapps. And Katz, he liked a little bit of schnapps now and then. I hated that stuff. It was terrible. Anyhow, that ended that. That German never mentioned that bill again. He actually had a piece of paper with so many wheels of cheese written on it and so many marks that he wanted for it. Sort of an invoice. He gave that to me. It's probably something he did business with as he sold.

Anyhow, we left there. We got relieved by the 36th; the 36th Texas Division. And this is the outskirts of Munich on the Isar River. They were supposed to go, which they did, into Austria, past Berchtesgaden and this Germisch-Partenkirchen, the resort area, which I didn't get to see, and Austria. Linz, I think they went as far as Linz.

But this was ten days before the war ended and I was grateful to be relieved because I read stories of dying the last day of the war and I didn't want that to happen to me. So, ten days before the war ended, we pulled back here; we went to a little town of Kunzelsau, very pretty country, and Bad Mergentheim, and Wertheim on the Tauber River that flowed down into the Main River where Würzberg was. And beautiful country, beautiful country not too far from Heidelberg. It was up river from Heidelberg. It was on a different river, Tauber. I think it was Württemberg, they called that area. Beautiful, beautiful country and we just stayed as occupation duty.

But anyhow, the last three days of the war I was in Paris. And the day the war ended I was in Paris and I had to go back to Germany then, back over to Kunzelsau. And I had to leave Paris that day. But I was there and they had the snake dances and of course, Paris went wild. And the American soldiers that were in Paris just joined the French and they were snake dancing in the streets. They had the parades, I think, the following days. I missed the big Army parades and soldier parades and the French Army parading and the Americans parading. I missed all that formal parading. But all they had on the day the war ended, May 8, was the snake dancing. And of course crowds, the Place de L'Opera, the Square in Paris, Place de La Concorde was just jammed with people, millions, millions. The Champs d'Elysees, that was all shoulder to shoulder and shake dancing. People were pusing the people aside so they could snake dance and they were holding hands.

I remember sitting up on the Opera House steps, where Claude Reins played in the "Phantom of the Opera." I remember sitting on the steps, up there, climbed the steps and sat on the side. They had some ornate figures around there if I remember right. I stayed there for about an hour just watching the Frenchmen and women dancing in the streets and their elation that the war was over.

And later that afternoon I had orders to leave, I think it was Gare L'Est, that was a railroad station for going east, Gare L'Est. I had to take the train to Saarburg. And I remember passing through Chatear Thierry, the World War I American area, and Bar-le-Duc, France. You could still see the trenches from World War I. You could still see even the bunkers or towers that they used, observation towers. That was left form World War I yet. It was amazing. I was amazed that this would still be around. You could see trenches that they never bothered filling in from World War I at Bar-le-Duc there. Even when we de-trained, coming up into Alsace of forty-and-eights. I remember in Luneville, France, a World War I area, and there were a lot of trenches there yet from World War I. I remember seeing that. And then that was it. Then the war ended. That was it.

We stayed in Germany and we moved around to different towns and I got to go to Brussels. I was in Bastogne after the war. I remember going through Bastogne and all the tanks and all the devastation of the battles was still there. Nobody had picked up anything. German tanks and the American tanks that were knocked out, the cannons, artillery guns, trucks overturned, it was all laying there.

I had enough I.Q. to go to Officer's Candidate School, but I never did get the opportunity or they never asked me to go. After the war, an officer wanted me to go to West Point Military Academy for the August 1945 year. "No, I don't want to go. I want to go home." He said, "We'll take care of you." I said, "I can't pass the test now, I'm mentally unstable, I'm exhausted." He said, "We'll take care of that if you want to go. We want combat infantrymen to go to West Point as a cadet." I had to start as a freshman. And that was one of the biggest things I desired most when I was young. I wanted to go to West Point. And come the opportunity, I didn't want to go. I turned it down. I said, "No, I want to go home. I'm physically and mentally exhausted.

I just cannot tolerate four more years," especially what the Army would call chicken, trivial discipline. And everything spic-and-span and shoes had to be polished and everything and there could be no little speck of dust anywhere. I was too tired for that. I had grown up. I had become of age.

And even when I came home, it took me years to get adjusted, to settle down. It was mentally. I'd have nightmares and I still have nightmares sometimes. And war is a terrible, terrible thing. It's the worst thing man can face outside of physical torture. You don't realize this unitl it happens to you. It's so horrible. It's such a horrible thing. You're alive and the next instant you're dead! And my coupany lost maybe eighty dead and I don't know how many wounded. We lost the most dead in the division. We lost a lot of men. We were in a lot of hard battles, artillery barrages.

And let's see, talking about artillery, our artillery was deadly artillery. We used good ammunition and good steel. And I had a German soldier tell me after the war, and he had lived for eight years in all the wars and survived, and he said, "There's nothing more deadly than artillery. That's the most deadly thing you'd ever want to experience." He said, "I'm telling you because it happened to me. There's nothing more deadly than American artillery. You get into American artillery barrages, it's so powerful and the shrapnel just shreds all over." And it is, even the mortar shell goes off, it's deadly, powerful, very powerful.

That's about it.

A: Okay.

F: That's all I can think of. I could talk more, but I think I've covered my five months of the war, or my Army life for posterity.

A: All right.

F: Thank you.

A: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW