

Vincent Geiger audio log

Veteran's Name: Vincent Geiger

Meyer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

Date of Interview: 2004

Transcriber: Carol Slezak

Transcribed: December 8, 2017

Log compiled by: Teresa Bergen, July 2025

Track 1

- 00:00 Geiger assumed command of Company I in Maizieres-les-Metz
- 01:38 retired as a colonel in 1974 after 32 years active service
- 01:59 stayed in army because he didn't have enough points to get out; assigned to 4th Division at Camp Butner, same division his father served in during WWI
- 02:50 when he could leave, he decided to sign up for reserve because he'd rather fight as an officer than enlisted man if we went to war with Russia
- 03:42 worked as infantry instructor at US Army Reserve schools in Pittsburgh
- 04:48 how he worked up the ranks
- 05:05 growth of USAR school system
- 07:35 shipped out of Boston in June 1944 with 250 replacement officers
- 08:40 "At Fort Benning, we were trained as cannon fodder. Every day, you were reminded you were cannon fodder."
- 08:56 at OCS at Fort Benning, they wanted to weed out the "weak sisters"; great need for replacement infantry officers
- 10:00 shipped out of Boston on the Aquitania, sister ship of Lusitania, bound for Europe
- 10:53 last year he played golf in Kinsale, Ireland, near where Lusitania sank
- 11:18 landed in Scotland June 26, 1944 as a replacement; the replacement system was badly screwed up
- 12:30 initially sent to London, where soldiers had lots of freedom because there wasn't much to do
- 13:15 Geiger was born March 31, 1921 so was 23 at the time

- 13:30 in September, Geiger was sent to Omaha Beach, France; description of destruction left from D-Day
- 14:19 description of getting out of landing boat; walking up beach, hill of wooden crosses
- 16:00 staying in a pup tent on Omaha Beach before moving to Nancy as a replacement
- 16:15 on November 11, 1944, assigned to the 95th Division because Patton was yelling for more officers
- 16:54 at Metz, got sent a retread officer who was afraid to come out of the house
- 17:36 never had enough officers until it was time to go home
- 17:51 describes what a full complement of six officers is responsible for
- 18:35 while at Saarlautern, trying to convince men to put in for field commissions; “Most of them didn’t want any parts of being an officer”
- 19:30 description of his movements during the Battle of the Bulge
- 20:12 26th Division eventually replaced the 95th, and 95th went to Bastogne; commissioning ceremony for two field commissions
- 21:17 they stayed in a barn at Bourcy, Belgium, five kilometers outside of Bastogne
- 21:47 shows photos of General Twaddle during the commissioning ceremony
- 22:23 when five of his company visited a few years back, the farm where they stayed still existed
- 23:22 mentions sniper alley in Fraulautern; describes Christmas 1944 spent there
- 25:04 they slept in the basements of ruined Fraulautern houses; one house still miraculously had a plumbed bathroom
- 26:05 had to stay inside, too unsafe to go out in streets
- 26:39 “runners” used for communication when phones were down, would deliver messages on bicycles
- 26:57 talks about a rebuilt church
- 28:20 men wounded at Maizieres-les-Metz

- 29:26 missing part of audio—bringing back bodies, stacking them like cordwood; groups of replacements for fallen troops
- 30:20 I Company stayed in La Maxe while L Company tried to take Fort Gambetta
- 31:13 Battalion that took Woippy; tobacco company
- 32:50 crossed river into Metz at night, paddled in boats of 12 to 15 men each
- 35:00 taking over for an injured commander in Metz; running from gunfire, hiding out in a caserne; narrowly missing a “potato masher” grenade
- 36:35 “I mean, I led a charmed life over here. There’s no question. The master plan for me must have been pretty good.”
- 36:45 Germans yelling at them to surrender
- 37:13 Germans surrendering to him because he was the only officer; they would come out if the Americans brought out the wounded German soldiers
- 38:50 his men survived an explosion in a booby-trapped tunnel
- 39:11 Heinrich Kittel, commanding general of Metz, wounded in action
- 39:42 next morning I Company was trucked out to the edge of Metz, starting walking towards Boulay
- 40:27 describes descending into stone casemates which protected a medical aid station that cared for General Kittel
- 42:33 General Archer has promised Geiger a copy of Kittel’s diary
- 42:56 subsequent movements: fighting in Saarlautern, relieved the British at the Bulge, crossed Rhine into Ruhr area
- 43:38 displaced persons used as Krupp factory laborers
- 44:17 towards end of war, SS members trying to sneak out in civilian clothes
- 44:46 trying to control displaced persons and keep them fed after the war ended
- 45:22 Germans accepted him because of his surname Geiger
- 45:26 Displaced persons stealing cows from Germans, cooked them

46:04 they did the best they could to take care of the hundreds of thousands of German POWs

46:40 End of recording