

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Veteran's Name: Anthony Duno

Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

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[Recording begins with interview in process; Anthony Duno's daughter Nancy is also present. Near the end, a second unidentified daughter is also there.] [Per wishes of the late Mr. Duno's daughters, a few edits and clarifications have been made]

Anthony Duno: ...At the suggestion of our company commander, Eberlee (PH), who was a very highly decorated guy. Silver Star, Distinguished Service Cross. And it was when we left Britain's and Canadian's part of the situation and moved across, if you remember correctly, and we were making our way there. And it was one of the situations that was different from the rest of the 95th, in that we no longer were part of that action. And what really got us, or me, was that we found ourselves closer to a little part of Germany that needed correction from the standpoint that they paid these guys the lowest rank in the British and Canadian army. What did they call them?

Nancy: You told me they called them Batman.

Duno: Batman. That was the first time we heard Batman. What the eff is a Batman? Batman is the lowest rank in the British and Canadian armies. And these Canadian, American, British armies, I should say, were distinct from anything else.

David Meyer: Were what?

Duno: It was distinct from any kind of other activity going on. Because when they went around, the Brits and the Canadians, taking inventory of all the stuff, and they fed them tea...

Nancy: The guns stopped, right? You said the guns stopped?

Duno: Yeah. It just amazed us. Everything seemed to slow down.

Meyer: So they stopped for tea?

Duno: They stopped for tea, and not only tea – a little bit of [makes sound].

Meyer: Really? A little bit of, like, brandy?

Duno: Not brandy.

Nancy: Scotch?

Duno: Not scotch.

And it was completely strange to us, because it was a different part of the 95th Division. This must be understood ...

Nancy: Excuse me, daddy-

Duno: from its inception.

Nancy: So part of you guys stayed with Patton, and you guys joined —?

Duno: Exactly. Exactly. In fact what was going on was Patton was told that he could go so far but not all the way in Czechoslovakia. And he was warned not to exceed this situation. He could stop at that point, period, no more. And we didn't have that problem.

Meyer: Because you'd been split off from Patton?

Duno: We'd been split off, and we were, like I say, that's where Metz ...

Nancy: Wait, after Metz you split off.
But you were talking about Neuss. Neuss with the school?

Meyer: Yeah, is that a different story, or is that—

Nancy: **That's that ..** That's the story where you and Stevens (PH) went around, you told Eberlee.

Duno: Yeah, we said, "Look, there's a situation that we have right now, boss. Eberlee." We said, "See that thing up there? They're pounding the crap out of us and we need to go around them. And if we get around them, we can climb our way around, up, and dump the stuff on top of them."

[TIME 4:30]

Meyer: Now the thing pounding you, was that an artillery piece?

Duno: It was an anti-aircraft. An anti-aircraft they were using. Kicked the shit out of us.

Nancy: And where were these Nazis? Was it in a building?

Duno: It was a place. Take a hill. Put these guys on top of the hill, dropping all these bombs. And find yourself in the situation where you're being beat up. Not just beat up, you're being --. So much so that -- I'm going to change the subject for just a little bit.

We drew for a leave.

And I was lucky to get a ticket to go to London. And I was given directions on where to go -- not too far from Piccadilly Circus. So I reported to this place, it was on the top floor of an apartment building. And when I got there the person in charge said [puts on a British accent], "I'm sorry sir, you are not in the right place, you see. What you must do is continue walking down the street here, toward Piccadilly Circus. Not very far from here, sir. And when you get there, present this document to them and they will award you the right to spend the night there, you see. Do you understand?"

I said "well that's pretty simple." So I get there, I went on the town, I had something like 20 pounds in my pocket, which was a hell of a lot of money in those days, and I'm walking toward Piccadilly Circus and there was a blackout. I mean you couldn't see your shoes, everything was so goddamn black. In fact, I slipped at one point and found myself in a bar with five pounds in my hand.

Yeah. And I bought the guys a drink.

And they thought I was-- "Chap, why don't you come back here again and make this a habit of yours. That's an awful lot of money, you know. We're not trying to take it away from you. We adore the Yanks." And all that kind of shit [laughs].

So they did, and I went to this other place which wasn't very far. Again, top floor. It was a little past Piccadilly Circus. And I heard about one o'clock in the morning something shaking. Get up in the morning, and have breakfast and she says, "Oh sir, you're the lucky one, aren't you? You see, the Germans -- ." And this is 1944, you would think the war was getting ready to end. She said, "You see, the Germans now have resorted to missiles. Missiles." And the missiles are-- soundproofing to speak of, you didn't know what was happening. All you heard was a big crash. And she said, "And that's exactly what happened. Now I'm not saying that you could have been injured..."

Nancy: In the first building that you went to.

Duno: Yes. And she said that the possibility is that you would have been wounded or killed, she said. I said, "Holy shit."

Meyer: Holy cow.

Duno: So that's that part of it.

[TIME 8:05]

Nancy: Oh, so after Saarlautern you and some members of the 379th G Company?

Duno: G Company left that area.

Nancy: And went to? To Belgium and to Holland.

Duno: Yes. And?

Nancy: Luxembourg.

Duno: Luxembourg. I mean we took a big chunk away. And let's not forget the fact that these missiles were causing all kinds of problems.

Nancy: Even to you on the front.

Duno: Yes.

Nancy: You crossed the bridge into Germany.

Duno: Right. And what we did with Germany was, it was this chunk of land. When Holland was invaded by the Germans it was no mercy. They took one city, the name of the city I've been trying to remember.

Nancy: I think it was Rotterdam, wasn't it?

Duno: She knows. Rotterdam. They bombed the shit out of Rotterdam with the German aviator that was so proud. Goering. His name is Goering. So he was so proud of the whole situation because he was bombing the shit out of the city. And it contained all of the food that Holland had. They were just scooping up the stuff and stealing it.

[Break]

Meyer: What did you think of your commanding officers?

Duno: Fantastic. I was very lucky I had some good guys. They were very good to work for, and it was a pleasure to be with them.

Meyer: That's what people say about you, by the way.

Duno: Really? A stinker like me?

Meyer: A stinker like you. They say they learn a lot, and that you give them what you need. And that you always have their back.

Duno: Well I'm happy to hear that.

Meyer: Before you begin just let me ask you some basic questions. Where were you born?
[10:14]

Duno: I was born in New York City, in the Bronx.

Meyer: In the Bronx?

Duno: Yes. There's only one. The Bronx.

Meyer: I know. And what's your birth date?

Duno: Thirteen June '25.

Meyer: Thirteen June '25. Where in the Bronx?

Duno: You don't know where the Bronx [is]?

Nancy: No, *where* in the Bronx?

Meyer: No, *where* in the Bronx? I know the Bronx

Duno: 1908 Prospect Ave. (*corrected later by Nancy – 2141 Prospect Ave*)

Meyer: I know that.

Duno: Do you really?

Meyer: Yes, I drove a taxi for seven and a half years in New York.

Duno: Oh! That's great [laughs]! And I need to interrupt if I can. This guy, he was a Jewish guy, had a grocery store. And we didn't have too much money, and my mom in particular would go up to him and scrub the floors. And for that she would get day-old bread. Not fresh bread. Day old bread.

Right. Yeah, and they were very, very poor. And, like I say, I remember one incident took place with my mom scrubbing floors.

When a guy came in and he said, to the owner of the store, a Jewish guy. "I have a document here," he says. "It is a graduate degree from CCNY."

“Graduate,” he says. Played it up. “I’m not looking for money, but if you could give me some food or something that I can take.”

And the grocery owner said, he says, “I find it interesting that you have this document which is I’m sure wonderful, but I can’t do anything for you.”

I don’t know whatever happened to this guy but I wouldn’t surprise me if he caused some difficulty to himself, because he was really... Grief. For the worst of all to get something.

And my mom, as I say, had to live on nothing but scrubbing the floors.

And she was a diabetic. My mom was a diabetic. And the very first time I met her with my wife, Ellie (PH), who by the way was the most wonderful lady in the whole world, that’s a different story. So she’s a diabetic, like I said. I met my wife and [did something with the injection]. And my wife said, “What the heck was that all about?”

I said, “My mom is a diabetic. And she takes care of it every second of the day.” And after the shock was over ...

[14:00] [Interrupted by Mr. Vittiglio, another friend, coming to say hello. Side conversation in English and Italian]

Mr. Vittigli (male voice): I have a very good report about you. A very good report. This guy’s riding high, man.

Meyer: He is riding high.

[more small talk]

[More small talk, kidding.]

[15:25]

Meyer: So you’re born in ’25. So when Pearl Harbor is attacked, you’re 16 years old.

Duno: Yeah, I was.

Meyer: What were you doing when you heard about it?

Duno: Well, I was just in high school.

Meyer: You were in high school?

Duno: Yes. And the nice thing about—well I don't know about nice thing—but I was in Public School 92, I think. And Pearl Harbor...oh, so I joined, not the state guard, but a notch from the state guard in New York. And I did it because a friend of mine, his name is George Duncceve (PH), and Duncceve said, "Tony, how would you like to make a few bucks? Just let's join the New York State Guard." State guard. One notch below that.

Duno: City, or something like that. And he was right. You go there and you attend meetings. In fact at one point we went to maneuvers for God's sakes. [laughs]

Meyer: Did you?

Duno: In the city!

Meyer: Where? Van Cortlandt Park?

Duno: Oh, anyplace over there. You were not a state or a country thing. It was just a guy that had a few bucks in his pocket which I was happy to get. And I kept on trying to delay myself. And I think you saw the documents I had where I was warned, they said. "When you finish high school you will immediately report yourself to the authorities because you're in!" [laughs]

Duno: So I went on maneuvers somewhere in state. And like I say, I made a few shepherds for me. George took care of me on that one.

Duno: Yeah. The rifles we fought with were not the modern rifles. They could have been World War I rifles. And I was practicing. Jabbing the thing in to see [laughs]

Oh yeah, we had a meeting at nighttime which paid us a few bucks.

Meyer: And that's before, is that before Pearl Harbor started?

Meyer: You're 16 when Pearl Harbor starts. And then you join this other organization, and you're getting a few shekels.

Duno: Yeah.

Meyer: What was going on when you joined the army?

Duno: Well that was something else. Full-time army. I'm going into one of my first exercises. West Virginia. West Virginia. Wintertime. And if you've been in that region—

Meyer: I've been there.

Duno: So going through the drills. I get there and our trainers were from some southern state.

[TIME 18:32]

Nancy: Tell us about the West Virginia maneuvers.

Duno: I am. I'm going to tell him. So I was having a little bit of a problem because these guys were from the 7th Division, and they were—they used to call us Yanks.

Meyer: Because they were from the south.

Duno: The trainers, there were half a dozen of them. And they took a look at my little body and the one guy says [speaks in southern accent], “A Yank can't do something like that.”

And the other guy says, “No excuses, if he's going to be in the infantry he's got to pack that [black?].” I got a whole bunch of crap on my back, it must have weighed 150 pounds. I'm not shitting you. I mean I did it, and my back and feet were just ready to crumble. And these guys didn't They used to call me the Yank. “The Yank, if he has to do the job.” I said, what the is this Yank shit?

Then they said, “You ain't one of us. You ain't one of us. You're a Yank.”

I take back to my barracks and I said, “Can you understand why we're being called Yanks, and these guys are something precious?” That's the way it is.

So anyway, the day or reckoning came along and they said, okay.

There was six guys.

And they said, “Put the pack on his back.” Geez. [unclear – 150 lbs?]) on my back.

And I said, “Geez, it's pretty heavy.”

They said, “We know it's heavy, Yank. But you all going to have to do that whether you like it or not, Yank.”

I go back to my [outfit] and say, “Can you ever stand in your line with this?”

And they said, “Well, there's a distinction between them and us, because they really believe that you're not one of us.”

So I put this thing on my back, and I prayed to God, I'm not kidding you. I said, “God, please give me the strength I need to do this against these guys who are accusing me of being a Yank.” And I started to move this pack on my back. [Snow? Snow?] And the more I pushed the stronger I got coming up those hills.

I got back. And they said, “Hey, the Yank did it, ha ha!”

So anyway I get back and they say, “Well, the Yank did it...”

And it backfired on me.

Because when I came back after this crazy situation, the Yank, I was a success story. They got into the big guys. The big guys that couldn't make it. And they said, "If little Yank can do it, why can't you?"

Nancy: Okay, so. Before you got to West Virginia, though, when you got drafted, weren't you headed to ASTP? Where was that?

Duno: ASTP?

Nancy: The ASTP? What school were you headed for?

Duno: It was, God, I can't think.

Meyer: Forty-two?

Nancy: No. It was 1944, and you had passed some kind of a test or something?

Meyer: Oh, yeah. Were you part of ASTP?

Duno: Yes. Exactly. I was on my way to Penn State because I passed this damn test, if you could imagine that. On a train going from Fort Dix to Penn State. The train stops in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. And it's snowing like hell. We get off the train and a Major starts taking over. [TIME 23:32]

He says, "Men, I got good news for you and bad news for you. Let me give you the bad news first. All service schools have been cancelled. Now you ask the question, 'Why are they being cancelled?' Because you dumb fools, we need infantry soldiers and you're infantry soldiers, and that's where you're going to be going, to Harrisburg"

Indiantown Gap. And the nice thing about that was I touched on it today. Going to New York City was easy. Take a bus there, two hours, and you're fine.

You had to get approval. And that wasn't easy. Of course the business about trying to get a commission was out of order

And this major says, "But look at it this way. You'll be enjoying the life of having such a situation like this. And you have a very nice name. It's Captain Gilhouse."

So they put me in that school. And it paid off for me because after all this drill crap I came through, I wanted to get a three-day pass, which was a very difficult thing. You had to do the drill, chain of command, all the way up the line. And the first couple lieutenants were easy. But the toughest guy of all was the first sergeant. Because the first sergeant had the responsibility to make us infantry soldiers. And his responsibility was just awesome. And he was going through a drill when I asked for an extra-day pass. And they warned me. They said, "You'll go through except for the first-sergeant."

So he said, "Damn."

So Gilhouse walks out of his office and says, "What's going on here, first sergeant?"

"Well, Duno here, you know, I'm trying to get these guys organized and it's going to be very difficult. The infantry," ba, ba, ba.

"Now," he says, "Sergeant, don't you think he deserves something like that? Now I know it's rather strange for me to say this, but..." "Oh, all right." (laughter)

Nancy: So you got to go to see your mom.

Duno: So I got to see her, yeah.

Nancy: And your brother was already gone? Both brothers?

Duno: I had a brother [Michael] that was killed in the Pacific. And my other brother—

Meyer: What was his name?

Duno: Tommy. Thomas.

Duno: Thomas was kind of an oddball. (laughs) He didn't want to get in the army so he immediately joined the navy. So he became a boxer.

Meyer: He became a boxer?

Duno: Yeah. That was his, because he was a damn good boxer. You know, it's like a football game today. If you do your stuff right they build you up. And they used to build him up all the time. And he'd say, "Jesus, I'm having a ball here. Navy, all I'm doing is punching people out, you know?"

Meyer: Does the navy keep him out of the service so that he could box?

Duno: Yeah. And he was having a helluva ball.

Meyer: Sure he was.

Nancy: Well, but he was also pressured to win.

Duno: Yeah, they kind of backed off on him over that, too. Because he—

Nancy: Yeah. He always won.

Duno: Yeah. He just couldn't make it today. He left California somewhere in some little tug boat or something, I don't what the hell he was doing, but he would do anything else not to go to war.

[TIME 27:51]

Nancy: And now Michael was over than you, so he must have been drafted.

Duno: Oh yes, Michael was drafted in the Pacific.

Nancy: The India Burma campaign.

Meyer: Oh, no!

Duno: He passed, yeah.

Meyer: I'm sorry.

Duno: Didn't make it. And so we had a situation where it's amazing if you were a good boxer, you were in. But if you weren't a good boxer you were out and they didn't know what the hell to do with you. Put you on a small little boat someplace.

Nancy: Tommy and you were one year apart.

Meyer: Yeah, one year apart.

Nancy: So then after Indiantown Gap, is that when you had the maneuvers?

Meyer: West Virginia?

Duno: West Virginia, how could I, yeah, we talked about it already.

Nancy: So then you went from West Virginia--

Duno: Well, hang on a second. When I got back from the war, I went with my sister, brother, sister--How many boys? Three boys.

-Nancy: No, four.

Duno: Oh yeah, one of my brothers had flat feet. So they wouldn't take him. Even before the war when he tried to enlist they wouldn't take him. Things were tough in those days, you know? So he finally got a job as an underwater welder. =

That was an extraordinary job he had. And I went to visit. He had an apartment in New York City – and his check was 395 dollars a week.

Meyer: Holy cow!

Duno: Put that into what the dollar was now.

Nancy: I mean, what was your paycheck in the army?

Duno: About \$42 or some crap like that? So he was a bit of a – not too smart guy.

But he made the money. And when I did leave the army—well, that's something else all together. We'll talk about that in just a minute. So I say he had all that money there. At that time I had a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. So he says, "C'mon, I'll take you to a drink." Biggest mistake I made in my life.

He takes me to a bar where my two beautiful medals are in as nice cases they have. He's putting them around for everybody else to [put on], and they get crap all over them. I could have killed that guy.

Nancy: What was it like when you said goodbye to your mom?

Duno: It was really tearful.

Nancy: Did you have to say goodbye to her when you got that three-day pass? Is that when you—

Duno: Oh, yeah.

Meyer: What was it like? Was she crying?

Duno: She was more than just crying. What happened was when I got back from the army, I hope you're not offended by me saying this, but I was on the verge of marrying Ellie. And you had to have documents. So I went to the Catholic church, and I said, "I'm here, I'm going to be married," ba, ba, ba.

And they said, "Mr. Duno, we find no evidence of you making the necessary contributions to the church."

So I says, "Well, I was over--"

"We don't care, we'll find you no matter where you're at."

Boy, it really pissed me off. So I gave them the money. And I decided that's going to be it as far as I'm concerned. To hell with this church, if I can say that. And I did. I didn't pay them any more than I could at the time.

Nancy: You were talking about when you went to war and had to say goodbye to Grandma Duno? What was that like?

Duno: Yeah, she was really in bad shape. ...

Nancy: Because Tommy and Michael were already gone, right?

[TIME 32:05]

Duno: They had a Catholic church, like I said. But it was a distance away and you had to take a taxi cab to get there. And they wanted more money, of course. So I said, "Look, I am not going to go through this. There's going to have to be a solution for this problem."

And there was a church, a Catholic church not too far away. Not farther than that was a Black church. So I said, "What's wrong with that church?"

And they said, "Nothing."

But [someone said to his mother], "Madame, you cannot do this, because it's a Black church."

And I shall never forget [what she said]: "I don't give a damn if it's green, black, blue, or purple. I am going there with you, like it or not." She did.

Nancy: So she left the Catholic church to become a Protestant. An Italian-American woman—shocking.

Duno: She came back and she came to me and said to me "Nino." Now, if you are Italian and your name is Antonio, Nino is your name. If you like it or not. Don't ask me why it's that way but that's the way it is.

So she said, "Nino, I want you to come with me the next time I go to the Black church. You have a good voice."

So I go there, and I'm getting in there, and they're singing a song [sings], "What a friend we have in Jesus, Jesus is my friend indeed. I know him."

Meyer: Sure.

Duno: And she cried, and they invited me to come back. And I sang that song, by the way, during my--

Nancy: At your retirement ceremony. I know, that was politically scary. You did it.

Duno: So what happened after that?

Meyer: So you were visiting her. You had a three-day pass, you visited her. Then you come back to Indiantown Gap. Then do they send you to a, don't you disembark from Boston, someplace in Boston?

Duno: Exactly. That's where we left. We left from Boston with a huge ship. During its commercial day it was called the United States.

Nancy: SS United States. But during your day was it called the West Point? Or no?

Duno: Well, let's take one step at a time. When they did that, the ship was huge. And down in the bilges, of course, were eight slots where you slept. And you had to make your way up there like I did, you had to sneak up to get some fresh air.

Nancy: Were you ever seasick?

Duno: And as the ship left Boston, it was moving along very rapidly. And we were – there was a dirigible above us. And that was the prime stuff we had as protection, if you can imagine something like that. And after two and a half days it was gone. We were by ourselves. But that ship was charging along. In those days I guess they had the ability to do that.

Meyer: And it was zig-zagging?

Duno: Zig-zagging all over the place by itself.

Meyer: By itself.

Duno: No protection.

Nancy: No coverage.

Meyer: No protection.

Nancy: And that was, so the West Point became the SS United States, which is the ship that we went back on when we were kids.

Duno: I'm sorry, what did you say?

Nancy: When we were kids, we used to get—

Duno: Yeah, oh, yeah. The government subsidized these ships. This is after the war, and I'm a civilian now. At [Ramstein?]. And I wanted to take the kids on leave.

Duno: And the personnel folks said, "You know, you can take a boat if you like." And boats were not the thing in those days. Planes were the way they wanted to travel. They couldn't get people to travel on planes. So we got ourselves—

Duno: So we took this beautiful boat, first class. And I'll never forget one night when we came back after a party, and I had a hunger for a steak. [unclear] "Yes, sir?" "I'm hungry." "So, how about a steak?" Bellboy comes [with a huge steak]. Oh, man, I thought I was in heaven. (laughter) Geez. It was just absolutely, and we landed-

Meyer: So the trip you're talking about is also on the USS United States.

Duno: Yes.

Meyer: So did you recognize that that was the boat that you went over in?

Duno: Recognize it? Like hell, because this was first class travel.

Nancy: So did you never, did you ever go down and say, "I was here. I was there."

Duno: Not when I was on the boat, no.

Meyer: But you knew it was the same ship.

Duno: Oh yeah, absolutely. And the fact that the captain would have a right to, not a right, but the captain, once a night they have had a captain's—

Duno: call. And the family was out there, enjoying themselves, and I was having a ball. Traveling by boat never bothered me. But I...

Nancy: Not me, Patty got sick on a lady's fur coat.

[37:45]

Duno: No not me,, Patty, my older daughter. She, unfortunately, was wandering around and ended up throwing up on top of a woman having a brand-new fur coat. [laughs] And boy.

Meyer: So you go over and you—do you have a question? =

Nancy: No, I was just wondering where. So you left Boston—

Duno: Yeah.

Nancy: To go to—

Meyer: To go to Liverpool, or Southampton? Or where?

Duno: Southampton.

Meyer: Southampton. All right.

Duno: Southampton we landed at. I'll never forget when we landed at Southampton, the plane (?) was unloading some stuff, one of which was a crate of oranges. And it was like they were taking gold away. We ran after these oranges. It just goes to show you that things weren't that great in Britain.

Nancy: So did you eat well, I'm assuming, on the bus? Ship. Ship.

Duno: Oh yeah. It was just first class, Nancy.

Nancy: Well, I mean going over for the war.

Meyer: Going over for the war.

Nancy: How many people were on that boat?

Meyer: Troop ship

Nancy: On the West Point. The troop.

Duno: The commercial liner itself, as I said, wasn't too popular for people those days. They all wanted to travel by air.

Nancy: Yeah. But I mean when you went over to participate in the war with the army.

Meyer: With the army.

Duno: Oh, shit. It was tons and tons of people.

Nancy: And then you get off the boat and it's a totally different country. What did you think about the way they were talking in England? What did you think about the way they were talking in England?

Duno: Gosh, it was, "Well I say, old chap." You know, that kind of crap.

Duno: Well, it was good because it was first class travel, which I liked, but then we landed there.

Nancy: Did you do training there anymore?

Duno: When I met, I went to visit my sister.

She had a husband who was a fantastic guy. I took a streetcar there. And I got to the apartment they had, didn't have the car, took a trolley car. And when I got there, I said, well I guess I'll have to take— He said, "No, take my car." I didn't have a license.

So, his wife went ballistic. She said, "You can't do that, he doesn't have a license." He said, "I don't give a damn, here's my [keys], take it. Go." Oh, and then I hitchhiked.

Duno: From Camp Shelby.

Meyer: After the war.

Duno: After the war. You had a choice. They'd give you a check, take a train or what do you want to do, or just hitchhike. I said, "I'll hitch."

Duno: I'm hitchhiking. And I stopped in somewhere,

It was Tennessee,. And I didn't have a coat, I just had this. And some guy said, "Hey man," he says, "you want something warmer than that." He gave me his overcoat. Just like that.

Nancy: And who did you hitchhike with? Did you hitchhike with passenger cars? People that drove cars, or people that drove trucks?

Duno: On, no. they were just commercial—

Nancy: A truck? Truck people?

Duno: That's right.

Meyer: Truck people would pick you up more often?

Duno: Yeah. They gave us nice—I mean, [unclear]

Nancy: Oh, I know what I was going to ask you. This is totally off topic. So, Paul Steinfeld (PH).

Duno: Paul Steinfeld. Paul Steinfeld was my good friend, and coming back from...

Nancy: Did you meet him at Indiantown Gap?

Duno: Yes.

Nancy: That's how long you knew him?

Duno: Paul Steinfeld, Jewish guy, a good friend of mine.

Nancy: They're still friends.

Duno: He was wounded.

Nancy: We can't hear you. This gentleman's voice is very loud. [over the voice of another man in the room, who is in a separate conversation, speaking loudly]. So I just was wondering, you met him at Indiantown Gap.

Duno: Yes.

Nancy: So you knew him throughout the entire training?

Duno: Yes. I was there when he was wounded.

Meyer: What's his name?

Nancy: Paul Steinfeld. He was in your company, right? Company G?

Duno: And I made some foolish comments like, when it was baseball time. I said, "Paul, just think, when was the," ball time, baseball time. I said, "Paul, just think you're going to see the Yanks and all."

Duno: And he said, "I don't give a shit about the Yanks."

Meyer: That's okay. It is distracting. I have a question. You told a story, this is just specific thing. This is the story that you told when you, I think it's after the war, when you're in charge of moving prisoners. Different things. And you had an [unclear]

Duno: Yes I did.

Meyer: Would you tell that story?

Duno: Yes. I will. So yeah, I was going--

[TIME: 43:17]

End Track 1.

Begin Track 2.

(in progress)

Duno: It was a ...

Nancy: It was in Virginia wasn't it?

Duno: A 5,000-tonner, or some crap like that.

Meyer: Yeah, sure.

Nancy: When you were in the occupation forces, Daddy, and you left, I think, from Virginia, right?

Duno: Yes.

Nancy: And where was that – was it Newport News?

Duno: I went to New York with this little crappy boat. And interesting story, I think. I'm on the boat going there, and it was packed with German prisoners. And they were well organized enough. And we're going across. And I was a sergeant and my boss was a major. A West Pointer that had no interest in what the hell he was doing. He would say to me, "Why don't you take it over?" I just want to [unclear] that kind of shit.

Anyway, during the crossing, the captain of the ship calls in the army guy and says, "Look here, this German officer has been bugging the hell out of me about he wants to talk to somebody about a trip." And I said, "That's not my job. My job is to drive the boat." He says, "My job is to drive the boat, not to get into politics."

So word gets down to the German lieutenant-colonel. So he makes his complaint. And my army guy says, "Sonny, I'm giving you the job to talk to this guy."

And in those days you could carry guns around with no problem. I had two. I had a Walter and a Luther.

Nancy: Lugar, yeah.

Duno: So as I'm went in to see this guy, the German, and he was wearing kind of a—

Meyer: Collar?

Duno: Yes, the collar on his shirt, around his shirt, was an SS collar. [all talking] So he came to me and he says [speaking in German accent], "I asked to speak to officer, not 'Unter Officer" (*under officer.*)

I said, "I don't give an eff if you're talking for the general of the world." First of all, I ripped the thing from my side. I said, "See this gun, my Luger? I will kill you, and I will be exonerated because you were part of the group that killed 242 Americans at during the Battle of the Bulge. And this is my justification, you son of a bitch."

I was going to kill him.

"D-d-d-d-don't, don't, don't, don't, Geneva Convention."

"You showed no Geneva Convention, you son of a bitch, when you killed those people. And I have proof. The proof is right over here." (laughs)

He was shaking. He should have shook. Because I was getting ready to kill the bastard. He was quiet as a lamb after that. He hid down in the bilges. You couldn't get to him because he was so goddamn afraid, which he should have been, the bastard.

This is where, you may remember this incident took place.

Nancy: Malmedy

Duno: No, no, Malmedy. I took them there, by the way, to Malmedy.

Meyer: Did you?

Duno: And he was just a little Nazi bastard, trying to get away with murder, basically.

Duno: So, anyway, my good captain [Gilhouse], every Christmas he sends me a beautiful ..

Nancy: Oh, yeah, Gillhouse, yeah. And you and Paul write to each other. I found lots of letters from Paul.

Duno: Yeah in fact, every Christmas, he [Gilhouse] sends me a beautiful Christmas card.

Nancy: Gillhouse.

Duno: A wonderful guy. And he tells me what he's done, and he has problems, that kind of stuff.

Duno: It's some small little village, some place in Montana or something like that.

Nancy: But you're right, Paul Steinfeld lives in New York. And you were somehow good buddies. Good New York buddies, right?

Duno: I was going to say something too about Paul Steinfeld. When he was wounded, I got there pretty fast. And I said, "Paul, just think, baseball season's coming on. You'll be there just in time to see the Yanks play."

And he said, "I don't give a shit about the Yanks right now."

Nancy: Were his wounds really bad, Daddy?

Duno: Yeah, and he's just a wonderful guy.

Nancy: You told me something about you were in the basement of a French house. Is that right? Is that where he got wounded?

Duno: Oh yeah, yeah. We took over a place in a dungeon more or less, a place where we bedded ourselves down. And it was quite nice in there. I mean quite nice, it was comfortable. And I had a nice chat with the owner of the property. This is after the war, by the way.

Nancy: Oh, I thought you were talking about Saarlautern when you, when, I thought Paul was wounded—

Meyer: He was wounded?

Duno: So, yeah, but this was a little bit away from Saarlautern. But anyway, we did that, and apologized to him for any [damage] He, later on we went back there.

Duno: Yeah, and there was damage to the property, of course. And I was a little bit embarrassed to go back to this place. And the French, there was kind of like an embassy place.

Nancy: It was a consul, the consulate?

Duno: Yeah this piece of consulate in that region. And I was told that if you go to them you can find out where this place is. Which I did. And I went down there, and took a look at the property. The property's already been fixed.

Nancy: Oh, is that the chateau in Valfanion (PH)?

Duno: Yes, and he seemed to be a very nice chap. And I apologized. And he said, "You don't have to apologize." He says, "I only have one request." He says, "You people left the place in pretty good condition. I thank you for that. But someone put in the bottom over here of this wooden stove, this huge wooden stove, 'Iowa.' I am curious, who is Iowa?" (laughter)

I said, "It could be anybody!"

He said, "I left that one, I shellacked it, as you can see, as a souvenir of the American forces."

Meyer: Oh, that's great. You had told me, there was a story where you had gone out. And when you came back, they thought you'd been killed. You were lost. And you came back around. What's that story?

Duno: Yes.

Meyer: What's that story?

Duno: Okay, the story is this. I had to take a patrol. I was called into some patrol actions on the river. So I went out there. I tried to go out there. And I had at least 15 guys behind me. Big mistake on my part. I'm getting there to the river, it's about three o'clock in the afternoon. I turn around and my guys are not to be seen anywhere. They're hiding in the woods. For protection.

And I said, getting incoming. And there's about two and a half feet of snow. It's getting bad. I'm buried in snow. I can't do this much longer. I waited and waited and waited until it was dark enough for me to get the hell out of there. And made my way back to my position. And we had had a bit of a pillbox that we used for cover. I get back in there and I shall never forget what I heard. As I was walking into this place for cover, I heard, "Too bad about Tony. Pass the coffee. Eight woots (CK)."

I said, "You son of a bitch. My life is worth eight fucking woots (CK)? You sit on your asses? This ain't going to happen again. The next time, you first, me last."

Nancy: Wow. And that's the way it was after that?

Duno: That's the way it was. If you want to play games, we wouldn't play games. It was, anyway.

[TIME 9:21]

Nancy: You told me too that you guys had a rule that if someone died you couldn't talk about them but once?

Meyer: What was that?

Duno: Oh yeah, that was the rule. We used to call it the "Patton Rule." You don't want to talk about anybody that's killed in your own section...

Duno: You have one [chance], and after that's done, no more.

Meyer: So you can acknowledge it once?

Duno: And that's *finito*. You don't do that as far as he's concerned.

Meyer: Was that a superstition, or was that what Patton said to do?

Duno: That was what he wanted. He gave us a big speech. I think I told you about that.

Meyer: No, tell me about that.

Duno: Okay. He's giving us a big pitch about what we have to do in combat. And this was not in a very big ship.

Duno: We were going to England. And he gives us a pep talk. First of all, he makes his way around, and gets to a place where, he's immaculately dressed, beautifully dressed. Everything around him is just spot on. And he starts giving us his favorite, famous pep talk. And he said—I have a copy of it, by the way, the speech. And I am a little leery about passing it over to people who don't appreciate the language. (laughter)

And he just—his dress is perfect.

He gives us a real big whipper, and he tells us what he wants us to do to the Germans.

Meyer: To the Nazis.

Duno: Yes, the Nazis.

Meyer: Which is – do you remember any of the language?

Duno: Yeah, yeah. He says, "Don't let them get close to you." And he says, "Don't be afraid of anybody. They're more afraid of you are than you are of them." And all that kind of stuff.

Meyer: I heard one time, somebody heard him speak and said, "We're going to cut through them like goose shit through a tin funnel."

Duno: And that's just part of it.

Meyer: That's just part of it.

Duno: Yeah. He goes around, talks about, "Just think that someday after the war's over with, as you have your son on your knee, you'll say, 'Well, gee, isn't it nice that we're back over here now? The only thing I'm concerned about is what is it going to be, shit and ...'" Or something like that.

Nancy: Shoveling shit--

Duno: You've got a choice of what you do, you know. And we gave him a tremendous sendoff. Which he deserved, I think.

Nancy: So everybody liked him.

Duno: Yeah. And he, by the way, was the guy that was after Metz. People don't realize it. He was fighting. And it got to a point where it was becoming a bit useless. Because there were too many casualties to take over these goddamn Metz fortifications. And [General Omar] Bradley—by the way, you know a story about Bradley. Bradley worked for Patton. And then Bradley didn't like, he felt he was too much of a bravado, didn't like that.

Meyer: He was a showman.

Duno: But he tolerated it.

Nancy: Excuse me, did you think he was a showman? What did you think of him when you saw him?

Duno: I don't think he was. I think he was doing something that needed to be done under the circumstances.

Nancy: And that's what you thought, Tony, in 1944? You thought, this guy is my general and I'm going to do whatever he tells me?

Duno: Yeah, I had no compunction whatsoever about that. But Bradley, they switched, you know. Eisenhower hated Patton, because he was just a showman and all that kind of crap. And he put Bradley in front of him. And Bradley made a big mistake during the Battle of the Bulge, because Bradley's touch on it was that it's a small item, it's not very much to be concerned about. And Patton said, "I don't agree with him." He says, there's a lot of things. [TIME 15:28] He had excellent intelligence, Patton did.

Meyer: Yeah, so Patton knew.

Duno: He said, "This is going to be big-time stuff." And he apologized to Patton.

Meyer: Bradley did?

Duno: Yeah. But his big boss did not like him at all. And played a role in having him removed, by the way. Because he just didn't feel—and, you know, Patton said, that this guy wants to become the president. He really predicted that he is going to become the president. Because everything he'd done that was right was dismissed as being nothing. So the two of them were really having a kerfuffle.

Meyer: Oh, at loggerheads.

Duno: Yeah.

Nancy: Did you get any of that background, you didn't know any of that stuff when you were in the trenches fighting. You read about it, yeah.

Duno: Well no, I'm not at that level. I read about it later on.

Nancy: But did you ever see Patton after you saw him in England?

Duno: I think I got a chance to see him later on before the war ended. When one more little thing took place. I'll tell you, he had a way.

Nancy: Not everybody in your unit likes him.

Duno: He was not a popular guy, Nancy. And he just made his voice heard. In fact, funny about him, there was an article in our magazine, the 95th magazine, was that he was going to be visiting the 379th. He couldn't find the commander for the 379th.

Nancy: The commander. Yeah.

Duno: And the guy that was writing the article said, "I felt this to be very embarrassing for me, because I was told to find him." [laughter]. And he said, "It was the most terrible job I've ever had in my whole life, trying to find out where General Twaddle is, and he's not to be seen." [laughs]

Meyer: Oh, no!

Duno: Oh Jesus. And boy, he came, he didn't see him. He never had the time to see Twaddle. But we didn't, the 95th didn't last long on this business about trying to take those fortifications out. It was an impossible situation.

Meyer: So what did they do? They went around them, or what?

Duno: They tried as best they could to get in there, and get underneath the fortifications so they could sneak into there at night. And the casualty rate was very, very high.

Meyer: Now where were you then?

Duno: I was in the group trying to find out an opening, a way of getting in there.

Nancy: Which fort was that, though? Was it a fort in Metz?

Duno: Fortifications.

Nancy: I thought it was Fort Jeanne d'Arc.

Duno: Well, yeah, Nancy, there were a number of different fortifications.

Nancy: I was just wondering which one your unit was in.

Duno: Even Eisenhower—of course there was [unclear]—criticized him by saying, “George, people are being killed for nothing? What are you getting out of this?” And told him to stop it. So it was not a very good thing for Patton.

Meyer: So you were attacking the forts, and then did you go into Metz yourself?

Duno: Oh yeah. We went into Metz after all was said and done.

Meyer: Again, just for the recording, you were with which company?

Duno: G Company.

Meyer: G Company of which?

Duno: Three Seventy-ninth [379th].

Meyer: Did you go over the bridge in Metz?

Duno: A touch, I would say.

Meyer: A touch.

Duno: Because it wasn't dead on. Dead on was suicide. There was some good movements made, from my perspective. I mean, I was just a soldier, so I didn't have-

Nancy: Was that the first combat, if you will, that you experienced?

Duno: Oh, no! We didn't have to wait for Metz.

Nancy: So it was before Metz, too?

Meyer: When was your first experience?

Nancy: But before Metz, I remember you said that you got off the boat and you literally bumped into a guy that you grew up with in your neighborhood. [TIME 18:41]

Duno: Yeah, yeah.

Nancy: He'd already been there, right?

Duno: Yeah, but I forget names. Steinfeld of course as you know.

Nancy: Yeah, I don't remember that guy's name.

Meyer: I have a question. When you're in England and you go across, are you part of the Red Ball Express at all? [19:01]

Duno: Oh yeah. That was a part of it.

Meyer: Did you drive?

Duno: No, I didn't do that. Not all of it – there were just bits and pieces.

Meyer: Were you in the apple orchard waiting?

Duno: No, no, we picked up trains, trucks.

Meyer: The forty-and-eights?

Duno: Yeah, exactly. Forty-and-eights.

Meyer: And you'd go across.

Duno: And you just hoped and prayed that you were able to get going on it, because—

Meyer: Why?

Duno: --driving these things were not just a piece of cake, you know? Because you had to do a job, and the job could be as difficult as being—

Meyer: Sure, it's dangerous. Dangerous.

Nancy: You and Paul Steinfeld were in the forty-and-eights?

Duno: Who?

Nancy: You and Paul Steinfeld were in the forty-and-eights?

Duno: Yeah Paul Steinfeld was my buddy.

Nancy: Was it tight quarters in there?

Duno: Yeah, I mean you either had a chance of digging in your way--

Nancy: I remember you told me, but you weren't with horses, right?

Duno: No. No.

Nancy: No. But you were pretty close quarters with other men, right?

Duno: We, at one point, I'll never forget this, we got on to a train. Forty-and-fucking-eights. And I got in there, and the train left and it stopped, and it came back. And it left again. And it came back. And we were saying, "What the hell is going on here anyway?" They just couldn't get their shit together using trains, forty-and-eights.

Meyer: Oh, they couldn't?

Duno: So finally the train got choo-choo going on its way. But it wasn't a piece of cake. No, it was not as far as I could see, it was not, as I could see, there was not a big tremendous success with the forty-and-eights. Too many problems, too many breakdowns. Sheesh.

Meyer: But you made it to Nancy. Or where were you going? I heard that 95th goes and they replace the 5th or the 90th?

Duno: The 5th. The 5th was our more or less buddy division, if you would.

Meyer: Oh, "balless" (*interviewer mishears "more or less" as "ball less"*) buddy? What did you say?

Nancy: He said it was "more or less" our buddy division.

Meyer: Your buddy division.

Duno: The 5th Division. Because the 5th and we, the 95th, exchanged conditions and..

Meyer: And you took over their position?

Duno: Yeah, and they took over ours.

Meyer: Were you in foxholes?

Duno: Shit, yes, I was in foxholes. [laughs] I didn't know which way was up. You bet I was in foxholes. [21:56]

Meyer: Holy cow.

Duno: Oh yeah, that was not very pleasant.

Nancy: Did you have to dig your own foxhole, or do you go into somebody else's foxhole?

Duno: Well you try to do what you got, Nancy. If you have to, you dig, and just do the best you can just to keep covered.

Meyer: And that's outside of Metz, first foxholes?

Duno: It was not in Metz itself. Because Metz, from what I see, it was a failure. It was just too damn powerful to overcome. And no matter what we seemed to do, we just didn't seem to be able to make a lot of progress on this. Yeah, over a period of time, but.

Meyer: It took a while. I know Vince Geiger and whatever group they were, they were lucky. They--

Duno: His team was with the 379th I Company?

Meyer: I'm not sure. They're the ones who got General Kittel.

Duno: Oh yeah, yeah. [laughs] Yeah, there were a few of those things there.

Meyer: I'm going to skip to the future because Nancy told me that you got to witness one day of the Nuremberg Trials?

Duno: Yes, yes, I did in fact. I reenlisted because I couldn't find a job. I came back, expecting to go – there were two units here in the occupation forces; one was the 1st Division, the Big Red One; and the other was what they call the constabulary.

And the constabulary's job was to protect East from West in the occupation forces. Which was kind of silly because the Soviets had billions of people. We didn't have anywhere near that.

So when I got there they said, "You're not going into the Infantry."

"Really?"

"You're going to become a policeman."

I said, “What do I have to do with a policeman?”

“We’re going to put you in the courthouse.”

“Courthouse?”

“Yeah, the Nuremberg Courthouse.”

I say, “Interesting. What the hell’s that all about?”

“Well, that’s the way it is. We don’t need you to do that, we need—”

So, Goering was as close as I am [to you]. Marshall [Hermann] Goering.

Meyer: And I heard he was a pig. Arrogant.

Duno: He was a piece of shit. He was arrogant. He sat back like he owned everything. He giggled all the time. He would never admit that he did anything wrong. I was as close to him as I am to you. I looked at this bastard and I wished I didn’t. I just looked at him and I said to myself, you fat piece of shit. And there he was.

Nancy: Did he have...

Duno: ...and...and..

Nancy:... did Goering have the SS symbol on his jacket? Or he wasn’t SS, he was just German army?

Duno: Nancy, the guy that I am talking to you about was an SS soldier.

Nancy: I mean, did Goering have that on his—

Duno: Oh no, he sat back with a big, fat stomach and acted like he was gold. Like he was the big man. And he wasn’t the big man. As you know the story, that he committed suicide.

Meyer: What happened to the guy who helped him commit suicide?

Duno: Nothing!

Meyer: Nothing happened to the guy who helped him?

Duno: No, and that is a very interesting story that somehow it’s been—

Nancy: Buried.

Duno: It’s been just quieted. He got him things.

Meyer: Yeah. An American guard? Or who?

Duno: A lieutenant, a second lieutenant. He became friendly with Goering. And Goering apparently took care of him with trinkets he would give him, and fountain pens and all that kind of stuff. And he ended up killing himself.

Meyer: Smuggling in the stuff.

Duno: And he walked out of the place free as a lamb.

Nancy: Forever? I mean, they knew who he was and they didn't try him?

Duno: Nothing happened to him. Nothing.

Nancy: That's shocking.

Duno: And he... he wanted to be executed.

Nancy: Yeah.

Meyer: Yeah, sure.

Duno: And they would not let him. He wanted to be hanged. Wait a sec—no, no, he wanted to be shot.

Nancy: Goering did?

Duno: He wanted to be shot, and the court would not allow that to happen. He was going to be, like everybody else, hung. He didn't want to be hung.

Nancy: Did you hear Goering say something, Daddy? Did you hear Goering say something, or did you just see him sitting there?

Duno: Yes, he would mumble all over his mouth by saying "it's all a bunch of crap, I'm innocent, they don't understand what's going on," ba, ba, bee, bee, you know.

Meyer: You said he giggled?

Duno: Yeah. You know when he was first captured, not by our outfit, way back somewhere very close to Austria, I think, he was treated like a general. Until somebody wised up and says, "What the hell are you treating this piece of shit, treating him like a general? He's a damn prisoner." And finally they made him what he really was.

Not the great Goering, but just a piece of shit. Took his uniform off.

Nancy: But he wore the uniform when he was a prisoner, right?

Duno: Yeah. Took his uniform down where it should be and treated him like nothing.
[TIME 27:55]

Nancy: Did you ever get down to the prison area in that, where Goering would have, or the other prisoners?

Duno: Oh yeah, you could see all, yeah, see all over the place.

Nancy: Was it a clean facility?

Duno: I told you what happened, didn't I? When I had my day there.

Nancy: Yes!

Meyer: What happened?

Duno: There was an incident that took place. And we were—I found that if you are someone that leads soldiers, keep them busy. Do not let them just do nothing. So before I got in the army, I would go to Bronx Park, and they had a big horse den out there.

And I would get on the horses and drive around like I knew what I was doing, and I really wasn't. So, one time I'm in a situation back there.

And I'm going on the horses again, having a great time. And there was a guy that was in my organization. He was from Princeton. I'll never forget the son of a bitch. He was in the field, couldn't ride the horse, and he got in the way of a farmer taking out seeds, a very sensitive thing. So he ignored the farmer, and trumped into the seed things being planted.

Meyer: No!

Duno: And the farmer whipped him. I got off the horse, and I said to this farmer, "Do not do that to my soldiers."

And he said, "Well they're interfering with my—" And he made a move to whip me. And I got right back at him and I slashed him with my whip.

Meyer: You did.

Duno: And the incidents like those was closed. So I'm in the courthouse in my office. And I had an office next to where they had all the rifles and all that kind of stuff. And two CID come into my office. CIDs. And they said, "You're Sergeant Duno?"

"I am."

"We have to take you to court for using unnecessary force."

And I said, “What the hell is shit this all about?”

And they took me into jail. Before I left, I got ahold of Gilhouse. I couldn't reach him. I said to one of my guys, “Get ahold of Gilhouse on this incident.” And the guy that was involved was a graduate from--

And I'm in this jail cell with a window that's broken, freezing my ass off. Oh, and by the way, as I was being led out, one of the cops—MPs—had a club, and he just jabbed that club into my ribs. Because he, my boss, my boss was CIC, he was CID.

Meyer: Was CIC—okay.

Duno: He was CID. And the two of them didn't get along too well. So I'm in this goddamn place, the window's open, I'm freezing my ass off. And I remember this goddamn jab in my ribs. So I heard a bit of a commotion going on outside. What's going on?

It was Gilhouse. And he said, “Sergeant, if you don't open—the guy with the club—I'm going to give you about a minute and 10 seconds to open up this _ door. If you don't, I'm going to jam this thing down your _ throat.” The guy was from Princeton.

So he gets me out, and he gave the guy minutes to clear the air. I got out and I took his club and I said, “Remember the club? [makes noise] Right in your fat gut.” Right in your big fat gut. Boy, that son of a bitch really—

Meyer: Who were the most important people to you during the war? Gilhouse?

Duno: Gilhouse was one of the nicest, I think. Because I shall never forget him for his kindness to me.

Meyer: His kindness.

Duno: And he was just a wonderful guy to deal with. Just a very nice fellow.

Meyer: Was he your age?

Duno: Oh no, he was older.

[TIME 33:04]

Meyer: And is he still alive?

Duno: He's still alive. Or was.

Meyer: So far as you know.

Duno: I don't know why he lives in this godforsaken place. He's not well. But every Christmas I get a card from him, telling me about how he's doing and all that kind of stuff, so.

Nancy: And who else do you remember?

Duno: Oh, Izzy (PH).

Nancy: Izzy Schlinger (PH), that's right!

Meyer: Izzy Schlinger. Tell me about Izzy Schlinger.

Duno: Izzy Schlinger, the guy that was my buddy in high school.

Nancy: All you guys hung out, you New Yorkers. All you New York guys hung out together. Paul was from--

Duno: Well that's the way it was in those days.

Meyer: That's the way it goes.

Duno: Yeah, we would walk home from school—we didn't have any busses in those days. I think it was 92, if I remember correctly. And I went to see if I could find him. Gillhouse. Not Gillhouse.

Meyer: Schlinger?

Nancy: Schlinger.

Duno: Schlinger, yeah. And, yeah, we found Schlinger.

Nancy: Now Schlinger was in the 379th? In G Company.

Duno: Was in the 379th, yeah.

Meyer: You were in G Company, too.

Duno: I was in G Company.

Meyer: So he was in the same company?

Duno: Yes.

Nancy: He used to go to reunions. What year did Izzy Schlinger—do you remember, you met Izzy Schlinger and Paul Steinfeld – was that in Albany?

Patty: That was Albany.

Meyer: Oh, that must have been great.

Nancy: Yeah, that must have been nice to see him again.

Duno: Yes.

Nancy: Did you guys—I hate to say this, this is a girl term—did you hang out together apart from being—Is there a way that you can be in battle and also socialize? Or did you just know—

Duno: Well this was after the war. I went to see—

Nancy: You kept in contact.

Now, I just wanted to get back to the story about Neuss. When you and Stevens were involved in this, I thought you told me it was some kind of a school or something, for the soldiers. The SS school or something like that, and that's where you took prisoners after you developed that maneuver with Stevens?

Duno: Yes, yes, that was it. We had this situation where we had—I mentioned this about--

Nancy: I just want to get clear on it. So they were up here. You were down there.

Meyer: Wait, where?

Nancy: In Neuss. The Nazis were up on the hill. I thought you told me it was a school or something like that.

Duno: It was an anti-aircraft school.

Nancy: Oh. Oh, okay.

Meyer: And they're shelling.

Duno: They're shelling the shit out of us, and having a jolly good time.

Nancy: And that's when you suggested—

Duno: And the only way that I can get to that, after I went to my good lieutenant...

Nancy: Eberlee.

Duno: I mean one of the lieutenants. And he was, "Yeah, give it a show."

Meyer: So you said you're going to take him out?

Duno: I said it was an anti-aircraft school, and...-

Nancy: It was you and Stevens, just two people, who went around the back?

Duno: Yeah.

[TIME 36:19]

Meyer: And what did you do?

Duno: I went around the back of this school. And it to me looked like an excellent situation to get back at them where the school existed, and drop it in there, because they were dropping so much crap on us.--

Nancy: Oh, so you dropped munitions in there...

Duno: Yes. And it seemed to work and work well.

Nancy: And that's when you took the prisoners, you told me.

Duno: Yes.

Nancy: Oh, how many prisoners did you take?

Duno: Shit. The school was something like, there must have been— it was really a disaster. I'm saying between 20 and 25 killed.

Nancy: Oh, killed? In the operation?

Meyer: What did you drop in, just grenades? Or what did you drop into the school?

Duno: No. Artillery shells.

Meyer: So you went behind the school.

Duno: Yeah.

Meyer: And did you have a bazooka, or did you call in the artillery?

Duno: I had a combination of both. I used what I had first, with mine, and dropped it in right in on top of them.

Meyer: And it just was a massacre.

Duno: It was. It wasn't very pleasant. Because it was just ...

Meyer: You did what you had to do.

Duno: Yes, I did.

Meyer: You stopped it.

Nancy: And Stevens?

Duno: And Stevens, of course, was with me. And we both agreed that we had caused a very bad thing for the Germans.

Meyer: You had killed all those people.

Duno: Yes, killed them. And it was just spot on. And they, they deserved it.

Nancy: They were killing Americans, right?

Duno: They were killing Americans like you can't believe. We couldn't move. And they did that, and that was the end of that story.

Meyer: Now that was, that was when you're with the British? Or that's when?

Duno: Neuss.

Duno: Neuss. Neuss was critical to this whole thing. Because that—

Duno: That was the last link about what was going on there. And it just seemed to work. It had to work.

Meyer: I know some members of the 95th were around when 95th liberated one of the camps. I think it was more Russian prisoners.

Duno: Interesting you should mention that. That question came up just recently. Someone asked me if I had known of any Polish—

Duno: I said yes.

Meyer: You said yes?

Nancy: Romanian. This might have been a different camp.

Duno: It was a kind of a different scenario.

Nancy: That camp excuse me, was called W-E-R-L. Werl. Correct?

Duno: Yes, Werl. It wasn't just Poles. It was anybody who could get the hell out of that place.

Nancy: Who was? I thought I remember you telling me there was an Italian in the group.

Duno: There was an Italian. -

Nancy: You said when you came into that work camp they were starving, and there was one Italian you told me that asked you to get him eggs. Because you told him your parents were Italian.

Duno: Well—

It's a situation where it's wartime.

Nancy: Yeah. So you came into the camp. How did you know it was a camp?

Duno: Camps are just like camps. Some of them are in decent condition; others are just a bunch of crap.

Meyer: Did you just come upon it while you were going down the road?

[TIME 40:19]

Duno: Yeah. As we were going on our ways, and making our ways, and as I say that--

Meyer: Is there barbed wire around it?

Duno: It's a regular prison camp. Some of them were not—I wouldn't put in the category of being a huge camp where people were dying every 15 seconds No, you didn't have that kind of a situation. The war was starting to wind down...

Nancy: Were there Jews in that camp? Because you all got--

Duno: Yes there was. I think I mentioned to you that Paul Steinfeld, of course, was--

Nancy: Well, no, I'm saying where there Jewish people in that work camp that you liberated? Well, yeah, Paul Steinfeld, I understand what you're saying. He was instrumental in the Holocaust Association recognizing your unit. His unit.

Duno: The thing that gets me about this if you go through the history of this whole situation about what's going on, they were the Jews. It is absolutely unbelievable. Nineteen forty-three. Hitler decided that his goal of killing all the Jews were not being met. He called all his generals together and he said, "You are not doing your job. My goal ever since I became a Nazi was to wipe out the Jews. And you are not meeting this goal. And you will meet the goal." **Nancy:** Why were there Poles and all the other nationalities, I thought you said Romanians?

Duno: Jews were different from anybody.

Nancy: Yes, but there were all these different—

Duno: Yes, you had different nationalities. But Jews in particular were his goddamn goal. They were not complying with what he wanted.

Nancy: So the people you saw in that work camp were starving?

Meyer: Were they in good shape?

Duno: No, they were not in good shape. They were not in good shape. But by the same token I wouldn't say they were in wonderful, prime condition, no. Again you have to appreciate—I'm repeating myself—it wasn't Italians, or Poles, or anybody else. They suffered, sure. But his goal was specifically Jews.

Nancy: They're playing Christmas music.

Meyer: I know, they're playing Christmas music.

Nancy: My gosh.

Duno: What did she say [laughs]?

Meyer: Someone is playing Christmas music now.

Duno: Oh gosh [laughs]. So yeah, I think that's something that's misunderstood, I think, Nancy. His goal had to be met. And it didn't matter if you were Poles, or Italians, or the rest of those. Things were winding down, but they were not winding down for the Jews. Absolutely no way.

Nancy: Not for the Jews.

Meyer: The Jews, no. It was heating up for them.

Duno: Absolutely no way.

Meyer: A long time ago John Komp had told me a story. I don't know whether it was G Company? It may have been the 378th. He talked about it being near the end of the war, I'm not sure, you're in the Ruhr Pocket. And coming across a wolf pack. Young kids. Disarming the German kids and said, "The war is over for you." The 95th keeps marching on. One of the young kids gets a gun and kills the lieutenant. And then he says, John Komp said a few weeks later at headquarters they said how come everyone's turning in prisoners, but not G Company? And then John Komp said, and then G Company started turning in prisoners.

Duno: Well I knew John Komp quite well. We used to be in Remstadt.

Nancy: Wait, Daddy, regarding the prisoners, though. Did G Company not take prisoners? And then did they all of a sudden take prisoners?

Duno: Well, I don't—how shall I say it? He was right when things were not as they should be. I think he's right there. But don't forget—I'm repeating myself now—the goal is not being met. The goal could be met against Polacks, Italians, and all the rest of these people, things are winding down, but not for the Jews.

Nancy: Yeah.

Duno: And they just didn't meet his goal. How could you put that into a proper perspective? That he goes through life from his first days, Hitler. And here he is, it's 1943, and he takes--

Meyer: I worked for a company that made a film of what you're talking about, the conference. The Wannsee Conference.

Duno: Yes.

Meyer: Because Eichmann took so many good notes that they were able to reconstruct the whole meeting, which only took 45 minutes or an hour. There are two movies, two versions of it. One's a bad, bad one with Hollywood actors. And one's good because all they take is Eichmann's notes. They do it very well—

Meyer: Just a few more questions right now. Then what I'm going to do is I'm going to look at your YouTube video and see— [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUCVT3Yz1hw>] —

Meyer: Let me ask you these questions right now and then I'll ask you more tomorrow. Would you recommend military service to young people now?

Duno: Absolutely yes.

Meyer: Why?

Duno: Because it's a service to our country. And I think we have too much of this business of somebody in the sports business saying, "I don't do this because he doesn't like God," or some shit like that. That is out as far as I'm concerned.

Meyer: You mind talking a little more tomorrow?

Duno: Sure

Meyer: Okay. So let me just finish up. This is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th, the 95th Infantry. Today is September 30, 2016. It's the last day of September 2016. We're in Roanoke, Virginia. And tonight I've had the great pleasure of talking to—Tony, could you tell me your name?

Duno: Anthony Duno.

Meyer: We've been talking about an hour and a half. So I'll ask you some more questions tomorrow.

Duno: Good, do that. Please.

Meyer: Thank you very much, you have made my trip.

[TIME: 47:35]

End Session.