

## **Joseph Brown audio log**

Narrator: Joseph Brown

Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

Date: 2005

Transcriber: Carol Slezak

Transcribed on: May 20, 2021

Log compiled by: Teresa Bergen, August 31, 2021

### **Track 1**

- 00:00 introductions; Brown served with Company E, 378th, 95th Division, final rank: staff sergeant; recites serial number
- 01:20 from Virginia Beach, Virginia
- 01:25 drafted into 86<sup>th</sup> Division, trained at Camp Howze, Texas in 1942
- 01:47 transferred out of the 86<sup>th</sup> after a year
- 02:00 shipped out for five-day journey on the Mariposa carrying 5,000 troops; thought he was going over as an artillery replacement
- 02:46 since Mariposa was so fast, it didn't need an escort
- 02:59 stayed on deck the whole time so he wouldn't get seasick
- 03:30 landed in Scotland just after D-Day
- 03:51 taken to a training camp, where the men learned from a crippled, tough old major they were now in the infantry; "You never heard such screaming in your life"
- 05:40 six weeks of infantry training; during the hardest part, an officer offered them a way out if they'd sign a paper. "So, having seen how the army works, I didn't take on that obligation. So, I'd heard them say many times, 'Who can drive a truck?' And hand you a wheelbarrow."
- 07:48 illiterate guy from Georgia signed paper. "We signed up for the dadgum glider troops.' He said, 'What in the world is all this business? We're up there in a plane, ain't got no motor, ain't got no steering wheel.'"
- 08:49 after infantry training, Brown joined the 95<sup>th</sup>, assigned to Company E, 378<sup>th</sup> Infantry; halfway through Metz en route to Saarlautern

- 09:40 In Saarlautern or Saarbrücken, while searching for Germans inside a house that had been used as an ammunition dump, Brown hit by phosphorus shells; damage to legs and eyes
- 10:42 hospitalized in Paris for a month before returning to the line
- 10:52 when he returned, his friend Buckholtz had been captured, never to be seen again
- 11:25 trip to Saarlautern/Saarbrücken on pontoon boat; had to push boat off a sandbar, and wade through wet ditches
- 12:14 tells a story of battle involving soldiers killed by friendly fire, and Buckholtz surviving his own grenade accidentally being set off
- 13:50 tries to remember sequence of events
- 14:13 a few days after Brown returned from Paris hospital, Patton loaded all the guys into trucks and sent them to Liege, Belgium for Battle of the Bulge
- 14:45 Brown's company sent to Bremerhaven to relieve the British, because the Germans were breaking through up north
- 14:56 brought back to Liege, traveled through Ruhr Pocket
- 15:15 war ended, and Brown shipped home on the Mariposa; docked in Boston
- 15:40 given 30 days leave from Camp Myles Standish, MA, then had to report back to Camp Shelby, MS
- 15:58 Brown got married on his leave, brought his bride to Camp Shelby. War ended and they were discharged
- 16:32 they settled in Norfolk, Virginia
- 17:12 details of Mariposa, landing in Scotland and taking infantry training near Ilfracombe, England
- 18:06 only officers were allowed to visit seaside resort of Ilfracombe on leave; good-looking girls there
- 18:45 commanding officer who made himself conspicuous by constantly blowing nose in a roll of white toilet paper
- 19:07 Midwestern soldier with thick glasses spotted a German who was about to shoot them, shot him first

- 20:16 Brown introduces his grandson David
- 20:31 foods he ate in the military: powdered eggs, horsemeat, shit on a shingle
- 21:25 during basic training, cooks didn't mind messing up lots of pots because guys on KP had to clean them
- 21:52 during basic training in Texas, a cook with a car charged soldiers five bucks for a ride to Dallas when they had leave
- 22:27 a card game with Creoles in Louisiana where his friend bluffed and lost on a pair of twos
- 24:37 Brown was in Hamm when they got word that Germany had surrendered
- 25:16 Brown and other soldiers were holed up in one house when a German woman came in looking for food; they let her take it
- 25:55 a soldier who got killed because he started cooking French fries on a stove, making himself visible to Germans
- 26:30 imitates noise of a shell; "sounded like a freight train coming"
- 26:51 description of buzz bombs
- 27:37 description of German vs. American artillery, with sound effects
- 29:31 description of getting stuck on sandbar in pontoon boat, having to get out in cold water amidst gunfire
- 30:10 had to step over the bodies of dead Americans and Germans
- 30:20 similarities with Germans—dead soldiers holding photos of their families, and similar magazines inside German homes; "And they had pictures of them going in the service, where they would shave the heads, and give them the uniforms. They went through the same thing we did, you know. And young boys, dead as mackerels."
- 31:12 World War Two was a religious war, since Nazis were killing Jews; similarities with religious wars currently going on in Middle East
- 31:50 US has been very fortunate in not having a full-blown war in our country
- 32:22 infantry was always on the move and traveling light

33:00 paratroopers went on ahead, then infantry, then ordnance, artillery and the rest of the troops

33:58 Brown led a squad of eight to ten men, they were together all the time; defying a lieutenant's order in favor of keeping his squad safe.

35:15 Meyer gets more information on Buckholtz, promises to look for him; Buckholtz was from Pittsburgh area.

35:49 while most soldiers pared down to bare essentials, Buckholtz carried everything he was told to, including a raincoat

36:54 Brown's wife was born in Rocky Mountain, NC and is of Greek descent.

37:09 Brown worked farming tobacco in North Carolina as a teen

37:25 during the war, Brown's brother was a shipyard electrician, his father was a carpenter at shipyards, sister and mother did secretarial work

38:19 Brown and two of his sons are in business together as Brown Building Corporation. Another son owns a used car lot.

39:08 mail delivery during wartime—sporadic, as Brown's squad was always moving.

39:50 one son joined the service; more about family business, which Brown has mostly retired from now.

40:20 they talk about the reunion they're attending, look at picture of Brown and his family in the commemorative book

41:05 Brown just celebrated his eighty-second birthday with his family.

41:33 Brown recites his address. Goodbyes.

42:22 Recording ends.