

## VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

**Narrator: Vincent Geiger Ceo Bauer**  
**Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)**  
**Date of Interview: 2004 (Metz, France)**  
**Transcriber: Carol Slezak**  
**Transcribed on: December 8, 2017**  
**Reexamined June 2025**  
**Editor: Teresa Bergen**

[beginning missing]

**Vincent Geiger:** --whom I never formally met because a few days later, he was wounded. The company when I joined at Maizieres-les-Metz was being commanded by a Lieutenant Macintyre, who came from adjacent battalion after Colonel Bolton, or Captain Bolton, the original company commander, was wounded on the eighth of November. There was a Lieutenant Canfield at Maizieres when I joined. Lieutenant Canfield had arrived as a replacement officer with 15 or 20 replacement men two days before I arrived with I think nearly 50 replacements. And I came here as a first lieutenant, infantry, on, I assumed command of Company I on about November 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> when the other officers were all wounded. And on January 1, order of [Number 103<sup>rd</sup>?] Army, I was promoted to a captain. I stayed in the US Army Reserve. I have a total of 32 years active and reserve duty. And I retired in 1974 as a colonel, infantry 06. And now I am a recipient of a nice pension. (laughter)

**David Meyer:** When did you decide to become, your experiences here make you want to stay with the service? Or did you [unclear]

**Geiger:** Well, when we were being, I went to, after we deactivated the 95<sup>th</sup> Division, I didn't have enough points to get out. So I was transferred from Mississippi, Camp Shelby, to Camp Butner, North Carolina, where I was assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. Which incidentally happened to be the division my father ended World War One in at Verdun. He was a litter bearer in the 4<sup>th</sup> Division in World War One. And he, that armistice was November the eleventh. I reported for duty in Maizieres November eleventh a few years later.

But when deactivated and I finally got enough points to get out, we went to Indian Town Gap. I went through the process, at which time you had to make a decision. And my personal feelings were that we would be fighting the Russians very shortly. I was drafted into World War Two as a private. Came out as a captain. And I felt if we were going to go to war against the Russians, I'd sooner go as an officer than an enlisted man. So I signed up for the reserve. Which, for a year or so, the reserve was very disorganized and I became very inactive.

Then a friend of mine, an attorney friend of mine in Pittsburgh told me about the USAR school system. And there was, the first school was in Redding, Pennsylvania. And we were to activate or to form one in Pittsburgh. And the USAR school system, we had every branch in the US Army had an instructor—the infantry branch, intelligence branch, quartermaster. We also had a C&GS School, which is command and general staff. So what we were doing was teaching off-campus courses to reserve people to increase their education in their particular field. So I became active in that school as the infantry instructor.

And I worked my way up. During that period I was graduated from Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth. I eventually retired as colonel commandant of the

school. That's how I got to be a colonel. So I went major, lieutenant colonel, etcetera, etcetera.

**Meyer:** Was it all within Redding?

**Geiger:** No, Pittsburgh. Yeah, the first was in Redding. Then I think the second school created was in Pittsburgh. And then they became common all over the country. And they always worked under, reported to, we used to report to Second Army headquarters in Fort Mead, Maryland. In recent years, when the 95<sup>th</sup> IT was formed, there was another IT in Houston, Texas, the 75<sup>th</sup>. There was an IT in Pittsburgh, well, they were called [AR Coms?] originally. They took the school system under, like the IT is an institutional training. So they acquired the schools as a part of their organization. I think there were seven schools that when 95<sup>th</sup> was formed, they took them over as a training device in their headquarters.

06:07

**Meyer:** Major General Archer, is he sort of in some ways in his position in the 95<sup>th</sup>, the IT, is he similar a little to what you did in your school?

**Geiger:** Except a great deal more. A great deal more. Plus the fact that they have not only, the objective of the IT Division is, we get to a full-blown war, they're going to be the cadre to train civilians, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Now they are training, maybe there's some portions of the Tenth Mountain Division and so on. And they do have some units. They do not have infantry regiments and so on. But they do have some units. They have an intelligence unit that was in Guantanamo. We now have units, they have units now in Iraq. Because we're trying to train some Iraqi troops. Okay?

**Meyer:** Okay. Okay. Well thanks for making that clear. I kept trying to figure out what [unclear] here's something here, you don't want to stop the whole conversation, you just don't want to be ignorant so you just sort of nod your head and they think you know, but you don't. So when you went up to Maizieres-les-Metz, had you been in action before?

**Geiger:** No.

**Meyer:** When you went up to Maizieres-les-Metz, had you been in action before?

**Geiger:** No. I left Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky, left the 75<sup>th</sup> Division first of June whatever year, I guess '44. Shipped out of Camp Miles Standish out of Boston as a replacement. There were 250 second and first lieutenants infantry as replacement officers of cannon fodder. We shipped—

**Meyer:** [unclear] cannon fodder?

**Geiger:** Well, 250 officers. At Fort Benning, we were trained as cannon fodder. Every day, you were reminded you were cannon fodder.

**Meyer:** No, they'd say that to you?

**Geiger:** Oh, absolutely. I went to OCS at Fort Benning. And one of their objectives was to scare hell out of you. They wanted the weak sisters out. If I could put it bluntly. And that's

the way. I mean, they did a lot of training. But they made it, it was like a little West Point. I mean, they make it very, very, very difficult, hoping that the cream will come to the top. And the war was developing not quite like after the invasion and so on. And the casualties were fantastic. And they were losing infantry officers here. They were crying for them. [loud noise]

**Meyer:** Let me just go to see what that is. [pause] And the noise stopped. I said, que es? (imitates noise) So it will probably start again.

**10:00**

**Vincent Geiger:** But back to the replacement situation, [tape gap] I shipped out of Boston with 249 other infantry first and second lieutenants for Europe.

**Meyer:** What ship did you go on?

**Geiger:** Aquitania, sister ship to the Lusitania, which was sunk way back when. Played golf last April, what's the place in southern Ireland?

Woman: Kinsale.

**Geiger:** Kinsale. Southern Ireland. Lusitania was sunk right off the coast there. But in any event, that's— we shipped from Boston on June the 21<sup>st</sup>, D-Day having been June sixth. And we landed in Scotland on June 26<sup>th</sup>. Immediately were shipped to various places in England. I did not get to France until September. People over here are crying for infantry officers. The replacement system was so screwed up, [brief interruption] was fouled up somehow. I've never seen any stories, I've never seen a book, I've never seen any explanation as to why the officer replacements weren't able to get through the system where they were needed badly. But I came to Normandy with a group. But in England, every morning – we were at a British camp—every morning at eight o'clock you stood roll call. They called names. If your name wasn't called, see you tomorrow at eight o'clock. Nothing to do. I bought a bicycle, and rode around. I was in southern England. On Friday morning if your name wasn't called, see you Monday. You could go do what you wanted. I would thumb a ride into London. I was about 80 kilometers out of London.

**Meyer:** How old were you then?

**Geiger:** Oh, 23 I guess? Twenty-two? Twenty-two, 23.

**Meyer:** What's your birth date?

**Geiger:** March 31, '21 [1921]. So, finally, my name was called and I went in September to Omaha Beach.

**Meyer:** When you got out in September, what did it look like?

**Geiger:** I think still like it did on D-Day. There was vehicles demolished, sunk ships protruding from the water. Many of the obstacles were still in the water. You know, the metal Xs and so on. I was with a group of officers that landed there. We came in on an LST [landing ship, tank ] or something. There was one of the smaller landing boats in the water,

and a net down the side. And we had to throw our duffel bag over. If you missed, tough. And then we had to climb down. As you're climbing down this is going up and down, you had to jump at the right time. One man was crushed between, one of the officers. Because it was rough.

But we came in to the shore and you got dumped in the water and you walked the rest of the way. Almost, not as deep, it was fairly low tide. And you know, all these officers, there was probably 20 or 30 of us, and we're all complaining.

So we walked the beach and here's a big wooden arch. It says, "Through this arch travel the best soldiers in the world," or something like that. "The greatest soldiers in the world." I've seen pictures of that. It's just a wooden--

So, where do we go from here? Well, you climb the hill with what you owned. And these guys are griping, "We're officers," and all this garbage. And you go up the hill. When you get to the very top of the hill there's a field full of wooden crosses. The griping stopped there.

And we pitched the pup tent, and I was there four weeks. And we pitched the pup tents, and I was there four weeks. And then moved somewhere else, and moved somewhere else. And the last move that I made was to Nancy, as a replacement. And on November the eleventh I was assigned to the 95<sup>th</sup> Division. Now that's unbelievable. Infantry officers. Patton was back in SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force], raising hell. "Need officers up there!" And what they were doing in SHAEF and other places is they were sending antiaircraft artillery, excess this that, up to the infantry. These guys didn't know. You know, they weren't trained as infantry. But, Company I, I'd never had during combat more than two other officers. I would get them and lose them.

One officer joined us here outside of Metz. Was sent to me—I think it was near Boulay—and he was a retreated antiaircraft officer. He joined us one night. I don't know his name. The next morning we go on the attack and the sergeant of that platoon, I said, "Where's the new officer?"

He said, "He wouldn't come out of that house last night."

I get on the radio, and called battalion, and say, "Whoever you sent me last night as an officer is still in the house up here. I want no parts of him. You find him, and do whatever." I mean, we kind of ran the war with sergeants then, though the combat.

And it was not until the war ended, we ended up in Bottrop-Essen, Germany, in the Ruhr. And it wasn't until that point when we were getting ready to go home that I had a full complement of officers.

**Meyer:** How many were there?

**Geiger:** Six. In a rifle company you have a captain-company commander, a first lieutenant, executive officer. You have four platoons. Three rifle platoons. A weapons platoon. Two are, the T, O, and E, two can be first lieutenants and two can be second lieutenants. So you have six complement. So six officers, we went home as a unit.

**Meyer:** So before that you never --.

**Geiger:** Never had six. Most I ever had was two other officers. Sergeants. Well, while we were at Saarlautern, and The Bulge broke loose up north, it was suggested by higher headquarters that we attempt to put men in for field commissions. So I talked to all my sergeants that were, most of them didn't want any parts of being an officer. And you would tell them, you're doing the job, why not accept the rank? I got two of them to agree to accept the field commission. A sergeant (CK, lieutenant?) Kupiec, K-u-p-i-e-c, and a sergeant

O'Brien (PH). I submitted names, and you didn't hear anything for a while. But when the Bulge broke loose we were in Saarlautern, bumping our head into the Siegfried Line, and the Bulge happened, the penetration in Belgium, and so they took the division on our left, the division on our right, up Patton – you know, went to help. So we stretched out, a three-division front. And at that point we were having lots of attempted penetrations by patrols from the Germans, and some in American uniforms. It was a touchy situation.

And the 95th eventually was replaced by the 26<sup>th</sup> Division, and we went up to Bastogne. We arrived up there the day after it was declared over, so we get no credit as being in that. Which is—who needs the credit.

So, the first thing that happened up there was I get notice: Tomorrow we're having a ceremony at your company area. We're going to commission two of your people. So we had a commissioning—in fact I think I have the pictures. Because we were going up there [Looking for pictures.]

So we had ceremonies where we commissioned two men as first lieutenants. Lt. Kupiec and Lt. O'Brien. (CK, previously said sergeant). We stayed in a—this was a barn, a big barn with a house on the edge of it. We stayed there, in that barn.

**Meyer:** Is this in Saarlautern?

**Geiger:** This is Bourcy, Belgium. Maybe five kilometers outside of Bastogne. And our company stayed in the hay, here (looking at photo). And the French people lived here. Big farm. Active. And there's a big manure pile over here [laughs]. And this was the street. The farm is up here and this is the street. This is the commanding general. This is General Twaddle. That's February second, okay. General, Twaddle, probably our battalion commander, coming up to the ceremony. And here's the general pinning the 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant bars on Lt. Kupiec. And at the end of the ceremony this little picture was taken and we're going...

**Meyer:** February 2, '45.

**Geiger:** Yeah. And we're going to this little town. We're going to Bastogne from here. And I want to show Doris [wife]. They put these buildings back. The same buildings are there. You know, they put the roofs back on, etc., etc., etc. Last time I was out here, this farm was still there.

**Meyer:** The farm looks like -- is it made out of brick? Or stone?

Vincent Geiger: I'm sure this part was masonry. And I don't remember. I think that might not have – he's a dairy farmer now. Or was, ten year ago. Ten or 15 years ago I brought back four of Company I men – Bauer (PH), Bodnar (PH) – because they got wounded on November ninth. They didn't know what we did. So we brought them back, and five of us toured our entire route. So I oriented them on where we had been. So Bauer and Bodnar and I have sort of been the key to Company I. Bodnar doing the newsletter regularly, and so on. But these pictures are of Fraulautern. I forgot to take these yesterday. Remember he talked about the street with the sniper alley? Well, that's the street. Now, my company did not – when we crossed the bridge, when we crossed the bridge, I think it was the 378<sup>th</sup> had cleared this area. So when we came over there it was no longer sniper alley. But we were sort of in defense. And we had firing artillery back and forth, we had attempted penetrations on the part of the Germans by scouting patrols and that sort of thing. And we did limited attacks.

**Meyer:** This is Christmas of --.

**Geiger:** We were there on Christmas. We had a Christmas tree in the basement of-- this was, my CP [command post] was in the basement of this building, and one of these pictures shows... This is the street. Oh here, this is the entrance. It was about, sort of like that. This is the doorway you went in, down the stairs into the basement. Most of these houses were half houses, very severely damaged, most of them. In Fraulautern. Cross the bridge, though an open field, over into Fraulautern. And they were badly damaged, but we dragged mattresses we could find into the basement. And we had mattresses on the floor, and so on.

25:22

And on the second or third floor, which was totally exposed, there was a bathroom.

No roof, no wall, but the plumbing still stayed. Now every day and night we would get incoming 88s and artillery and stuff. So you had to be very careful.

**Meyer:** So people would go up to the third floor and use the bathroom?

**Geiger:** We'd put a chair... take a seat out of a chair and sit it in the bathtub. That was the bathroom. We would fill the bathtub. Then you'd go to the house next door and do the same thing. You had to go somewhere. It wasn't safe to go outside. No snipers.

**Meyer:** But the roof was off.

**Geiger:** Gone. Walls gone, roof gone. You saw a lot of exposed bathrooms.

**Meyer:** So if you were walking down the street at a certain time you'd be treated to a picture of a GI sitting on a [unclear] in a bathtub.

**Geiger:** Yeah, you could. But you didn't really, very rarely did you walk down a street. Or very rarely did you ride a bicycle. But he was the -- one of these was the company...

**Meyer:** [Reading] This is how my runners got around Saarlautern and Fraulautern.

**Geiger:** Yeah, we used to send -- sometimes your telephone's sound power weren't working, so you'd send runners out to this platoon, that platoon. And so they'd ride a bicycle up and down the street. One of these pictures shows, if you remember yesterday, there was a steeple church, sort of a contemporary? That's the church back there.

**Meyer:** Is that in Saarlautern?

**Geiger:** Yeah. We'd come down a side street, and look back, and there was a steeple. It was kind of contemporary. It got damaged, so they rebuilt it in contemporary fashion.

**Meyer:** I remember when we got in there, there was a little place that had a stone cross in front of it.

**Geiger:** I don't recall that. ... but... And I'm sorry, I forgot I had these [pictures] yesterday.

**Meyer:** This is great. So the road we were on yesterday was the sniper road.

**Geiger:** Right. We sort of wound up coming down that street, sort of, as we left yesterday. Remember when we were down by the grist mill and so on? And then when we were coming back, before we came back over the bridge, and left town... Well, I'm sorry, I could ramble on forever.

**Meyer:** No, that's great. ... So Steve Bodnar and Ceo Bauer --.

**Geiger:** They were wounded on November eighth and ninth in Maizieres-les-Metz. I did not know them, never met them until after the war, at a reunion.

**Meyer:** And when you came in were things --?

**Geiger:** When I came in on November the 11<sup>th</sup>, I was taken by a guide. A guide met us back somewhere, from Company I somewhere, took us up into the rear CP. Do you remember Maizeres, where we had the--?

Meyer: Yes.

**Geiger:** The main street back there, the CP in the rear was in the basement of a building. The guide took me in there, and put me on a telephone. [missing section in audio] He said, We need you. But you stay back there, I'll tell you. You just stay with the 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant, he'll take care of the men, assign them where they go, the men I brought. And if you're looking for something to do, you help the 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant write letters, we've had a lot of people killed. Write letters to dependents. Okay?

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This was mid-afternoon, I think. And ... when it got dark that evening he called on the telephone. He said, "I want you to get some of your replacements that you brought. I want you to come out and bring our dead back."

The town was here [apparently pointing things out on a map], and they went through an open area out to the chateau. Not out the street that they fought on, through the – there was a tank blown up in the mud out there halfway, too.

[He said], And bring all the litters you can find. I think he said, We have 15, 20 something bodies here that need carried back. So we found, I think, somehow we got three litters, and we started out across this field. And there must have been one sergeant with us that knew where we were going, I don't know. But as we start moving out here we spread out, spread out. It's dark – pitch dark. Flares. Freeze.

So you stand here like trees 'til the flares go out. It gets dark again, we move a little further. Eventually we got to the chateau. The bodies were stiff. I don't know how many we brought back. We carried all the bodies from the chateau back to town. And we put them in a trailer, stacked them like cordwood in the trailer.

When we left on the attack a few days later, they were still there. We had taken some boots off of some of them. Some of them had combat boots; everybody didn't have combat boots. So we had – but our duty was to take them back and leave them there, and graves registration people would get them when we went on the attack. But, it was an interesting indoctrination for me and the rookies that I brought up with me.

29:26

**Meyer:** How many people did you bring up?

**Geiger:** Twenty? In some instances I was told there were 50. I don't know. It was many. And that was the second group of replacements. Lt. Canfield had brought replacements up one or two days before I did. So when I got there, there was Lt. Canfield, a lieutenant in a mortar platoon, and me. Lt. Macintyre. When we jumped off in the attack towards Metz, which was, say, the 17<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Macintyre was leading the company, I was in the rear with the first sergeant, and the weapons platoon was somewhere around. And we fought our way through ditches and things, and eventually we got here.

**Meyer:** Did you go into Woippy on the way down?

**Geiger:** Yeah. We didn't take Woippy. Our regiment did, but another company. We came by Fort Gambetta. We stayed in La Maxe, and L Company was trying to take Fort Gambetta. We were between Fort Gambetta and the river. L Company was on the left flank coming down. River on our left. That main road was our right boundary and the river was our left boundary. We had two companies – L Company was next to the road, and I was next to the river. And Fort Gambetta was along the road. L Company tried to take Fort Gambetta, they lost most of the company trying to take it. And we backed off then. I backed into La Maxe, and at night we went around it.

And then we, then the battalion on our right took Woippy. And then we were sort of squeezed out. And we came into Woippy. Over on the right flank there was another caserne there that my company took. Lt. Canfield and Sgt. Odom (PH), they took that. And there's picture's in Joe's [Joe Januskiewicz] book and so on, about eight of them. After they had taken that somebody had a camera and took a picture.

We spent the night there, and then sometime during the night Woippy then had been taken. We went down and got in boats and went around and got into the caserne and so on. Tobacco factory [where you went].

**Meyer:** The tobacco factory. The night you went there, I thought to myself, this is a private thing.

**Geiger:** You didn't go? It would have been wonderful.

**Meyer:** I asked John Komp twice, and I think --.

**Geiger:** We didn't really know what was going on.

**Meyer:** Yes, and also as soon as they put it on the board they made it public, when actually it was more private. made it public, when actually it was more private. John Komp thought it was his..uh....

**Geiger:** And we eventually got into Metz, crossed the river. We had smokescreen to come over, but they were firing. We could hear bullets and stuff, but none of us got hit in the boats. So we got across the river.

**Meyer:** What were the boats like?

**Geiger:** They were our organic boats that the combat engineers carried in the 95<sup>th</sup> Division. And they paddled us over. They didn't have motors with them. I don't know whether they had any. But they paddled us over. And I would say there was 12 or 15 men in each boat. And we landed on the other side. Well, someone else went across the river first. And took

some of the buildings there. I think OCS barracks and so on. Then after they did that, we went over, landed at the same place, got on the banks, and went upriver or downriver, I'm not sure. Downriver. Past where they'd taken. And we got down to a certain place, and they say, okay, this is I Company. And there's a big stone wall there, about eight feet high. Daylight. And we got through that stone wall and there were two big long garage buildings. We got into those buildings without difficulty. And we were then told that, well, you see this big building here – this is like a three-story big house. It was across an alley. And then across from that building was this huge caserne. A big three-story caserne.

So the next morning... We spent the night sleeping in this garage. We had people in the windows of the garage and the doorway. And it got quiet at night. We didn't do a lot of fighting at night. The Germans didn't either, that was good.

So the next morning, daylight, our men got into this office building. Eventually we got that cleared. I'm still in the back, sort of a reserve, behind. And sometime, let's say early afternoon, I got a messenger, "Lt. Macintyre wants you to take over. He was wounded." So I got up into this kind of office building thing. And Lt. Macintyre was on a stretcher. They were carrying him.

**Meyer:** Where was he injured?

**Geiger:** In the shoulder, high in the shoulder. Didn't get his lung. So it turned out to be pretty good. He lived. So at this point I took over, and they were already in the first floor of the caserne. So I got across the street – I mean, they're firing at you from, the snipers are all firing from higher floors down at us. But you had to run. And if you ran fast you could usually make it into the caserne.

We fought our way up to the, had the second floor when I got over there. And we started our way up to the third floor. At one point, I was going up one of the floors. I think it was toward the third floor. And a potato masher got thrown down and bounced off a wall, bounced off of me and went down a few steps and exploded.

I mean, I led a charmed life over here. There's no question. The master plan for me must have been pretty good.

The head men in front of me got to the third floor, and they couldn't get out into the corridor. Up the stairs the corridors went a long way each way. There only seemed to be action from one corridor and they were yelling, "Surrender! Top floor, surrender! We got you!" And they had people who could speak English, the officers particularly.

No. No surrender.

So by that time they'd patched up the one bridge and got a TD [tank destroyer] over. And he came through the wall at a far end, and he fired a couple rounds at the top of building. I don't know if you've seen the picture – there's a picture of that in one of Joe's books I gave him. At the end of the caserne was a big hole. And I never saw that hole until I got a picture after the war.

But then the word came to me – I'm on a stairway and there's men up here – they will surrender. There's a white flag came out. They will surrender but only to an officer. I'm the only officer. So, oh, okay.

So I go up. They're down there with a white flag. And so somebody came out with a white flag and I went down the hall. And an English-speaking person whom I assumed was an officer. I showed him – I dug down on my shirt -- the lieutenant bar, because you didn't wear those things.

"Okay, we'll come out if you bring our wounded out." So we brought stretchers, took their wounded out. They came out. So our men... I don't remember how many wounded they had. But I left then and they started bringing their wounded. And I went downstairs and then

clear downstairs, my men had cleared, presumably were clearing all the wings and the offices and stuff. I went in the basement. And things had pretty well calmed down. And then I learned that some of my men had gone through a tunnel. There'd been an explosion, a booby trap, but no one was hurt. And they got into a tunnel, and K Company, they ran into K Company men that were coming from the tobacco factory this way. And we're going that way. That's when they said, there's a general over there in the aid station. And he was wounded. Of course, later I learned that that was the commanding general of the defense of Metz. Hell, we didn't know that. There was no intelligence. It's just buildings. In any event, that was the tobacco factory. I never got into it then.

39:42

Within an hour or two it got dark. And they moved us, they took us out of there back to an area they called the OCS barracks. We spent the night. I mean, we quit fighting. There was still some fighting apparently in the city somewhere. And the next morning they put us on trucks and took us out to the edge of town. Dumped us out and we started to walk towards Boulay. Because we were going to attack. And apparently the next day they had a parade. General Walker came in, and Patton. They took us out.

**Meyer:** When you went back to the tobacco factory, did it stir any specific memories?

**Geiger:** No, because I'd never been in it before. But we got down into casemates. There were casemates below ground.

**Meyer:** What's a casemate?

**Geiger:** Big stone forts, big stone walls. With these kind of ceilings. There's two levels down there. And there was a lady there the same age as me. In those casemates, there was this lady. Now they're asking me questions. The people that own the tobacco factory are writing a book about the tobacco factory, the business. And they want to do a segment on wartime. We laid flowers in front of a monument there, and so on. They take us down into the casemates. Which I didn't know existed. I mean, we had a tunnel going over under there, I didn't know what was under there. Never been in there. In fact, I guess there's a picture in the newspaper [in Metz], if you got one of the newspapers the other day, there's a lot of pictures, there's a lot of us that went. And if you look close, the ceiling is rounded, and the walls. And there was an aid station there in one of the rooms. Many rooms, and so on. Two levels. This lady that was there, she's the same age as me, she worked there as basically slave labor. The Germans forced the French. They were making airplane and submarine parts. And there was an aid station.

Well, there's a hospital next door, Belle Isle Hospital, but that hospital was apparently damaged and they were subject to bombing. So therefore they had moved the aide station down in this impenetrable – I mean, you couldn't, the walls were, it was an underground fort. But there were rooms that connected. It was unbelievable. Beautifully built. It had to have been – it wasn't for World War II, those had been built there many, many years before. But that's where General Kittel had his leg fixed up. Well, when K Company came in and the Americans they arrested him. And I don't know what happened there.

But General Archer, I understand now, got the other day notes from General Kittel's diary. I understand he has the and he's going to give me a copy. But the reason the aid station was over there was because the hospital had been damaged and subject to bombing, and they had the aid station there.

So we moved out, went on to Saarlautern. That area was bombed and burned. And we fought over there for a while. And then The Bulge broke loose, so we were in the defense. Then they pull us up north, and we went up and eventually relieved the British. And then we came back and then we crossed the Rhine into the Ruhr area. We took Dortmund and so on and so forth. And we were on - I Company went - with Task Force A with 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division on ahead. Eventually we were relieved again by the 26<sup>th</sup> Division; that is my group. We came back into the Ruhr, cleaned that up, spent a month on military government, and came home.

**Meyer:** My father one time talked about a Displaced Persons Camp?

**Geiger:** Yes. DPs. In the Ruhr, in the Ruhr area. They were in the factories. The Krupp. They were laborers in the Krupp factories.

**Meyer:** Okay. He mentioned that one time it was his understanding that they were mistreated. And that one of the Germans, maybe it was SS or something, who had mistreated them was trying to escape and was in disguise. And some of the people found him and beat him to death.

**Geiger:** Oh, that's quite possible. When the Germans started giving up by the thousands there, when we had the pocket, a lot of them started to give up. A lot of the SS guys and so on who, they were leading a hairy life at this point. Tried to change into civilian clothes and sneak out, etcetera, etcetera. We had that problem. Now, I have no knowledge of us shooting anybody.

My knowledge of the DPs was, we spent a month sort of in military [demo?] where these DPs wanted to go home to Poland. I mean, they wanted to break out, roam around. They wanted to steal everything they could from the Germans, or everything that was left to pilfer. And our objective was to keep them under control. Not as prisoners, but keep them under control and make the Germans get food to them. We made farmers bring in wheat and so on. But every night, the next morning, we'd get a complaint.

I'm Herr Geiger, they'd accept me, the Germans did, they liked that name. "Herr Geiger, I lost a cow last night." Well, that cow would end up in the DP camp. And all night they would cook him. You know number ten cans, big, big cans?

**Meyer:** Yes.

**Geiger:** They used those to cook.

**Meyer:** Cook the cow?

**Geiger:** In the can. They would get anything they could get when they broke out once in a while. And they would cook all night and so on, and the next day there's no evidence of anything.

But our objective was to keep them under control. Because they wanted to go home but we had to feed them. Same as the German soldiers. You know, eventually after the war there were some books written about how we didn't take care of the German POWs? Because they surrendered by the hundreds of thousands in the Rhine area. We didn't have camps and so on. We weren't prepared with that mass situation. We did the best that we could. And they were on Ike's back about it.

**Meyer:** Well, thanks a lot. Maybe I can call you at home sometime?

**Geiger:** Anytime.

**End Interview 46:50**