

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Veteran's Name: Jim Anderson

Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

Interview Date: September 21 & 22, 2018 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania)

Transcriber: Carol Slezak

Transcribed on: February 18, 2019

Interviewer: This is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th, of the 95th Infantry. Today is September 21, 2018. Autumn has begun. And we're in a board room at the Best Western Premier in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It is now about 8:45 pm. And today I have the great pleasure of talking with, Mr. Anderson, could you say your name?

Jim Anderson: My name is Jim Anderson.

Interviewer: Could you spell your last name?

Jim Anderson: A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n. And I've been ducking David for years [laughs]. ...

Woman's voice [Kay? (CK): He got you!

Jim Anderson: Because basically I'm a private person. I've had a good life, and a lot of military in it.

Interviewer: Let me get your birth date, and place of birth, before we begin.

Jim Anderson: I was born on a farm in western Pennsylvania that was established by my three-times great grandfather. He fought in the Revolution, brought his family to western Pennsylvania in about 1789, I think it was – 17, 1789, wow [laughs]. And he just today I was thinking about him driving over here, of the long trek from Allentown area, where he started out with five children, livestock, moved everything there, to Butler County, and just a long trip.

Interviewer: Butler County, is that near Pittsburgh?

Jim Anderson: Yeah, north of Pittsburgh. ... I was delivered by my grandmother's brother, who was a physician. And a very interesting guy. And I had a letter, sort of interestingly, I had a letter from my mother on my 60th birthday, telling me all about the events of my birthday. How the doctor had come around, Uncle George came around, in the morning. Said the time wasn't ready yet. He came back dinner time, sometime in the early evening is when I was born. I'm the first born on both sides of my family, so it's put me a different position than some, I guess.

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Interviewer: What's your birth date?

Jim Anderson: 10/22/24

Jim Anderson: That means today you are how old?

Jim Anderson: Ninety-three. Next month I'll be 94. If I hang in there I might even get beyond that [laughs].

Interviewer: What branch of the service where you in?

Jim Anderson: I was in the army, draftee. I had gone from high school to Swarthmore College. I was there for one full year, then the draft got me. When World War II was over with as far as I was concerned, Swarthmore doesn't have a place for me, it was very agreeable. So I went to what was then Carnegie Tech, now Carnegie Mellon. I spent three years there, got a commission. Next year Korean War came along, so I went to Korea for a year.

But in the meantime, on my 30-days leave before I left, I met my wife on a blind date. Betsy, who I'm sure you remember. And 11 days later we were married, and honeymooned in Seattle. I went to Korea, she went back to Pittsburg for a year. And so it worked out. We had 65 nice years together. So – it wasn't a wasted date [laughs].

[TIME 5:09]

Interviewer: In WWII, what was your company?

Jim Anderson: Well, in WWII I had signed up for ASTP – Army Specialized Training Program. So I took ASTP basic in Fort Benning. From there I went to 87th Division at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. They got a call for replacements and I was on the list. So between August and October I was in the sort of a turmoil of one place after another.

Interviewer: What year was that?

Jim Anderson: This was 1944. I actually got to Europe in September '44. Spent about a month there in Britain, north of Liverpool. And got on a – shipped across the Channel to France. Should have been an overnight crossing but the weather got bad and we were out there for like three or four nights. And at the end of that when we calmed down a little we got on these boats and went into Normandy.

Interviewer: Is that a Higgins boat?

Jim Anderson: No, they were bigger than a Higgins. Landing Ship -- LST, I think. Whatever it was. And so then we sat around in France for almost a month because Patton had to give up all his gasoline to support the British thing in Arnhem. So finally on the very last day of October I was assigned to the 95th. ... The 31st day of October. I reported to the company commander, and he was busy with payroll. In those days the army was still paid in cash. Slept on a hayloft overhead for one night. Next day I went to my platoon, the transportation platoon in division headquarters. And mostly older guys than me. I was only 19 years old – 20, I hit my 20th birthday in France, actually. So these guys had all been with the division back when it was formed in what, 1952? ...

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Interviewer: Or 1942.

Jim Anderson: '42, yeah. So there were a lot of old timers there. It didn't make much of a consequence, because I didn't spend any time there with them anyhow, with my platoon. My assignment was as a driver, a bodyguard, and whatever, for a liaison officer, and we spent all our time away from the division, to the flank, either right or left. But mostly toward the north, which was the direction.

Interviewer: When they assigned you to the 95th, was that in Normandy?

Jim Anderson: No, this was in – right outside Metz was where I got my assignment.

Interviewer: So they shipped you out there and they weren't sure where they were going to put you.

Jim Anderson: Well, we were in packages of 200 enlisted men and five officers. So the package got up pretty close to the Front. We could hear artillery rumbling, we were that close. So I got lucky. I went over to riflemen replacement. It got changed to -- truck driver light is the MOS. I don't know much more I can tell you about that.

[TIME 10:00]

Interviewer: In transport were you still a driver? You were a driver for the lead liaison?

Jim Anderson: Yeah, I drove a jeep. We would go out to, say to the 90th Division, which was on our flank at one point. And stay overnight there. The captain would pick up all the information from the 90th that they had, and we'd drive back to 95th, get there in time for morning briefing. Enough time to have lunch at the division headquarters [laughs], and then back out again to the 90th or whoever. It was interesting.

Interviewer: Where would you stay when you were driving?

Jim Anderson: They had spaces set aside for drivers because they had liaison people coming from all the way up to the Front. Layers of it back through the company, regiment, division. Some of my friends were at similar jobs going back to the corps. So it was pretty well covered.

Interviewer: So did you take the liaison officer to the Front? How close did you get to the Front with him?

Jim Anderson: Close enough to get shot at a few times [laughs]. No, we got pretty close, actually, once we went through Metz, down into Germany. They had an advance EP up there. There's a lot of action in what was then called Saarlautern, now called Saarlouis.

Interviewer: ... Was there something that happened where all of a sudden the war became real to you?

Jim Anderson: Oh, every day. Actually, it's sort of interesting because I was down in Saarlautern when the Bulge began on the 16th of December. And so then we started traveling up into the Bulge area. Not while -- Bastogne was under siege now, but in that general vicinity. Just a lot of activity up there. A lot of shrapnel in the snow, a lot of flat

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tires on my jeep. Those were the old days when we had inner tubes in tires, you know [laughs].

Interviewer: So if you got a flat tire you had to change it?

Jim Anderson: Oh yeah. I had a spare. But what I had to do [was] every time I got back to the division I'd get down to the platoon motor pool, and patch tubes. Kept some spare tubes around, too. But this got to be four, five times a day – it was sort of boring [laughs].

Interviewer: Did you have different liaison officers all the time?

Jim Anderson: I started out with one for two, three weeks. And then I got a captain who had come up from North Africa, an old timer. And he and I stayed together for quite a number of months.

Interviewer: What was his name?

Jim Anderson: Van Fossan V-a-n-f-o-s-s-a-n.

Interviewer: Did you stay in contact with him after the war?

Jim Anderson: No, I didn't. I'm sorry I didn't really. I tried looking him up on some of these -- social security death lists, whatever they call them, never could find him. I know he was from the middle west somewhere. Kentucky, that area out there.

Interviewer: When you entered the service, you were drafted. There was military service in your family, you've already talked about your great-great-grandfather.

Interviewer: Yeah, and his son fought in the War of 1812, and died from the fever. And his grandson died in Andersonville Prison. So [laughs] – it just goes on and on.

[TIME 15:13]

Interviewer: Did you feel like that was part of your blood, part of your destiny?

Jim Anderson: Probably, probably sure. I had two uncles who were in the national guard here in Pennsylvania, 28th Division. Both captains. And one of them invited me to come down to summer camp in about 1939 I think it was. So, Indiantown Gap wasn't terribly much. They had just moved here from Mount Gretna where they had their summer camps before. So, I had an interesting two-week experience there.

Interviewer: That's interesting because you knew the Indiantown Gap before the 95th was there.

Jim Anderson: Oh my, a long time before.

Interviewer: But you didn't know it with the 95th.

Jim Anderson: No, no. No, I went from 87th into this replacement group, and we all moved as a package then.

Interviewer: How did you go across the ocean?

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Jim Anderson: On a troop ship. The Mariposa. A British ship. Slept in hammocks, which we had to take down because the dining tables were underneath us [laughs]. We were in a compartment. And we got kicked out on deck during the day and back inside at night, so, you know, cigarette butts weren't blowing and attracting attention and that sort of thing. It was a fast crossing though. The Mariposa was fast enough. Not quite as fast as Queen Mary, but it got there in a few days.

Interviewer: Did the travel bother you? Did you have any *mal de mer*?

Jim Anderson: No. Never. I don't know why. I guess I just got lucky. I've been across both oceans, both directions. I didn't have a problem.

Interviewer: And then you went to England for a while?

Jim Anderson: Yeah, we were there. And then we had this dumb kind of training, just to keep us active.

Interviewer: What sort of things would they have you do?

Jim Anderson: Oh, hikes and calisthenics, and that sort of thing. It was an all right experience, but we were just parked there for almost a month. And then we went to France and sat over there for almost a month.

Interviewer: When you were in England did you hear any of the buzz bombs?

Jim Anderson: Yeah. And of course when they left we came down through London, and I could see the extent of the damage to the city. The only thing that looked to be standing was St. Paul's Cathedral. The [city] was pretty well worked over. I saw more buzz bombs in Germany later. For some reason I ended up carrying the captain to a unit which wasn't too far behind the lines, and they were launching buzz bombs on the other side. I don't know how close but enough that you could hear them go over. They had a motor-like sound to them, and they were using the B-2 rockets then, too. Of course those were quiet, but... At that time we could also see these German jet fighters, too.

Interviewer: You saw them?

Jim Anderson: Oh, yes. Not on the ground, now. Up there. So when we crossed the Rhine, the 377th Infantry was attached to the 2nd Armored Division as extra infantry. So it was our job to catch up with them every day, and then bring back the information to 95th headquarters. So we had a little humming jog (CK) every day trying to catch up with the armored. They were moving pretty fast.

Interviewer: Is that when they were going into the Ruhr Pocket?

Jim Anderson: Yeah, exactly.

[TIME 20:10]

Interviewer: How did you like the food?

Jim Anderson: I ate pretty well, I think.

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Interviewer: Is there anything you stopped eating?

Jim Anderson: No, I don't think so. I got more than my fill of C- and K-rations, of course. Generally, when I'd come back to division headquarters I got a pretty decent meal, once a day. The only time I didn't do well was when we were with the British 52nd Division for a short time.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Jim Anderson: Well, they divided our rations into five parts instead of three, so they'd have something to go with their tea, morning and afternoon tea. Unfortunately, I never got there until after afternoon tea and before evening tea.

It was interesting. Made a few friends there.

Interviewer: With the British?

Jim Anderson: With the Brits, yeah. It was fine. I slept in with their drivers and so forth. They did the same thing we did.

Interviewer: Being a driver is an interesting position. Interesting vantage point. You get to mingle with other drivers.

Jim Anderson: Mm-hmm. We all had a war story or two to tell. It was very interesting.

Interviewer: Do you remember a time you felt nervous or afraid?

Jim Anderson: No. No. Not deathly afraid. Uncomfortable maybe.

Interviewer: Uncomfortable like what?

Jim Anderson: Just not knowing when the next one is coming along, you know? The Germans were very big on taking potshots at us, and – so.

Interviewer: Was there ever a close call?

Jim Anderson: Two or three.

Interviewer: Tell me about one of them.

Jim Anderson: I'm not necessarily interested in talking about that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jim Anderson: We started out, coming out of Saarlautern, and we went down the road. The Germans used metal telephone poles, built out of angle iron. One of them had blown over onto the highway. I hit it at high speed and knocked the muffler off my jeep. So then I went down another several hundred yards and came upon tank traps. Had to turn around and as I was turning around here are tracers going between me and the windshield [laughs]. I thought that was a good time to get out. They destroyed that jeep for me. And the captain and I ended up going up over the mountain to a tank destroyer unit up there, and they drove us back out of there.

Interviewer: So you walked over the mountain?

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Jim Anderson: Yeah, we had to climb the mountain. Pretty steep one as a matter of fact.

Interviewer: Had you had mountain training?

Jim Anderson: No, it wasn't that kind of mountain. ...

Interviewer: Was that in the afternoon, or in the dark?

Jim Anderson: No, this was early in the morning. We were supposed to be going to 378th regimental headquarters. Missed the turn. That's how we got in this fix in the first place.

Interviewer: I know from driving a taxi, I depended on maps.

Jim Anderson: Well the captain was pretty good with the maps. He kept us navigated pretty well.

Interviewer: So the captain would navigate for you?

Jim Anderson: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jim Anderson: Or at least give me an idea of where I was going.

Interviewer: When you missed a turn, he might have missed a navigation?

Jim Anderson: He missed it in this particular case. We both missed it. Whatever -- who cares [laughs]. It's interesting now, though. Down very close to where this all happened there's a big Ikea store and God knows what else, you know. It's sort of strange [laughs].

Interviewer: Did you get wounded?

Jim Anderson: No, never.

Interviewer: But traces in front of you, so close.

Jim Anderson: I knew how to get out of the damn jeep in a hurry. I just rolled out and stayed out, that's all. They continued shooting up the jeep.

Interviewer: How many jeeps do you think you went through?

[TIME 25:30]

Jim Anderson: Just that one. Maybe I got smarter, I don't know. Actually, it got to the point there, towards the end of the way, that I got out of that job and started to drive a command car, and hauling people around in that. ... A command car is much bigger. It's built on a ¾-ton truck chassis. The biggest thing I hated about that vehicle was they had this enormous spare tire on the driver's side. So no getting out of there very quickly [laughs]. And I didn't need to, actually, but it gave me some concern.

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But one of the things I do remember driving that is toward the very end of the war I drove a bunch of officers down to one of these salt mines or whatever where they had a lot of German art stored. And at the time we went all the way over to the Elbe. So, you know, I've covered a lot of ground [laughs].

Interviewer: Did you see any of the art?

Jim Anderson: No. We just – my job was to get them there and back. So I stayed with my vehicle.

Interviewer: What would you do to amuse yourself while you were waiting?

Jim Anderson: Probably most times there was some other driver, one or more, to talk with. I met a lot of people in a year's time.

Interviewer: Did you go back with the 95th?

Jim Anderson: Yeah, I came home with the 95th. And down to Mississippi.

Interviewer: Were you expecting to go to Japan?

Jim Anderson: Yeah, we got lucky when Truman dropped the bomb. Then I was transferred out from the 95th. I was deactivated. I went to the 2nd Division at Camp Swift, and I was there for like 3 months before I got out.

Interviewer: And how did you get into Korea again?

Jim Anderson: I went to Carnegie Tech and got an ROTC commission. I always did spend a lot of time with the national guard, because it kept me in pocket money while I was in school [laughs]. But I got involved with the 28th Division, and it was called up right after the Korean War began. Activated. And we went out to Camp Atterbury [in central Indiana]. Indiana weather wasn't great in the winter. I didn't care for the people – a lot of old national guard people that weren't too swift, and just annoying me. So I volunteered for Korea, and they sat on the request. Finally I got my dad to squeeze some of his political friends, and a congressman finally got me my orders. Which came as a big surprise, I thought it was never going to happen.

Interviewer: When did you go over to Korea?

Jim Anderson: Well, this was May in 1951. I went to Pittsburgh – Carnegie Tech was having a big spring festival, a lot of activities. And having been a student there I still had a lot of friends. Then I met Betsy. So that was the good thing that happened. Most people say don't volunteer, but this time it did me some good [laughs].

Interviewer: It did. She's beautiful. When you got to Korea, you'd already been through WWII. Did you think it would be like that?

[TIME 30:30]

Jim Anderson: I went as a replacement officer. Ended up with the 65th Engineers in the 25th Division. And the unit, the very day that I got there, the platoon I took over had just come back from building a temporary building at Panmunjom for the peace talks to

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begin. But we didn't stay there any period of time; started moving east across Korea, finally ended up in the Punchbow, which is an extreme northeast of the location. Right up on the demilitarized zone. Tinkered with explosives and such [laughs].

Interviewer: They talk about how cold Korea was.

Jim Anderson: Oh my, yes. I have pictures of me at 55 below. We had cold weather garments then, which we had not had in WWII.

Interviewer: That's right – the winter you were there with Metz, that winter of 1944, is supposed to be one of the coldest winters of the 20th century.

Jim Anderson: Yeah.

Interviewer: So looking at Korea and comparing it with WWII--.

Jim Anderson: There's no comparison. Most of the time we were working out ahead of the infantry, looking for mines and such. Sort of grisly work, but it happened.

Interviewer: Did you have that much contact with the enemy?

Jim Anderson: No, they stayed in their holes. They'd come up out of them and take a shot now and again at us. But I didn't have much contact of that nature.

Interviewer: Had the morale of the army changed?

Jim Anderson: No, I wouldn't say so. Mine had toward the end of my tour there because when my time was up they didn't have a replacement for me. So I had to stay there, another extra 6 weeks I think it was...But, the way the cookie crumbles.

Interviewer: Was there a difference with the public when you came home from Korea compared to WWII? Were there any parades after Korea?

Jim Anderson: No. Coming home, you know, I guess thinking of having to move on and attack Japan sort of screwed up my life a little bit. But it turned out I didn't have to do that. Coming home from Korean was no big deal. I was on a troop ship as the night mess officer, so I ate pretty well [laughs].

Interviewer: Where did you come in?

Jim Anderson: San Francisco. And a few days later I was home in Pittsburgh. My wife and I didn't recognize each other immediately in the Pittsburgh airport [laughs]. I don't know why, it was strange. But we got together. She had me paged [laughs].

Interviewer: So you were looking around, wondering where she was, and she's looking for you?

Jim Anderson: Yeah. And I continued to mess around with the reserve and national guard. I've been to Indiantown Gap many, many summers for two weeks. And I've been in 5 different branches of the service.

Interviewer: Which are what?

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[TIME 35:08]

Jim Anderson: Infantry, field artillery, engineers, transportation corps, and armored cavalry.

Interviewer: What was your unit in Korea?

Jim Anderson: It was engineers, 65th Battalion. Company A, 65th Engineers.

Interviewer: And in the 95th it was just Headquarters Company?

Jim Anderson: Yeah. ... Right at the time the division was being deactivated I got transferred to the 379th service company. So I drove a truck there for a few weeks before – saw a 45-day delay-en-route to report to the 28th Division up the street in Camp Shelby, Mississippi [laughs]. I was there overnight then went to Texas to the 2nd Division.

Interviewer: What does that mean, delay-en-route?

Jim Anderson: Just not chargeables leave, that's the best definition I know of. So I got a job while I was on that, so I could afford chasing the girls [laughs].

Interviewer: In Mississippi.

Jim Anderson: No, no, I went home. ... I didn't have time in Mississippi. Because at some point I became dispatcher for the division motor pool. And got myself promoted to T-5.

Interviewer: T-5.

Jim Anderson: Exalted rank [laughs].

Interviewer: When you left in WWII, you were T-5?

Jim Anderson: Yes. Then I got in the national guard when I went to Carnegie Tech, and worked up to tech sergeant. Then I got my commission, and had to get out of ... that particular unit.

Interviewer: Because you got a commission?

Jim Anderson: Yeah, I got a commission, and had to give up my enlisted status.

Interviewer: Was Betsy upset that you were going to Korea?

Jim Anderson: Oh, no. We were in love, you know [laughs]? If she was upset she didn't show it. I didn't feel she was distraught or anything by me being over there. I just didn't tell her everything that was going on, either, you know? No point in telling her I'm messing around with diffusing mines and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: So you did diffuse mines?

Jim Anderson: Oh yea, that's part of the engineer job, you know? The Chinese mines for the most part were wooden box mines. You couldn't pick them up with the detector so you had to go looking for them. They had 13 nails, or something like that, in the box,

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that's all the metal they had. So we'd go along, look for depressions in the ground. I don't know – after a while you get used to what you're looking for.

Interviewer: So if you found a depression in the ground and you knew there was something else, what would you do?

Jim Anderson: Probe at it with a Prince knife. They weren't very dangerous. We ended up destroying them by burning them. Explosives burn well. So that's the way they were disposed of. It was a box about 18 inches square [and 6 inches deep].

Interviewer: What would set it off?

Jim Anderson: Pressure. ... It was an anti-tank mine. Actually the biggest hazard we had was they had given American armaments to South Korean troops. And when you lay out a mine field, you make a map showing what you'd done. There was a routine at the Corp of Engineers, created and specified. And they didn't always follow the map. We'd get the maps, and we lost a few guys stumbling into them. A lot of them were these bouncing ones...Bouncing Bettys and so forth.

[TIME 40:42]

Interviewer: What did you think of your commanding officers in WWII?

Jim Anderson: I thought I had competent commanding officers always.

Interviewer: In Korea, too?

Jim Anderson: Yeah. But only in Korea. In other words, at Camp Atterbury ... it was bad. I was so happy to get out of there. ... So after Korea then, I stuck with the reserve, and national guard, for several years, until 1962. The Bay of Pigs was going on in Cuba. I had light helicopter maintenance company at that time in the reserve. And they had 3 units at that time in the country. Fortunately mine wasn't recalled. But I decided I'd get out then. I was old enough to retire – I was 37 years old. And so I got out and stayed out [laughs].

Interviewer: So you had spent nearly 20 years in the military.

Jim Anderson: Yeah, probably. But I wasn't concerned about pensions or any of that crap.

Interviewer: Would you advise military service now?

Jim Anderson: Oh, of course. I'm sorry my boys never [joined]. You know they did away with conscription. I'm just sorry they didn't have that experience. Even the basic training part of it, you know?

Interviewer: What do you think it would have given them that they never got?

Jim Anderson: They didn't turn out badly [laughs], but I think it would just give them a little different outlook on life. As it was, I started a business in 1964, and I made about 65 transatlantic crossings doing business, importing and so forth. The oldest boy, Sam, who's here now, went to school in Britain for a year. Daughter Susan went to school in

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Italy for a year. Son Joe went to Sweden and worked in the window factory there because we were importing their products into the States. And then Tom, who's also here, the youngest, was involved with blinds and shades and so forth. He even got out to Pakistan on one job we had. So.

Interviewer: Who were the most important people to you in the service?

Jim Anderson: I don't know. I guess that would be hard to say, really. I just made it my business to get along, whatever it took. No point in making a stink about it.

Interviewer: So if you ran into unreasonable people or situations you would just try to get along.

Jim Anderson: Yeah. I didn't do too badly. I'm still here [laughs].

Interviewer: What was your final rank leaving Korea?

Jim Anderson: I left there as a first lieutenant. By the time I got through with the national guard I was a captain. One time I had a company in an all-black engineer battalion in Philadelphia. And it was quite an experience.

Interviewer: How so?

Jim Anderson: Reverse discrimination.

Interviewer: You felt it?

Jim Anderson: Oh, of course. I was the only white there among the officers [laughs]. So. ... Not to the point of being disgusted We got along. But it was there. ...

[TIME 45:10]

Interviewer: In Bermuda where I live, as a Caucasian I'm outnumbered, and I'll sometimes feel it, depending on what's going on politically. I just let it wash over me.

Jim Anderson: I miss Bermuda. We had some great times there.

Interviewer: It's still beautiful.

Jim Anderson: When we were doing work there, Betsy and I would get out occasionally. I made a lot of trips back and forth to Bermuda.

Interviewer: Where would you stay?

Jim Anderson: I don't remember the name now. It wasn't one of the big, big hotels – not touristy. I just don't remember.

Interviewer: What is the greatest challenge you've faced as an adult?

Jim Anderson: I guess seeing that the children grew up right. We didn't end up with any junkies, boozers. They all ended up being pretty respectable citizens. We had a big family business going there for a while. Then they all split off into their own businesses.

Interviewer: Did anyone take over your business?

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Jim Anderson: Well, it was in four parts. They all in a sense took a part with them. Sam was a super computer technician, programmer and such. Tom was blinds and shades, and he's still in the blinds business – you saw a logo on his shirt?

Interviewer: Yeah, I did.

Jim Anderson: Okay [laughs]. Susan did some of our manufacturing of blinds and awnings.

Interviewer: What's she doing now?

Jim Anderson: She's – I don't know how to describe it. She's living out in New Mexico. I don't know how to describe her job. She works hard at it. It's something in service, I guess that would have to be how it's described. Joe works in New York City doing high rise buildings. He's a general manager for a big company that manufactures curtain wall, if you know what curtain wall is.

Interviewer: I don't know what it is.

Jim Anderson: It's the skin of a building, made out of aluminum. It's a complete building exterior. And he travels all over just like I did. He goes to Spain, and he goes to the Far East, the Philippines, and Singapore. They get a lot of the stuff fabricated in Korea. So he gets a lot of travel out of his job.

Interviewer: Do you still travel a lot?

Jim Anderson: No, not anymore. I don't get around all that well. I still drive, but. I took a couple trips with Tom last fall, and at the airport I had to get in a wheelchair, and get pushed out to the gate, that sort of thing. I wasn't up to walking that far.

Interviewer: Sure. How did the war change me?

Jim Anderson: I just seemed to follow what everybody else was doing with it. I think it gave me a better attitude to a lot of things. It gave me a good background for whatever I got into.

[TIME 49:35]

Interviewer: Do you have any questions?

Woman's voice [Kay? (CK): I always want to hear about Thanksgiving.

Interviewer: Follow up on Thanksgiving, 1944. Do you have any memories?

Jim Anderson: I was in Metz.

Interviewer: Do you remember the meal?

Jim Anderson: Yeah. It was at the back door at officer's mess. I had a lieutenant then as a liaison officer. He had the shakes from having been a forward observer, and they gave him this job. So he went to officer's mess, and they fed me at the back door. It was a good meal.

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
Headquarters Company/95th WWII; Korea/1st Lieutenant;
National Guard/Company Commander

Interviewer: Did you ever see any of the generals, like General Patton?

Jim Anderson: Oh yes, almost every day.

Interviewer: Why?

Jim Anderson: On the highway. He got around a lot. He visited the 95th, he visited the other units where I would go. So I saw him probably nearly every day. Very impressive guy.

Interviewer: Was he? What did he look like? Short, tall?

Jim Anderson: Very, I thought, tall. No nonsense. He had a jeep with twin silver horns on the hood about this long [laughs]. And the sergeant in the back seat with a 30-caliber machine gun, and so forth. Just an interesting guy. You know, we stayed in 3rd army until the end of January, and then we went to ... where did we go. We went up north to cross the Rhine, what was that.

Interviewer: Was it 9th army?

Jim Anderson: Probably. I don't recall.

Interviewer: With General Patton, did you ever hear him talk?

Jim Anderson: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: I heard that he didn't sound like George C. Scott.

Jim Anderson: Say that again?

Interviewer: I heard he wasn't like George C. Scott, that he was higher pitched.

Jim Anderson: I thought he did a pretty good job though of characterizing him in Patton.

[Excuses himself, to be continued.]

Part 2

Interviewer: This is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th, the 95th Infantry. Today is September 22, 2018. We're here in the lobby of the Best Western Premier Hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. And today I have the privilege of talking again, for some follow up questions, with Jim, could you say your name?

Jim Anderson: Jim Anderson

Interviewer: And what company were you with?

Jim Anderson: Division Headquarters Company.

Interviewer: So I've gone through Jim's Metz Hour speech from years before.

Jim Anderson: Well, I gave one I think in '06, then I wrote another one I think for Salem in Virginia and didn't get there.

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
Headquarters Company/95th WWII; Korea/1st Lieutenant;
National Guard/Company Commander

Interviewer: So this is the one from '06. And when I went through it there were a few questions, in some cases because a few things were inaudible. One thing is, your name was called and you were led up to a jeep called something "male pegs"? The name of a jeep.

Jim Anderson: I don't know.

Interviewer: The driver explained it to you. It was a mail clerk and he was going to deliver you to --.

Jim Anderson: Oh, yeah. It was the division mail clerk for headquarters company.

Interviewer: Okay, so it was probably the jeep he delivered mail in or something. So the driver explained he was a mail clerk and he was going to deliver you to division headquarters.

Jim Anderson: Yeah. He picked me up from a replacement group that was being processed.

Interviewer: Okay. And did you know what division headquarters meant?

Jim Anderson: Not a thing.

Interviewer: So you spent the first night in a hay loft?

Jim Anderson: In a hayloft, yep. Because company headquarters was in a barn, in this little bitty town.

Interviewer: Do you remember the name of the town?

Jim Anderson: No, no, no.

Interviewer: And you said the hay loft ended up being the softest bed you would have for the next couple of weeks?

Jim Anderson: Yeah. And this was on the last day of the month, and the company commander was paying the troops down below.

Interviewer: Next morning the division headquarters moved to a town called something, a few clicks north of the main Metz. Do you remember the name of the town?

Jim Anderson: No. There was a time that I did, but not now. ... Yes, I do too. Mouve M-o-u-v-e Grande G-r-a-n-d-e. I think that's it.

Interviewer: So you're assigned to the transportation platoon. You said your new MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] is as a 345 truck driver light? What's 345 mean?

Jim Anderson: That's just a number they gave to MOSes.

Interviewer: And you said it was an unusual assignment because you'd never been behind the wheel of any military vehicle.

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
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Jim Anderson: That's right. And they gave me a driver's test in a command car, which required double clutching, and you know. I didn't know how to handle that, but I got through it [laughs].

Interviewer: So what was it like to drive that first time in a truck? Do you scrape the gears? What do you do?

Jim Anderson: I don't know. I was out of there the next day in a jeep with the captain. Drove him over to some other unit, which was – I think it was the 106th cavalry at the time.

Interviewer: Your service record showed however that you had driven a ¾-ton truck in a night job you had in college.

Jim Anderson: Oh yeah, but that was an old beat up panel truck. You know, nothing very scientific about it. The people were in the carpet business.

Interviewer: And in your speech you said you drove it when you were in college taking some course. What course would that have been?

Jim Anderson: I don't know. I was majoring in engineering at Swarthmore College.

[TIME 5:19]

Interviewer: Okay. And then you were introduced to your new platoon mates and new schoolhouse quarters. Here you were 20 years old, and you were with this group of guys who had been together all the way. So you're the newcomer.

Jim Anderson: Oh my, yes. In every way. Because they resented my being there because I was a PFC [private first class]. And they expected that one of them would get promoted. There were still a lot of privates in that platoon. And so there was resentment because of that. And in a sense I didn't fit in, because I was 10, 15 years younger than most of them.

Interviewer: When did you become PFC?

Jim Anderson: When I was in the 87th Division.

Interviewer: Okay. So you come in as a PFC, and you're with these guys. I know sometimes they called ASTPers whiz kids.

Jim Anderson: No, what happened is the guy I replaced had been a PFC, so I guess that's how they selected me. There were only so many PFCs in the unit in those days. There wasn't any kind of rank, really.

Interviewer: You said the man you replaced was 1 of only 3 assigned to drive for division liaison officers.

Jim Anderson: If it's relevant his name was Koenig K-o-e-n-i-g. I only saw him once or twice maybe. I think when he came back from wherever he was they sent him back to the division rear somewhere.

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
Headquarters Company/95th WWII; Korea/1st Lieutenant;
National Guard/Company Commander

Interviewer: It's November and you're in Europe, so it probably gets dark early. So you spent a lot of time driving using cat-eye headlights. Can you explain what those are for people who don't know?

Jim Anderson: Well they look like cat eyes. They're little slits of light, a pair on each fender. ... Maybe an inch tall. They were illuminated. They had a piece of white glass behind, so they were illuminated.

Interviewer: How far in front of you did they show the highway?

Jim Anderson: Not very much [laughs]. It's only to keep somebody else from getting whacked, I guess – you know, seeing the vehicle coming at them.

Interviewer: So it's not for you to see the road, it's to protect you from someone else running into you. Because you said your eyes bugged out when you were driving.

Jim Anderson: Yeah. They do that [laughs]. You know, you have to look through what was probably a dirty windshield, or certainly not clean all the time.

Interviewer: You know jeeps in movies never have roofs. Was your jeep open?

Jim Anderson: Oh yeah, open. Patton didn't permit tops on vehicles in those days. That's supposedly to keep people from getting shot up by aircraft.

Interviewer: So they could see who's there?

Jim Anderson: No, just to make the occupants of the vehicle aware that they were being strafed or whatever. Does that make sense?

Interviewer: It does. Did you ever find yourself in danger from friendly fire, where you had to jump out of the vehicle?

Jim Anderson: Oh yeah. But not a lot.

Interviewer: Not a lot [laughs]. You mention that liaison drivers were a fairly large group because all 90th Division residents and the vast tanks and other Ford units had another man along with him to ride shotgun. As a jeep driver, did you have another person around?

[TIME 10:16]

Jim Anderson: No, I had to be both shotgun and driver. You know, to be sure if we were attacked to help protect myself and the liaison officer. It's just a term of reference, really. But some of these guys were coming from company back to battalion or regiment. And it could have been pretty dangerous, especially at night. The Germans had a way of being sneaky, too.

Interviewer: They waged the war for a long time. It says your job took you to Metz several times when things were hot there. Once when the floating bridges were out the only way to get to Metz was by the permanent bridgehead. Where was that?

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
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Jim Anderson: Drop-dead center in Metz. But the bridges were constantly out because the Germans had flooded the Moselle, opened some damns up and flooded that whole area.

Interviewer: So they were out because the river had risen above the level of the bridge?

Jim Anderson: No, a lot of the bridges were floating. And they'd get washed out. One time, I don't know if I mentioned there, I had to go all the way down to Pont-a-Mousson, which is like 20 miles south. Come up the other side to get in to Metz.

Interviewer: And you went up the other side on strange roads, all in darkness, you said, like the inside of a whale.

Jim Anderson: Yes [laughs]. It was terrifically dark. I don't know if I mention in there, I had one case where I was trying to get past the artillery gun truck. He had rear cat-eyes. Red ones. And I honked at him and nothing happened. So I flashed my brights at him and he really got out of the way in a hurry [laughs]. You know, just a flick of the switch. That was dangerous I suppose, but it worked.

Interviewer: You said with action moved forward to the start of Saar, division headquarters moved to – where would they have moved to?

Jim Anderson: I don't know. They stayed there for a long time. I think when division headquarters moved they moved clear beyond Metz. This was after the capture. That was to, oh dear, Boulay. Boulay, Moselle. And they were there a long time – 'til the end of January.

Interviewer: I asked you before about the food, and you talked about the British 52nd Division. You said guys there would call you Yank?

Jim Anderson: Yeah.

Interviewer: You said you came up short on solid food, because they broke their rations down to 5 meals so they could have a snack with tea.

Jim Anderson: Yeah, they had toast, bread and jam or something, with their evening tea. And toast and jam ain't very filling for a young 20-year-old.

Interviewer: You said when you arrived at the headquarters too late you had a stomach-growling wait until 8:30 or so for bread and jam, but it came with tea.

Jim Anderson: Did I say anything about sharing their rum ration? I don't know if they did it every night, I don't think so, but at least on certain days they got a rum ration with the evening tea. I wasn't a drinker but I did accept the drink, just to find out what it was like. I don't think I'd ever had rum before.

[TIME 15:10]

Interviewer: The veterans I've talked to in Bermuda talk about the rum rations. They say it's an old British tradition. Now coming back home you say that prior to packing for

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
Headquarters Company/95th WWII; Korea/1st Lieutenant;
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the trip back home you get another of life's great surprises when you're called to the orderly room and you're presented the Bronze Star.

Jim Anderson: Yeah, that was a complete surprise.

Interviewer: Did someone submit you for that?

Jim Anderson: Somebody must have. Possibly the man that I drove with for such a long time. Captain Van Fossan that I mentioned yesterday. I have no idea other than that.

Interviewer: And a citation for meritorious service. It's the only one served in your platoon.

Jim Anderson: Yeah I don't think anyone else got one. You know they weren't handed out very freely.

Interviewer: So again, are you the only replacement in your platoon at that time?

Jim Anderson: No, there was one other one, the general's nephew. General Twaddle's nephew. But if you're asking about decorations, no. He just served with me.

Interviewer: So out of the platoon you're the one person who gets the Bronze Star.

Jim Anderson: Yeah. May have been out of the whole company for all I know. I didn't go asking, Did you get one [laughs]? I just took it and felt glad I had it, because it got me some rotation points to go home. To get out of the army sooner, not to go home. I went home with the 95th. But it gave me 5 extra points toward separation.

Interviewer: Near the end of your speech you say, When I left the gap with a something in my right shirt pocket, I was sure I'd had my fill of army life.

Jim Anderson: Yeah that's at separation.

Interviewer: Separation. And then you went back to Carnegie. Now there's a question Kay said to me. She said, You didn't ask the question. I said, No, because Jim is shy, and I'm so happy to get him to talk about anything. She said, You should ask him the question. And I said I would, and this is the question.

Probably about 2009 I went to hear Ken Burns speak in Los Angeles as part of his . war documentary. At the end of it I talked to his producer. I explained to her that I interviewed veterans, and I asked her what her favorite interview question was. She said her favorite question is, Tell me a story you've never told anyone else.

I said, But you work for Ken Burns, people want to talk to you. No one wants to talk to me. And she told me what to do: tell them the question, ask them to close their eyes, take a deep breath, say the question one more time, and ask them to talk about the first thing that comes to mind, whether it's an image or a story.

So please close your eyes, take a deep breath. Jim, tell me a story you've never told anyone before.

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[TIME 21:10]

Jim Anderson: I'm not sure I can think of one. I'm sorry if I seem uncooperative. But I just --.

Interviewer: Do you have a story you've told only to a few people?

Jim Anderson: No. But that was not purposeful. I just didn't see any point in it, maybe. And I wasn't truly avoiding you all these years. I just --.

Interviewer: Yes you were [laughs].

Jim Anderson: No, you were just with more interesting people, I thought, than me. You know, I've had a good life. Exceptionally good for that matter. But I just -- a lot of things didn't turn out like I thought they might, you know. I wasn't expecting to be in the military as often as I was [laughs].

Oh, I'll tell you something that is funny. When I left Indiantown Gap from the separation center. I went home devoutly thinking that I was never going to see the military again. I didn't sign up for the reserve. Two or three months later I'm in the national guard in Pittsburgh, in the field artillery. I ran into a guy in my class in school and he said, Why don't you come over? You get a day's pay for every drill.

So I was poor enough at the time, I guess. I was getting GI Bill money, but that wasn't everything. So, I did there. I did all right there. I worked up to sergeant first class. Then during all this I'm taking ROTC at Carnegie Tech as well. So I got a commission in '49 -- I think I already mentioned that yesterday.

Interviewer: Yes.

Jim Anderson: Well, whatever. And then I didn't know quite what to do. I was in a 5-year program at Carnegie Tech. I still had a year ago. But I decided I wasn't really interested in staying in school at that point. So I got myself signed up to go to Fort Belvoir to take the engineer basic officer course. And that was 90 days, a good trip. Got out of there, was unemployed for a little while. And then I -- got to think a minute here -- I went to work for Pennsylvania Department of Highways, I guess it was.

I don't want to get things confused here. You know, there was a period when I came home from WWII and another one when I came home from Korea. I tend to confuse them maybe a little bit.

No, I know. I didn't have a job to return to, so I had to do construction labor. So I did some of that in the summertime, worked the scout camp on the staff, just keeping busy.

Interviewer: Thank you for the additions.

Jim Anderson: I had one more correction, too. The ship I went over on was the Mauretania. I think I came back on Mariposa.

[TIME 25:08]

Interviewer: Were they roughly the same size?

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
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Jim Anderson: Probably. Mauretania was next class below Queen Mary. So it was equally fast so it could travel without convoying.

Interviewer: When you got your separation papers were you at the Gap or were you at Shelby?

Jim Anderson: I was at the Gap. Actually, I had gone from Shelby over to the 2nd Division at Camp Swift in Texas. And from there I went to Indiantown Gap for separation.

Interviewer: So you go to Indiantown Gap visiting as a young boy, then you end up coming back to separate from the service.

Interviewer: Going back today, is it familiar?

Jim Anderson: Did I tell you that I've been here when I was a young boy?

Interviewer: Yes.

Jim Anderson: I've been to Indiantown Gap a good many summers over the years. Because when I was in the field artillery we came up here to summer camp. That would take me up though '49. In '50 I was working for the Department of Highways and active in the national guard, I think. I had to have been, that's how I got federal [inaudible, laughing]. No, I had my commission, so I got a branch change. I don't know if it was a change or whatever it took to be active in the 112th Infantry, which is in the 28th Division. And that's how I got recalled in 1950 when the Korean War came.

Interviewer: And again, your final rank at the end of WWI was T-5?

Jim Anderson: I was a T-5?

Interviewer: And what's the equivalent in terms of --.

Jim Anderson: Corporal. Two stripes with a T under them.

Interviewer: Okay. ... If my father had been a corporal, he might have been a T-5.

Jim Anderson: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is that the beginning of the corporals, then you work your way up toward sergeant?

Jim Anderson: Well, at this time with the draft these units all operate under an MOS that entitles them to so many privates, PFCs, corporals, and depending on the type of unit maybe T-5 and such.

Interviewer: A question regarding your homecoming. Coming home from Korea you come home to Betsy, she met you at the airport. And you didn't recognize each other?

Jim Anderson: For some reason we were a little slow getting together [laughs]. You know, it was a 2- or 3-minute thing, but it was sort of comical at the time. She was dressed in a two-piece suit, skirt and top. I don't think I'd ever seen her in that kind of costume. Maybe that was my problem. Whatever.

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Interviewer: Had you changed? Had you lost weight?

Jim Anderson: No, about the same.

Interviewer: Was your attitude coming back from Korea the same as it was coming back from WWII?

Jim Anderson: In what respect?

Interviewer: There was a definite end to WWII – Germany was defeated.

Jim Anderson: Well, like I said I had no job to return to and I didn't know what I was going to do there for a while. I knew I was going to try to get back to school. But I ended up going to Carnegie Tech to architecture school instead of coming back to Swarthmore.

[TIME 30:15]

Interviewer: All right. Any last thing you want to say?

Jim Anderson: I don't think so. I bared my heart to you [laughs].

Interviewer: After all this time.

Jim Anderson: No, I had said a lot of these things in these speeches I wrote, you know.

Interviewer: I know, but now you've said them to me.

Jim Anderson: I've been very interested in family history. ... If I didn't mention it, my Anderson grandparents were Swedish immigrants. They came in the 1890s to the States. My dad was their first born. And he went to Grove City College and met my mother, who had been a farm worker. Same farm that this great-great-great-grandfather had founded originally. In western Pennsylvania. And you know, I haven't been there in recent years but as recently as maybe 15, 20 years ago the homestead was still standing there.

Interviewer: And who owns it now?

Jim Anderson: I have no idea. My grandfather died, and my grandmother moved away to live with her son. But it was an interesting place because it had oil leases. They were pumping oil down through there. My mother every now and then would get a royalty check for 2 or 3 dollars. Thought she was in tall cotton, you know. That was big money in the '30s [laughs].

Interviewer: Preserving family history is part of what these interviews do, Why do you think it's important to find and preserve family history?

Jim Anderson: I don't know. Nobody else in the family was doing it, among other things. There was a period in my life when I needed something to do, so that's what I took up. And there was good software around to support it. There's even better stuff around now. Unfortunately, most of what I did earlier was lost because the software

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
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wasn't renewed and refreshed. I've got it in my head anyhow [laughs]. But I had both sides of the family back to the early 1700s. Sweden was a little bit more difficult, but I got it.

Interviewer: Well they're probably start in a few minutes.

Jim Anderson: Are they ready now?

Interviewer: They said they are, but no one is in there. So this is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th, 95th Infantry. It's about 3 PM on September 22nd. And I've had the great pleasure of talking again with Jim – can you say your name?

Jim Anderson: Jim Anderson.

Interviewer: Okay. And your WWII division?

Jim Anderson: 95th Division, Transportation Platoon Division, Headquarters Company.

Interviewer: And in Korea when you left?

Jim Anderson: I left the 65th Engineers, Company A, 65th Engineers, 25th Division.

Interviewer: And when you finally left the reserves you were a captain?

Jim Anderson: I left the reserves, I was a captain long before that. I got to be a captain not too long after – anyhow, when I retired I had been company commander of a light helicopter maintenance company in transportation corps.

Interviewer: Okay. And that's good.

-end file-

Anderson, Jim; Army, T5 (Corporal); Transportation Platoon/
Headquarters Company/95th WWII; Korea/1st Lieutenant;
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