

Frank Bever audio log

Narrator: Frank Bever
Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)
Date: September 10, 2017
Transcriber: Carol Slezak
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Log compiled by: Teresa Bergen, July 2021

Track 1

00:00 preach peace, because the opposite is killing and a multitude of death

00:28 commenting on short film in World War I Museum reminiscent of current events

01:06 Bever's church struggles with how best to preach peace

02:00 world leaders focused on dominance scare him

02:26 thoughts on second coming

02:54 Bever lost his wife two months ago, trying to keep going to Church of the Brethren without her

03:33 his five sons try to keep his spirits up with frequent visits

04:24 Church of the Brethren is a peace church

04:57 when faced with crossing the flooded Moselle River outside of Metz, Bever promised God: "If I make it home, you get me home, I'm a church person. He made that promise. I kept the promise."

06:31 felt reassured the lord was still with him when a German 88 shell burst on a tank while he was going into Saarlautern; Bever survived, though full of shrapnel

07:36 felt that the bombing of Japan was a gift from God that spared the whole 95th Division, who were scheduled to invade Japan. "And they were fanatic enough that you know, we would have never gotten on that island."

10:13 mentions his best friends in the military, Al Kerr and Jim Beardsley

11:54 now that Bever is 96, friends from his company are all deceased; "I haven't done something yet that I was supposed to do. He's giving me more time."

12:50 last April, Bever went on an honor flight to Washington, DC; encountered Bob Dole and Joe Donnelly

- 15:55 views on “joker” Donald Trump, Meyer tells story about how Trump denies global warming yet insures his buildings against its effects
- 18:23 victories are short-lived, then people start fighting again
- 19:04 Church of the Brethren is strong in Nigeria, but ISIS has destroyed many of its church buildings
- 20:14 mentions visit to World War One museum
- 21:03 one of his sons joined the Jehovah’s Witnesses
- 22:29 Bever entered war on Omaha Beach, three months after Normandy invasion, at D+90 days; describes scene of abandoned halftracks, huge cliff from which Germans shot Americans.
- 24:00 discussing route Bever took through England
- 25:47 once they were in France, some of his fellow soldiers were anxious to get into combat
- 26:20 staying in apple orchards, playing volleyball while awaiting orders
- 26:33 describes his friend Nick, who would box gently with him since Nick was twice his size
- 27:16 discuss route to Metz, France
- 27:37 remembers walking through Saint-Lo: “That city was 100% destroyed.” Reinforced his commitment to peace
- 28:48 can’t remember how they traveled through Paris
- 29:20 memory of torturous, long, cold ride in a military truck
- 30:15 Bever was a model soldier who never got sick or misbehaved; received good conduct medal, which he came to value greatly
- 32:15 seeing “Kilroy was here” written everywhere, especially in West Virginia
- 33:05 was on maneuvers in West Virginia June 6, 1944 when heard about D-Day
- 33:55 Camp Coxcomb in Riverside, California, now has only a sign to show that the 95th Division trained there

34:47 Bever's job was to carry 21-pound Browning Automatic Rifle. "That thing was killing me. Heavy."

35:41 People said the automatic firing of the BAR was the first thing Germans looked and listened for, so it was a very dangerous job

36:23 managed to get a different job before going overseas

36:33 repressed memories of war came out in nightmares for about five years

37:33 unlike guys coming back today, it was easy for Bever to reintegrate into society

39:03 traveled overseas on USS West Point; describes eight-day voyage

41:00 Meyer and Kay Grosinske talk about their fathers' voyages on the Mariposa

41:56 slept in bunks four high

43:08 never remembers missing a meal in the army, they'd always get food to soldiers somehow, even in combat

44:00 ate a lot of shit on a shingle, aka chipped beef

45:30 recounts first night he spent in a foxhole listening to German mortars overhead

46:35 hearing buzz bombs when Germans were shelling England; sounded like tractors

47:45 Bever's son and daughter-in-law got a grant for teachers that allowed them to retrace Bever's wartime footsteps in Europe, including Barton Stacey camp

50:31 after freed from BAR duty, carried a regular, much lighter weight M-1

50:50 three months ago fired his M-1 with a friend; forgot how loud it was

52:30 crossing Moselle river to enter Metz

54:14 stopped to help an injured fellow soldier, got left behind by company; holed up for two weeks, waiting for a break in the action to be able to rejoin company on way to Saarlautern

55:49 a fellow soldier killed by a tank

57:09 injured, taken to field hospital in Metz for surgery, then sent to recuperate north of London

57:49 dreamed about taking showers

59:04 carried a bayonet, practiced with it a lot but never used it in combat

59:30 Grosinske and Meyer talk about importance of Bever's contribution, people ask for autographs

1:02:00 chats about Oklahoma reunion with Judy, another soldier, also started in 379th,

1:02:40 mentions a World War I memorial in Kansas City, and what a great city it is, but where is the river

1:04:00 regularly caught in rain during West Virginia maneuvers

1:05:59 weather in Metz; Bever left before weather got bad

1:06:15 missed the Battle of the Bulge because he was recovering from injury

1:06:45 rejoined his squad in Dusseldorf; squad led by outstanding Browning, who supported his men and wouldn't order them to do something he wouldn't do himself

1:09:00 saw complete destruction in St. Lo

1:09:51 heard about concentration camps, but didn't see them himself

1:10:14 spending the night on the German line on a frosty night in April 1945

1:11:02 "cleaning out" abandoned homes, looking for German snipers

1:11:40 big job cleaning out houses in large town of Hamm, Germany

1:12:32 Bever doesn't remember being shot at

1:13:17 procedure for clearing out German houses that seemed just like those back home. "It made me think about stupidity again."

1:14:05 remembers seeing a crowd of German soldiers walking on the autobahn, en route to surrendering to Americans at end of war.

1:15:05 seeing American planes flying victoriously over the German line on a spring morning in 1945

1:16:10 Bever's son says that for more than twenty years, Bever wouldn't talk about the war at all, except to say that it was hell

1:17:49 remembers trying to talk about his departed World War Two friends at a family dinner many years after war, couldn't finish, had to leave

1:19:09 mentions some of his best World War Two friends, visiting his friend Nick in West Virginia, who published a weekly newspaper to which Bever still subscribes

1:21:04 remembers those friends well. "You've been through instances like that with a gun, it makes a difference. He had my back; I had his back."

1:21:37 tracking down the injured soldier, Ron Bleaker, he'd stopped to save; spending time with Bleaker and his wife at reunions

1:24:57 remembering being honored at a baseball game at a reunion in Toledo

1:25:27 joyous feeling of going home after discharge

1:25:54 elated to hear about bombing of Japan, even though it took so many lives

1:26:34 Grosinske recounts her father telling her that the day US bombed Japan was the most important in his life because he knew he was going to live

1:26:57 mixed feelings about results of bomb; has a friend who spent two years in Japan showing tourists results of bombing

1:27:42 Bever's attempt to preach peace

1:29:21 his grandson Andrew, a schoolteacher, teaches his students about peace

1:29:51 talk about practice hand grenade, shooting an M1 recently

1:31:37 younger brother spent a year of postwar military occupation in Germany

1:32:16 Bever's son says he doesn't think Bever's father was happy about him going to war, but Bever can't remember too much about what his parents said

1:33:32 thought the military did an outstanding job with the mail service overseas; Mom wrote to him but Dad didn't

1:34:16 parents never made any money farming until they bought a John Deere tractor

1:34:45 farm was in Wabash, Indiana

1:34:51 mother and paternal grandmother wrote regularly to Bever

1:35:19 American soldiers were discouraged from fraternizing with locals in France and Germany

1:35:35 many churchgoers in Germany; Bever's own family religious roots

1:36:57 brought souvenir pillowcase home to mother

1:38:30 one of Bever's sons talks about being proud of his father, learning his message of peace, and being glad that Bever is finally talking about his wartime experiences

1:39:53 his teacher son talks about sharing Bever's wartime memorabilia with his students when he's teaching history; Bever used to come in and talk to his classes

- 1:42:45 didn't know his army insurance would help pay for his children's education until he'd paid for almost all of it already; discussion of whether his sons fought as children
- 1:44:05 Bever tried to be a decent role model as a father
- 1:44:38 Bever was awarded Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star and Purple Heart
- 1:45:51 Meyer tells story about another veteran who objected to incorrect information accompanying his Bronze Star
- 1:47:43 memory of planes being shipped on train tracks in Central Germany
- 1:48:52 sons surprised Bever by showing up to this reunion
- 1:49:43 Meyer talks about how Bever telling his stories helps to preserve history, and moves people who hear or read them; discussion of how humans are moved by stories
- 1:51:57 Grosinske talks about how her father developed a love of mushy peas during his time in England as an infantry with C Company, 378th
- 1:52:39 discussion of other food preferences and dislikes inspired by World War Two and Great Depression
- 1:53:43 memory of his wife's death, surrounded by family
- 1:56:17 Meyer recounts stories of the deaths of his parents
- 2:01:54 End recording