

## VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

**Veteran's Name: Joseph Brown**

**Meyer: David Meyer (O'Shea)**

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**Transcriber: Carol Slezak**

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**David Meyer:** I'm David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th, and we're in the Hampton Holiday Inn, Hampton, Virginia. This is the last day of the reunion, just after the Metz Hour. This is Sunday. And I'm here with—

**Joseph Brown:** Joseph C. Brown.

**Meyer:** Which company were you?

**Brown:** Company E, 378th, 95th Division.

**Meyer:** What was your final rank?

**Brown:** Staff sergeant.

**Meyer:** Staff sergeant. Do you remember your serial number?

**Brown:** 3489 were the last four numbers. That's the one we usually ...3348.

**Meyer:** Those were the last four numbers, were the most important.

**Brown:** Yeah. 334839, 334839.

**Meyer:** That sounds right. Now I can ask questions, but it's just as good if you have some things that come to mind that you want to say, you can start talking.

**Brown:** I'll start talking then. And you can ask me questions in between, or tell me how much time I've got left, or what.

**Meyer:** You have as much time as you want.

**Brown:** Okay, you ready?

**Meyer:** Ready.

**Brown:** My name is Joseph C. Brown. I'm from Virginia Beach, Virginia. And I was drafted into service and went into the 86th Division. And we trained in Camp Howze, Texas, 1942. I took all my basic training in the 86th. And I was in the 86th for about a year. And then we

Brown, Joseph; Staff Sergeant; Company E/378th/95th WWII

transferred out of the 86th. I went to Boston and shipped over on the Mariposa as a replacement to the front line in artillery. I was in the Artillery Section, Headquarters Battery, the Survey Section. And I thought I was going over to replace, artillery replacement, as an artillery replacement. We went over on the Mariposa and we docked in, as we were going over it took five days for the Mariposa. And we had about 5,000 troops on the Mariposa. And it was a fast enough ship. And I think it ran from San Francisco or Los Angeles to Hawaii before the war, and they converted it to a troop carrier. And it was one of the fastest ships. So we didn't have an escort going over, because it was fast enough that we got there in about four or five days zigzagging across the Atlantic.

**Meyer:** Was the trip rough?

**Brown:** It was rough enough for me [laughs]. As we were going over they said you get one day on deck and one day in a bunk. Well I told them, I said, "Somebody take my bunk, because I'm going to stay on deck, because it's the fresh air up here. I'm not going down in that slop hole." [laughs] With all that vomit and everything else. I didn't want to get into that. So I stayed on deck the full time.

And as we were going over, just before we landed in Scotland, D-Day hit. And I said, Lord, don't let this boat dock right now [laughing], it comes to France and just shove us off. So, it didn't. It landed in Scotland. And when we landed in Scotland, we stayed in Scotland for about a day. And then we got on trains and went down to—I can't think of the name of the training camp we went to, but when we got off the train we said, "Where are the trucks?" Because the artillery is used to riding in trucks. And this old major was standing there, and he was a crippled guy. He had come back from the lines, I guess. He said, "There are no trucks. Get your duffel bag and follow me."

So we followed him. And we went through this big gathering yard, where there must have been 5,000 troops in there, around this stand.

[Time 5:00]

He got up on the stand and he told us, he says, "Gentlemen, welcome. You are now in the United States Infantry."

So [laughs], you never heard such screaming in your life. And he says, "I hope you're not as bad as the last group that was here. They told us to go to hell and they wouldn't do anything except eat. So we told them they could stay here, and take the training for six weeks, infantry training." Since there was a lot of different branches of service, they were going to give us the infantry training before they sent us out. He said, "Or you can be like the last group. Stockade was full. Nobody would do nothing. So we give them all a rifle and sent them on over across the line, and we don't give a damn if they're dead."

That kind of calmed the crowd down a little bit then, and they said, okay, I guess we better stay here and take this six weeks training [laughs].

**Meyer:** Oh, God! Oh, God! [laughs]

**Brown:** So we stayed there; we took six weeks of infantry training. So, one week while we were taking the training, toward the last, they bore down on us real hard. Inspected us all night long, and they put us out on the firing range. [pause]

**Meyer:** Good. Yeah. So you'd just been given--

**Brown:** Yeah, an ultimatum to stay there and take the infantry training or get the hell on out of there with a gun on your shoulder and go to the front lines. And they didn't care what in the hell happened to us. So we stayed there and we took the training. And so about the last week of the training, they bore down on us real hard. They gave us inspections at night, and then put us out on the driving range, and one of us would watch the other guy pull the trigger, in the rain, in the mud.

And finally, about the second day of that kind of treatment, a jeep pulled up and this officer got up on the hood of the jeep and said, "You guys must be crazy as hell to stay out here and take this kind of crap." He said, "Why don't you just get up and come up here and sign this piece of paper and go on back to the barracks and go to sleep, and don't do anything until you hear from me. Tell them to blow smoke."

**Meyer:** Really?

**Brown:** So after bearing down on us for about a week kind of hard, you'd be surprised how many guys signed the piece of paper. So, having seen how the army works, I didn't take on that obligation [laughs]. So, I'd heard them say many times, "Who can drive a truck?" And hand you a wheelbarrow—and all that kind of stuff.

**Meyer:** Do you know what happened to those guys who signed the piece of paper?

**Brown:** Well we went back to the barracks, and one of them, an old boy from Georgia, he couldn't read or write. And the guys used to read his mail for him. And the guys used to add a lot of stuff in his letters, you know [laughs] from his girlfriend, and all that stuff, you know? And so, he was sitting there on the couch, about three or four days after that, sitting down on the bed, rather, in the bunkhouse. And we came in there and he says, "You know what that piece of paper was we signed?"

We said, "No, what was it?"

"We signed up for the dadgum glider troops." [laughs] 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." [laughing]. So, we really got a charge out of him talking about where they were going to send him.

So then after we got through the infantry training, we went on across the channel. And we landed on the beach over there, and they shot us on up to the line. And I joined the 95th in Metz, France. And I was assigned to Company E, 378th Infantry.

[Time: 09:21]

**Meyer:** Where were they in the battle when you joined them?

Brown, Joseph; Staff Sergeant; Company E/378th/95th WWII

**Brown:** We were about halfway through Metz. So then we went out the other side of Metz and went into the Saar Basin. Or, into the Ruhr Pocket, I guess it was. Then in Saarlautern, Saarbrücken, and Ensdorf. And I got hit in Saarlautern or Saarbrücken. It's hard to remember where we were at that time.

**Meyer:** What were you doing?

**Brown:** We were front line infantry. And we were going through one of the little towns there, trying to clean out the Germans. And we got caught into a house that the Germans had used it for an ammunition dump upstairs. We were downstairs. And we had run in downstairs, and then the artillery shells started coming over. And then the Germans started shooting phosphorus shells in at us to blow the house up with all of us inside. So we had to get out of there. And before we could get out, we had phosphorus landing downstairs on us, and that's where I got the burns in the legs, and my eyes got—

**Meyer:** Hurt?

**Brown:** Hurt, with phosphorus. White phosphorus. So from there I went back to Paris, France, to the hospital. Stayed there for about a month, I guess it was. And I came back to the line, and one of my good friends, Buckholtz [phonetic], had been captured. And he was such a fastidious soldier, he always took his raincoat with him, and this and that and the other. And he had his shoes off. So all they found was Buckholtz' shoes in dead winter. So I never—I've run ads and everything else looking for old Buckholtz, but I haven't found him yet.

When we went into Saarlautern, Saarbrücken, we had to go over on pontoon boats. And my pontoon boat got caught on a sandbar. So we had to get out in the cold water and push the pontoon boat off the sandbar. And then we went across this long field that had ditches that were too wide to jump and not deep enough to swim. But we finally got across all those, carrying ammunition and everything with us, to supplement our troops once we got over there. And then that's where we ran into this house that had the ammunition dump in it.

Then when I came back to the line, I found out Buckholtz had been captured. But another story on Buckholtz, before we got into that, was we were charging a prisoner of war camp, not a prisoner of war camp, it was a regular, one of the Nazi's concentration camps, I guess. So we were in a field charging, and we had been pinned down, and Buckholtz was laying up in front of me on the ground. And I was behind him, just a little bit behind him. And one of our shells landed short and took one of the companies out on our right flank. And that was friendly fire that got those boys. And then when it hit, I heard something go BAM! And Buckholtz rolled over. I said, "Hey Buck, what's wrong, are you hit?" He said, "No." We used to wear all of our grenades and everything hanging on our shirt collars, you know, we'd carry all our ammunition and we'd have a couple grenades hanging on our collars. And he said, "No, my grenade went off."

And I said, "Are you hurt?"

He said, "No, it mashed it down in the mud. And when it exploded it all went into the mud and it didn't hurt me." [laughs]. So, we got through that thing.

The sequence of all this is getting a little confusing, I can't remember. Because it was after that we crossed that Saar River. And then we went on up to Ensdorf.

**Meyer:** Yeah, to Ensdorf.

**Brown:** Ensdorf, up in that area. And then that's when I got hit, and I went back to Paris. Then when I come back, and I found out Buckholtz had been captured. And so then I'd only been back a couple of days and Patton loaded us all up on trucks. Cold, dead winter. Must have been 50 guys to the truck. And hauled us to Petite Liege. We went into, just outside of Liege, Belgium, because the Bulge had hit. And Patton was running us up to help plug a hole up there.

[Time 14:39]

Well, some of the 378th went over into the Bulge. And he took our company and sent us into Bremerhaven to relieve the British, because the Germans were breaking through up north. So we relieved the British up there. And then they brought us back to Liege in trucks and we went through the Ruhr Pocket then. We went through Dortmund, Hamm, Dusselberg, and

**Meyer:** Krefeld?

**Brown:** Yep, and through there. And then the war ended, and we were shipped back. And I came back on the Mariposa, also. Went over on the Mariposa, came back on the Mariposa. And then when we docked back in the Boston area, we were given leave, so I went home.

**Meyer:** Back to Texas?

**Brown:** No, we were given leave out of Boston. When we got back, I guess it was Camp Myles Standish, we were given 30 days leave and we were supposed to report in to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. So while I was home, I got married while I was home. My wife and I both went to Shelby, Mississippi. And then in Shelby, Mississippi, the war ended. And instead of us having to go to the Pacific, they told us we had 45 days to walk from one end of the camp to the other end of the camp, to get our discharge. You can either go home, or you can stay here in camp and wait for your discharge to be processed.

So we went back home. The wife and I came back to Norfolk, Virginia. She was from Newport News. And so we came back to Norfolk, then I went back down to Mississippi and picked up my discharge. And that was the end of my war period.

**Meyer:** Okay. Well, I have a few things I wondered. When you talked about the boat ride across a little. I know few people who liked that boat ride across.

**Brown:** No, it was--Well, especially zigzagging across. We were on a pretty good size ship to carry 5,000 troops. That Mariposa was a right good ship. Of course, the swimming pool had all been covered up, and all the amenities, you know. Bunks had been put in it for a troop transport ship.

**Meyer:** So you landed at Omaha, at Normandy?

**Brown:** I didn't land in Normandy.

**Meyer:** Where did you land?

**Brown:** I forgot the name of the beach that we landed on when we left England. We landed in Scotland when we come over from America. We landed in Scotland. Then we took the infantry training in England there somewhere. Around Ilfracombe, and that area in there.

And another story about Ilfracombe is that they told all of us in camp, you can go to any of the towns around here on leave, but don't go to Ilfracombe. I think it was Ilfracombe; it was right on the coast. It was a resort town. So, naturally telling us not to go, that's where we wanted to go. And when we got there, we found out what it was. Only officers were in there, and only good-looking girls were in that beach resort [laughing]. So, we got picked up and had to be hauled back to camp on that deal.

**Meyer:** Oh, no. How did you like your commanding officers?

**Brown:** Very good. We had one that would lead us down the damn road, and he was, he always kept a roll of toilet paper or something and he was blowing his nose. We said, damn, can't he do something else with that white, advertising us going down the road? So, we were riding on tanks. We hated to ride the tanks because they made so much noise and they drew the enemy fire. But we were on the tanks one day and this guy that had bottlecap glasses—they were real thick—he was sitting on the tank with us and we were riding down the road, and all of a sudden he turned and fired, and there was a German in the ditch over there with a rocket.

**Meyer:** Holy cow.

[Time 19:33]

**Brown:** Getting ready to shoot into the tank, you know. So I said, good God, of all the people that could have seen that guy, the guy with the big, thick glasses [laughing], he shot him. But, ah, he was from out in the Midwest somewhere. I've forgotten where he was actually from. But that's about the extent of my experiences in the service.

**Meyer:** What did you do for relaxation when you had a chance? In the service.

**Brown:** Breathe. [laughter]

**Meyer:** Who's this?

**Brown:** That's my grandson. That's David.

**Meyer:** David. I'm a David, too. Is there any question you'd like to ask your grandfather?

Brown, Joseph; Staff Sergeant; Company E/378th/95th WWII

**David:** I don't really have any questions.

**Meyer:** Do you have any curiosity about anything? What he ate?

**David:** Yeah, okay.

**Meyer:** Okay. Talk about what you ate. And how you liked it, or didn't like it.

**Brown:** Well, we ate a lot of powdered eggs. And, um, I think we were eating horse meat sometimes [laughs], but they didn't tell us what kind of meat it was.

**Meyer:** Is there anything that once you got back, you thought I'll never eat that again, or I don't want to look at that again? One guy told me he didn't like fireworks from then on. Someone else said I hate Spam.

**Brown:** Well, they had a dish they called S.O.S. over there.

**Meyer:** Mm hmm. "S" On a Shingle.

**Brown:** Yeah [laughing]. So, we ate quite a bit of that, because it was easy to prepare, I guess. On KP when we went on our basic training, those cooks didn't have any qualms about messing up pots and pans and everything else, because they had all the KPs around to clean up everything in the kitchen, you know. So instead of using the same pot, they'd grab another pot, and mess it up, because they knew we would have to scrub them, you know.

So while I was on basic training, we went to Dallas and we went to Denton, Texas a lot. And went to Dallas whenever we could get a weekend to go during basic training. And one guy, one of the cooks, had an automobile and he lived in Dallas. So he'd charge us five bucks, I think it was, and take us to Dallas and bring us back, from camp. So that was pretty good deal back in those days. We would all jump in his car and go. He was the only one that had a car around there.

**Meyer:** Did you play cards at all?

**Brown:** Oh, yes. We were playing cards one time on maneuvers down in Louisiana. This buddy of mine, he was a heck of a card player. So we got down there, and we saw all these tables, guys playing cards. And they were French. And so you couldn't understand what they were saying. I guess it was—

**Meyer:** Creole.

**Brown:** Creole French, you know.

**Meyer:** Yeah. Cajun Creole.

**Brown:** So one night I dumped some money in him and he had some. So he sit down at the table with them. And he had a real low hand, but he was a helluva bluffer. Had a bluffing face on him, you couldn't read what he had. And he threw a twenty dollar bill down on the last card and said, "Bet twenty." Even before the card was dealt. I thought that Frenchman would sit there an hour before he ever called that damn thing. And the Frenchman had a pair of aces [laughing], and my buddy had a pair of deuces. So, but that Frenchman took a long time before he called that pot.

**Meyer:** But he called it?

**Brown:** He called it, and my buddy and I had to get up and leave or go broke. We'd gambled all we were going to gamble. We'd come out of camp somewhere down there in Louisiana, and we told the cabdriver, "Take us to a place where there's no GIs. We don't want to see no GIs." He said, "Got you covered." I think he even spoke broken French. Anyway, when he unloaded us, we found out why there were no GIs. It was a French-Creole village, I think it was [laughing]. But we had a good time there. But like I say, the poker game, my old buddy, he could not bluff that Frenchman on calling that hand.

**Meyer:** And he was bold.

**Brown:** Oh yeah, he was a helluva gambler.

[Time 24:37]

**Meyer:** Where were you when Germany surrendered? Do you remember where?

**Brown:** I think we were up in the Hamm area. Up there. We'd gone through Dusselberg, and Dortmund, and I think we went into Hamm. Then I think that's when we got word down the line that Hitler had surrendered.

**Meyer:** Did you stay in any French homes or German homes at any time with the people?

**Brown:** No; we were on the line one time and the Germans were across the street. We were in this house. And this German woman, we looked out down the street and she was coming over to our house. She didn't say nothing. She come right in, went into to her pantry, got some canned goods, or got some jars of food, so the guys said, "Let the old lady go." So we let her go back across the street. I guess she was feeding her family. She put it in her apron and went back across the street with the food.

**Meyer:** When you were in that house did you do any mouse-holing, go building to building?

**Brown:** House to house, building to building, yeah. We came out of one house and we left one group in there behind us. And we went on up ahead. And we looked, a shell came over and landed right by the stove this guy was cooking French fries on. And it killed him and it came right through the roof. Of course, he should have had more sense than to light up a dadgum smoke. So they could see where he was at, you know?

**Meyer:** When a shell came in—

**Brown:** It sounded like a freight train coming. [Makes noise, ending in BAM.]

**Meyer:** Is that about how much warning you had?

**Brown:** Well, you could hear it coming. But you didn't know where it was going to land. And then we had the buzz bombs coming over. And they came over, but they just ran out of fuel and then they would fall.

**Meyer:** What did they sound like?

**Brown:** You could hear them PUTT-PUTT-PUTT-PUTT-PUTT-PUTT-PUTT, up in the sky. You'd look up there and, PUTT-PUTT-PUTT-PUTT-PUTT, well, he's gone on. Well, once it PUTT-PUTT-PUTT stopped, you knew it was heading down then, you know. Because it had run out of fuel. The Germans had figured out just how much fuel that engine would need to get it over to a certain location, and then it would drop.

**Meyer:** Did it make any sound when it dropped?

**Brown:** Oh yeah. It was a bomb.

**Meyer:** In the movies they always go [low whistle].

**Brown:** Oh yeah, you heard that sound a lot. And the Germans had fast shooting 88s. They were faster shooting than some of our guns were. They had them on their tanks. They had 88s, and I think we had 105s or something on our tanks. No, we had 75s on a lot of our tanks. But I remember when we were making a river crossing in the night, the night I got hung on that damn bar on that pontoon boat, the Germans were shooting across the river. And you could see where they were coming from out of this Saarlautern, Ensdorf, where we were heading. You could see the tracers. About every ten shots would be a tracer, so they could see where the bullets were going. So we could see where they were coming from, too.

But we had a tank sitting there with us. It had the big 50-caliber sitting on it. And as they would shoot out, they shot fast HRT-HRT-HRT-HRT-HRT [mimicking the sound of their fast guns]. And our 50s went da--da--da--da; they were slower shooting but they had a bigger bullet. So, you'd see the tracers coming and you'd see HRT-HRT-HRT—da-da--da--da--da--da, that big 50 would go right back at it, you know? So, that was a good sound for us. [laughter]

**Meyer:** That was a good sound.

**Brown:** That the 50 was covering us. But I still got stuck on that daggone boat and had to get out in the water.

**Meyer:** So when you're stuck on the boat, you're stuck on the boat and people are shooting all around you.

**Brown:** Oh, yeah, shooting over our heads and everything else. But that 50 was answering it. You know, he'd go [imitates sound] that big 50 would go right back at it, you know. Once he heard that HRT-HRT, and he could see the tracer, the way it was coming from, he'd shoot right back at the tracer.

[Time 29:31]

**Meyer:** Yeah. So imagine you're in the middle of a river, and you're trying to cross, and you get stuck.

**Brown:** On a pontoon boat. [laughs]

**Meyer:** On a pontoon boat. And you had to get out in the water—was it cold?

**Brown:** Cold as hell.

**Meyer:** Cold as hell. And you have to push out, and people--

**Brown:** [more gun sound effects] And tracers coming across the top of you. Yeah.

**Meyer:** And how old were you then?

**Brown:** I guess I was about 19, 20.

**Meyer:** How old are you now [to David]?

**David:** I'm turning 11 in November.

**Meyer:** So eight years older than you are now. Imagine that. Imagine eight years, and you're standing in ice cold water, and you're stuck in the middle of a river. And people are trying to—

**Brown:** Trying to shoot you [laughs].

**Meyer:** Trying to shoot you.

**Brown:** Yeah, we crossed the river, a lot of dead guys were behind us that had tried before us, you know, evidently. We stepped right over them and kept on going. And I saw some dead Germans, and they had pictures of their families laying out. And they were holding them as they died, too, you know. And we went in some German homes and they had the books—looked something like our *Look* magazines, or what we had back then. I forget the name of, *Life* magazines we had back then. *Look*. 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.

**Meyer:** What do you think about it now? [pause]

**Brown:** I wonder sometimes if these religious wars are going to get—that was a religious war if you dig deep enough and think about it, you know. The Germans were killing the Jews. So, now we have another big religious war going. Somebody said there's five billion, what, Muslims, against, I think, two billion Catholics and Protestants. And they say we're infidels and they're going to kill us.

**Meyer:** Some of them say, yeah.

**Brown:** So, what can you do? Now like Bush says, Let's go over there and kill them first. Don't let them get over here and kill us in our country. We've been very fortunate in having all the wars over there. But we've had accidents over here, like 9/11. That was a terrible thing. We haven't had a full-blown war in this country.

**Meyer:** Do you remember when you were in Metz, were you there for when they liberated it when the French came, were you there for any celebrations?

**Brown:** I haven't been back to any of the celebrations.

**Meyer:** I mean when you were going through.

**Brown:** Well, being in the infantry, you only took what you could carry [laughs]. So you travelled very light. So we were always pushing ahead. So we'd have to leave behind—in would be coming the occupational troops and the military police and all that crowd behind us. We would be on up ahead by that time. And a lot of times they would drop the paratroopers ahead of us. And then once we caught up with the paratroopers, they would go back, and we'd keep, the front keep going, you know.

**Meyer:** Yeah, some of the paratroopers, I remember talking to some D-Day guys who had clickers. When you were coming up to the paratroopers, how would you know they were there? Or would they come up to you?

**Brown:** They would come up to us. We would be coming into areas that they had already taken, you know. So they would go to the rear, and I guess they'd shoot them back to England or somewhere in the country there, and they'd load up again, I guess. Or retrain them, or give them more training, and they'd drop them again up ahead. But they would go first. We would come in behind them. And then all the rest of the troops would fall in ordnance, the artillery and everyone else would be pulling up behind the infantry.

**Meyer:** When you're walking around, when you're going out, I was going to say, what's a usual day like? Do you see a lot of people, or just your buddies around you?

**Brown:** Just your buddies around you. I was a squad leader, so I saw my eight to ten men all the time, with me. Once and a while the lieutenant would come down and give me orders on what to do and where to go. Like, he come up one night and told us—I think we were on the Rhine or one of the rivers—and he says, “I want you to walk that bank tonight and see if you can draw fire.” And of course he got back in his jeep and went on back.

So I told my squad, I said, “The first one of you that sticks your head above that mountain, I’m going to shoot you. You can go up there and look over and see if you see anything. But as far as getting up and walking that dike, you ain’t going to walk that dike, because you’re going to get shot.”

[TIME: 34:57]

**Meyer:** [to David] You know what he means? Yeah, to draw fire. I know, they get in their jeeps, they drive away.

**Brown:** [laughs] Yeah. But I was in charge once he left out of there. Because I had my men with me, and he was giving me the orders, what to do.

**Meyer:** So Buckholtz, his name, B-U-C-K-H-O-L-

**Brown:** H-O-L-Z or H-O-L-T-Z.

**Meyer:** H-O-L-Z or T-Z What was his first name?

**Brown:** I can’t think of Buck’s first name. Some of them said maybe it was William.

**Meyer:** Where was he from?

**Brown:** He was from the Pittsburgh area. Coal mine district.

**Meyer:** And he got captured during that month that you were away, after you got hit.

**Brown:** He got captured about a week before I got back. And then I asked about him. They said, “The only thing we’ve got of Buckholtz is his shoes.” But Buck always traveled with his raincoat, and he kept that on his belt. And the rest of us done throw that stuff away because we were traveling light, we weren’t hauling a whole bunch of junk. Because you on the move the whole time. The only thing you carried was the bare essentials. But Buck, he carried whatever they told him to carry, you know. They said, “Take your raincoat with you,” he’d have his raincoat.

**Meyer:** Oh, boy. Well, anything else come to mind? Are you leaving today?

**Brown:** Yes, I live in Virginia Beach so we’ll leave right after lunch, I guess. Right after noon.

**Meyer:** This is where your wife's people are from, right?

**Brown:** She was born in Rocky Mountain, North Carolina. And she's of Greek descent. Then she moved back to Newport News—their father was always in the restaurant business. And I was farming until I got out of my teen years and got out of high school. And I was down on the farms in North Carolina, raising tobacco. Big tobacco farmers.

**Meyer:** I wanted to ask you, when you went into the service, what did your parents have to say? I mean, what was the situation?

**Brown:** Well, my mother and father and sister and my brother, they were all working. My brother was working at the shipyard, an electrician. And my sister was a secretary, and my mother was doing secretarial work, although she majored in music and she taught piano and organ both. But during the war I don't think they had much use for the piano and the organ player, so she went to work for the government in the secretarial work. And my father, he was a carpenter doing carpentry work for the different contractors building the shipyards up and building all around the area. And the housing, and what have you.

And after the war, I'm in business with two of my sons now. His [grandson David's] father, and Ronald, his uncle. They are in business together under the Brown Building Corporation. My older son was in the construction business, but he now is in the automobile, he owns a used car business.

**Meyer:** David, you've now heard this much. Do you have any other, before we finish, do you have any other questions?

**David:** Did you get many letters from home?

**Brown:** Yes, I got letters from home, but it would be on the little fliers, like where they just fold them over and stick them, and I'd get some every now and then, yeah.

**Meyer:** How were they delivered? Was it like someone would yell "Mail call" or what?

**Brown:** Yeah, they'd have mail call, and we would, whenever they caught up with us. After we got into combat, they would be few and far between then, because they couldn't keep up with it, you know. We'd go to the post office box, New York, New York, zip, you know, coded. But it would eventually get to us.

So, my sons, I had one go in service, and the other three boys have been in the business with me, or they're in business by themselves. And I started a company and his father and my other son are running it. So, I'm out. I'm out, and I go in and pick up the mail and say, howdy doody, and that's about my job.

**Meyer:** What did you think of the service today?

**Brown:** I thought it was very good. Very good service. And my son and I were the host for this one.

**Meyer:** Oh, you did a wonderful job.

**Brown:** Of course, you know, Bob is in charge of this thing, you know.

**Meyer:** It's a lot of work.

**Brown:** We're on page 37 in the bulletin, in the book.

**Meyer:** Oh, look at you. Well, that's great. Oh, there you are. Oh, okay. I remember seeing all of you around. Oh, here's mine. Your remarkable stories. So that's nice.

**Brown:** I had them all over Friday night because it was my birthday. Eighty-second birthday. So all my sons came over Friday night, and we had the birthday cake here and the whole bit.

**Meyer:** Nice time. Mr. Brown, happy birthday. And thanks a lot.

**Brown:** Thank you.

**Meyer:** Let me get your address, or a place to send this.

**Brown:** All right, 421 Cedar Lane, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452.

**Meyer:** Okay. This is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer. Company H. Ending the interview with Joseph C. Brown, Company E, 378th. Thanks a lot, Mr. Brown.

**Brown:** You're very welcome.

**Meyer:** And also here in the room is his grandson—

**Brown:** David.

**David:** David C. Brown.

**Meyer:** What's the C stand for?

**David:** Carlisle, just like—

**Brown:** My middle name.

**Meyer:** Joseph Carlisle Brown and David Carlisle Brown. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

[TIME: 42:22]

**End Interview.**

Brown, Joseph; Staff Sergeant; Company E/378th/95th WWII