

INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE HAUSER

August 1, 2008
Holiday Inn French Quarter, Toledo Ohio.

Transcribed by David Meyer

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MEYER: This was when I This is David Meyer - son of Earl D. Meyer,
Company H, 379th, 95th Infantry.
Today is August 1st, 2008, its 10:40 AM and we're at some sort of
atrium of the Holiday Inn French Quarter Toledo Ohio

I'm with Mister Hauser.. Could you say your name..?

HAUSER: My name is George Hauser.

MEY: Could you spell your last name?

HAU: H A U S E R.

MEY: What's your birthdate.

HAU: I was born on December 13th, 1922.

MEY: And where were you born?

HAU: I was born in Vienna in Austria.

MEY: Vienna in Austria...

HAU: Right.

MEY: How..how did you get here?

HAU: Ah well that's a long story maybe longer than you want to hear..
But in... 1938.

You may remember from your history lessons or something
when the Germans took over Austria - the so-called Anschluss. And a
lot of people especially Jews tried to leave if they could because
they knew things were not going to be very good, even though nobody
knew at that time that there was going to be a "final solution" like
the holocaust.

But.. uh... people immediately lost their jobs and so forth and my
father was teaching in a (re-ahj-soo-lay? Sozzzund like) which is a
high school...institution. And so we tried to leave.
But that became very difficult (2:15)

I had an uncle in Brooklyn New York, a pharmacist, and he was able
to provide us with affidavits of support that you needed in order to
get an American visa
But... You couldn't until your number came up. (2:31)

And because there was a quota system in the immigration laws at that
time
Depending on where you were born, it could take a year or two before
you would be eligible for a visa.
And ..At one point there was a phone call from the British embassy
the passport office in Vienna saying they had temporary visas for my
parents and me.

HAU: And we just never found out who guaranteed our stay in England because they didn't want you to be on the dole in England too so you had to have someone guarantee your support.

We don't know how that happened, but we finally left in April of 39.

MEY: How old were you then?

HAU: My parents left in July of 39. I was sixteen.

MEY: Sixteen.

HAU: In December '38 I was sixteen. I left..a few months after that.

MEY: So.. you're sixteen, you leave almost all your goods you have to leave everything.

HAU: Yes, you had to leave everything.

You were allowed to take the magnificent sum of ten German marks with you.

Here's another strange thing. When people emigrate they have to turn in all their jewelry and so forth... all they had but they were allowed to keep one place setting of table silver per person..

MEY: That's very strange.

HAU: Fork, knife and spoon. We were allowed to keep maybe two spoons a dessert spoon and a soup spoon.

It's so perverse ... very totally weird.

But my parents had been in touch with some groups in England because they were trying to get me out.

So those people who had not guaranteed anything who were not responsible for the visa, they ...they took care of us. For the seven months that I was there until December 39.

And then my parents were there until November 1940. through the blitz.

MEY: So you get to England in...

HAU: I get to England in April 1939 through December ...

MEY: So you were there ... what was it like on September 1st. Was Sept. 1st Blitzkrieg?

HAU: September 1st was the beginning of World War II when the Germans invaded Poland.

MEY: So you were in England then when the Germans invaded Poland..

HAU: I was in England then but not during the Blitz.
That was sometime during the following year.

MEY: I haven't talked to anyone who was in England at that moment. Was it like Pearl Harbor was it a big surprise when they invaded Poland? Do you remember what you were doing when you heard the news?

HAU: No I don't remember not like I remember Pearl Harbor. But it was certainly... almost the logical outcome of all the things the events that had gone before.

MEY: People may have been expecting it.

HAU: I don't know if anybody expected exactly what was going to happen or exactly when it was going to happen because there had been the occupation of first the Sudetan land and then the taking the whole of Czechoslovakia.

MEY: How did you get to the United States

HAU: In December that year when my American visa number - came up I was able to get the visa in London.

MEY: So if you hadn't had the unknown benefactor in England you never would have gotten.

HAU: Well, I don't know.

MEY: But your number still wouldn't have come up until this number..

HAU: I don't know when it would have come up at the same time what would have happened to us in the meantime you know a lot of people who didn't get out you know what happened to them. So.. it's hard to know whether we would have survived ...

MEY: ... sure ...

HAU: gotten out or... speculation.

MEY: You had just mentioned Pearl Harbor do you remember what you were doing when you heard about the Pearl Harbor attack?

HAU: I remember what was I was doing ... Pearl Harbor... I was at Arizona State College. At that time, I was in the dining room, the cafeteria when I heard that news. I remember that quite clearly.

MEY: So you are ...

HAU: .. that was my first year of college.

MEY: And you are twenty?

HAU: At that time, that was in December so I was just shy of my... twenty... 19th..birthday...

MEY: So it's 1941 and you were born in ...

HAU: '22.

MEY: ..'22...

HAU: Just shy of my 19th birthday which was in about a week. Six days later.

MEY: What was going on in your life around the time you decided to serve - did you enlist or were you drafted or what happened.

HAU: I was first deferred.. because of being in college.. but finally drafted in the summer of '43.

MEY: So.. you go in summer of '43. So when you are drafted you go into the Army. Did you ever think of going into another (branch of the) service?

HAU: No...I never did. I went to basic training in Ft. Benning (GA.) and after that into the Army Specialized Training Program - ASTP. Which in my case was at Pittsburgh. University of Pittsburgh. The Cathedral of Learning on the 23rd floor thereof.

You know they'd converted all of this into barracks and .. uh... a bunch of us there studying what was supposed to be an engineering course... but of course there were the elementary courses.

For people who were just starting out because I'd well I'd had...two years of college. Maybe a little more than two years. Because from Arizona State I went to Ohio State for a year. From '42 to '43.

MEY: And what were you studying there?

HAU: Well my major was.. chemistry.

MEY: Okay.

HAU: Of course, that was only my sophomore year. But you take elementary chemistry courses.

MEY: When ASTP ... ASTP went on until when?

HAU: I think all of it... certainly our unit was disbanded in March of 1943. (*actually '44 - note*)

I don't know if all in every institution stopped, I don't really know. But at that point, I and a lot of other people were shipped to different units.

MEY: Where did they ship...

HAU: The infantry.. 95th infantry.. which at that time was at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania north of Harrisburg.

MEY: (10:57) So that's '44 maybe. You think it was '44 Indiantown Gap.

HAU: '43.

MEY: '44 okay.

HAU: Well... no no.. that was '44.. that was '44, basic training until the fall and then December until March... that was '44.

MEY: (11:24) When you get to Indiantown Gap -I know there are a lot of men who have been together since Camp Shelby. Did.. people have different experiences—did you -- how was it blending in?

HAU: Well, I think the ASTP people - and there were quite a few actually in my company.

But they were always sort of outsiders in a way because they had not been since the start of the division at Camp Shelby and gone to the Louisiana maneuvers

And the whole bit. There was there was a definite social distinction maintained between the two groups.

MEY: Now when you uh... The infantry guys.. the people had been together for quite a while, I know they had been in desert training and had been in other things.

Was the physical conditioning - was it hard for you ASTP guys to get up..

HAU: ...to get up to speed? Cause we'd been through basic training a few months before so.. took part in the whole twenty five mile marches with ... pack and all that..

(end of day) Had done everything that needed to be done. We were not requested but required to do.

We went through that and eventually we went... to Camp Miles Standish in Massachusetts... and then to Europe.

MEY: What was Miles Standish... Like?

HAU: I don't remember much about that..we weren't there very long. It was a short interim stay.

MEY: Because you know you're going overseas.

HAU: Yeah... it was more of a staging area.

MEY: What boat did you go over in?

HAU: I think .. I can't be sure... some of the other guys may be sure... I think it was the West Point.

MEY: I'd heard "West Point," "Mariposa," "America."

HAU: Which was something else before the Army took it over I think it was the Holland America line ... ship. I don't know which one it was ... the (unintelligible)

MEY: You'd been on ships going across the ocean before... how did you handle... some people talked about... having different reactions to sea-sickness. Did you..

HAU: Well the one thing I remember specifically is going down to chow, which was sort of in the belly of the ship which was hot and stuffy and by the time you got to the chow line you just about didn't want to eat... because it made you just physically sick just to be in that.. in that closed-in hot environment. But you did of course. You were glad to get back on deck.

MEY: Did you sleep in your room or on deck... where did you..

HAU: No.. in whatever they... the arrangement was. Bunk or something.

MEY: (15:16) So you get to England and...

HAU: ... and we're at a Camp near .. near... called Barton Stacy was the was the camp and it's near in the south near...

MEY: Is it near...Winchester?

HAU: Winchester.

MEY: Yes, Mr. Madden (another interviewee) had talked about Winchester

HAU: (15:46) And that's where we were for... maybe a month, but...

MEY: What was your day-to-day life like at this camp? Drill or what did you do?

HAU: Yeah... you did drills and just...the days passed I don't have any specific recollections of anything unusual during that time (intelligible).

MEY: How did you get... how did you find out where you were going?

HAU: Well you never knew I guess one day to the next you were just ordered to show up. You know, you'd get about two minutes notice. To do anything. Pack your dufflebag.. formation...in five minutes..

It's the army.

MEY: When you crossed the channel, what sort of ship was that?

HAU: I don't think it was any.. landing craft.. I mean I don't recall going to the beach through the water..

MEY: Okay

HAU: By that time Normandy beaches, Omaha, Utah, and so forth, had been cleared. Cause this was like September..

MEY: Yeah September... I heard it was D-Day plus...

HAU: ... D-Day was June... and this July August September.

MEY: July August September so almost 90 days. But uh... what did the beach look like. Was there still any rubble on it.

HAU: There was some rubble but no ... no bodies... or anything like that.

MEY: So after you land on the beach

HAU: So we really didn't have any fighting in Normandy... we just eventually got much farther east because Paris had fallen by that time.. in August sometime... and... uhm.. we went further east...

In fact, one strange thing I never understood myself looking back on it, I got lost from my unit.

And..uh... I remember.. pilfering some canned peaches from someplace to get something to eat from the rail car in the rail yard there and I eventually hitched a ride on a train and found my unit again.

I don't know exactly... exactly how that worked.
No clear recollection.

MEY: Did you ride in the 40 and eights.

HAU: Yeah.. pretty much... across France.

MEY: When ... when ... what's the next thing that sticks out in your mind.

HAU: Well, I know we had days that seemed like months.. in the foxholes.. in the front... that we had to dig and that very quickly filled with water..

MEY: What was the weather like?

HAU: ... Well now we're really in ... November. Much colder than it should be that time of year... and raining.

MEY: So it was always filling up..

HAU: ... It was always filling up and we had these wooden crates.. That we put in... tha projected about this much above the water... that we would try to sleep.. (on)..

MEY: About 2 inches above the water..

HAU: Yeah.. that was something... That was really...

MEY: Miserable...

HAU: Unpleasant... miserable Even though there wasn't a lot of fighting going on at that... point.

MEY: Were you in Alsace Lorraine then?

HAU: We were in that general area... I don't know exactly where where...(unintelligible)

But we moved and then dug more foxholes and moved again.

MEY: Foxhole.

HAU: But there was one attack at the beginning of November Because that's when the whole Metz battle really began... different units crossing the river and so forth.

One attack I remember up a hill guys on the side and we were firing.. Germans firing back and all of a sudden I found myself all alone going forward and everybody had gone .. had been called back to retreat off that hill.. Well I turned tail and ran as fast as I still could run then.

That was very strange... word never got to me...to retreat from there.

Then a week later during the attack after we'd moved out from where we were, that's when I got hit near Woippy.

MEY: I was going to ask you to .. before you go into that... where's the first place you experienced combat. Or when... what was your first experience were you hearing shells? Or..

HAU: Oh yeah, we heard a lot of gunfire and shells exploding ... "eighty-eights" (88 millimeter) mortar shells and so forth..

Not directly... in the vicinity where I was .. but nearby.

I couldn't pinpoint on a map exactly where that was..

MEY: What was your first ... before you went up the hill before you tried to take the hill... did you have a.. a.. did you enter combat before that or was that the first..

HAU: That was the first actual combat in terms of firing your weapon.

MEY: Could you tell.. by the way.. this is just great, thanks for talking to me about it.

HAU: I can't remember all the details of everyday

MEY: That's okay.. this next question may have to do with Woippy, I don't know... could you tell me about a time you felt afraid?

HAU: Oh... you were certainly afraid... not just one time.. much of the time, because you never knew what was coming because of the attack or... Not a ... not what you would call an enjoyable experience.. not looking back on it with great fondness

MEY: What happened at Woippy? How did the day begin?

HAU: I don't know what happened exactly at the town..

(coughs - MEY offers water HAU :No thanks.)

It was fairly early in the morning and we had moved out and we were going into this whole operation and uh... maybe the company records would show what everyone was doing and what we were trying to do. As an infantryman you don't really know .. don't know the overall tactical.. plan.

So there I'm...going along... you know, holding this (pack?) and there was this explosion to my left rear, I don't know what it was a mortar shell or an artillery shell or what but I know I flew up in the air and landed back on the ground and found my toes of my left leg up here by my ear.

You know things.. totally turned around.

Company commander came by just then... whom we called "Tiny" - pretty big guy - (laugh) - so naturally "Tiny" and I said "Tiny, I just lost my left leg"...cause I certainly thought it was gone ..but uh fortunately the ... medics

were able to come fairly quickly -

I mean I don't have a clear notion or a recollection of it ... elapsed time between being hit and being picked up . but it couldn't have been too long or else I wouldn't have survived..

Which I came very close to not doing anyway. 26:28

In fact I do remember somebody I don't know whether it was an actual clergyman of some sort... or just somebody else praying over me the 23rd psalm. And so on.. (because I was) In and out of consciousness. And in fact after they collected me and helped me to the aide stations and I'm not sure exactly where it happened but uh I got ten blood transfusions immediately so I probably fairly close.. to bleeding out.

MEY: You were.. You were. What's the first thing you remember coming back to consciousness.

HAU: Well, I don't think I was ever unconscious - for any continued period of time but uh... it was not really hopping around.

MEY: Do you have any memories of that time about (unintelligible) ... people talking to you... I mean you have the memory of the priest

HAU: I do remember that.. but uh I remember the ride being pretty bumpy

MEY: To the hospital?

HAU: ..First to get to the aide station. Field hospital and eventually in Paris.. the hospital in Paris... somewhere.. for .. a period of time. Don't remember exactly and then eventually a hospital in England ... for at least a couple of months, two or three months... until March... of thirty of '45.

MEY: And for your leg... could you still uh.. what was .. what did they do for you? What could they do?

HAU: I tried unsuccessfully to get the medical records for that early period or for any period especially I just would have loved to have seen it but they don't seem to exist.

At least..they couldn't find them I've written to the Army said that I would love to know.

I don't know what they write down...whether they write down who it is... who .. who .. what medic picked you up and where you were transported.. and what the injury was and what the treatment was... in this first...couple of weeks

MEY: Sure.. All those are gone?

HAU: I have not been able to get them.

MEY: Where do you try to l...

HAU: It might just have been... it doesn't matter it just would have been interesting.

MEY: Did you ... How long were you in the hospital in England.

HAU: Till March.

MEY: What was your experience in the hospital like?
How was it 29:37

HAU: Nothing unusual about that. I don't remember whether I had any surgery there. I certainly... because this shell went right through the leg or this fragment whatever it was and took out... you know skin...and blood vessels and nerve and bone and everything. Took a hole through the... through the leg. And uh... I don't even know exactly but somewhere I mentioned early on ... and that's probably more accurate than what I would recommend now that I had - fourteen bouts of surgery-to try to repair - including... skin grafts, full thickness (?) grafts, bone grafts and so forth.

MEY: And how is it now?

HAU: Well it's still there.

Which is maybe a little amazing. It came pretty close about three different times to being amputated but uh ... and I would have agreed to that it certainly would have shortened my hospitalization. But it couldn't be done it couldn't be done below the knee. You see it was too short a stump it would have had to be done in the knee... in the knee itself. Which is a much more complicated prosthesis.

The lower leg amputation below the knee wouldn't be not so bad.

MEY: (31:20) Did they give you a choice? Or did you say no?

HAU: Well at the point I said no I don't think you should do that so they were able to save it.

MEY: Was that in England?

HAU: ... No I think that was much later..

MEY: Much later.

HAU: ...by the time I got back.. But the time I got "Z-I'd."

MEY: What's "Z" "I"?

HAU: "Z" "I" is "zone of the interior" which is the United States. That's what you called it - being "Z" "I'd." All of this jargon that...

MEY:That's great... Any other jargon come to mind?

HAU: Well no...

MEY: That's great... the jargon is stuff that... Always gets lost in the wash. So someone was telling me about... and nicknames too and friend ... Someone was telling me he was in a prison camp and they named the one guard "Lippie" because... I forget why... because he had..

HAU: Did he talk too much?

MEY: Maybe he talked too much or something like that.

When you were in the hospital did you make friends with the people around you.

HAU: Oh, yeah. A couple of people. Yeah.
After a while it seemed as though this was your life. Forever.
This went on day after day after week after month. And you'd spend the time playing pinochle. (33:06:9) and reading and..

Red cross shows.

In fact when you were able to.. get up and around I'm talking now back in the states.

Because in March, I came back and I don't know what a trip (ship?) that was - a hospital ship. To New York. We must've been in New York for a few days then we shipped out to Ohio. Cambridge, Ohio Hospital. A hospital I was there - not very long, maybe a month. And then to Atlantic City. Where the army had taken over many or most or all of the ... hotels... the big hotels on the boardwalk. Have you ever been to Atlantic City?

MEY: Yeah, sure.

HAU: Well there's the (sound like "Haddon Hall")... became the surgical unit the Shellfont? Next door became the medical unit, the Traymore down the board walk which was the rehab. Then others that were nurses' quarters, doctors' quarters and so forth

MEY: So.. so that that whole boardwalk was all hospital and medical facilities.

HAU: Thomas M England General Hospital. Until... Until... I think April of ...'46. Yes.

And then they returned the Properties to the owners... Of course the patients were transferred or discharged. And that's when I was transferred to the Valley Forge General hospital.

MEY: Where you were when the ..

HAU: Yeah, right. Philadelphia. Two and a half years from April ' 46 to September '48.

MEY: What's your day to day life like at Valley Forge - what do you do? It does seem to go on.

HAU: Well... I mean since you went through these cycles of surgery and bed rest and wheelchair and crutches and surgery that went on and on. You didn't do too much during the initial ...parts of that. Once you were able to get around on crutches... then the Red Cross would frequently take you to a ball game or concert..or a Newholt (? On sp)Pennsylvania to summer theatre.

To meet with the artists afterwards. And uh.. you just ... lived a life sort of unreal in retrospect I mean very different than ... normally

MEY: When they took you around were you like the "honored guest" at the like at the ballgames.

HAU: Well no because there was always a group of us.

(Looks at pictures) --- I was in the hospital together with this fellow we were trying to sell these ... large greeting cards with a sort of silk ... thing ... in the middle..

MEY: Yes.

HAU: I don't know how I got on to that.

MEY: That's nice.

HAU: And that was a wheelchair phase. And here this was a ... I don't know whether you know that name...

MEY: Kate Smith. Sure I know Kate Smith. "Participants in the second Purple Heart trip to New York. Kate Smith giving autographs. Corporal George Hauser." I've never never seen Kate Smith this young.

HAU: (unintelligible)

MEY: Everything but coke bottles to hurl at the umpire. Group above... in the Post Theatres watching a *televised* version of the 1947 World Series opening game at Yankee Stadium. So..uh..uh.. Yankees have just made an inspiring pick on that team... supporters.. Just made an inspiring play... there's one person applauding but you're holding your nose.

So is that to show your disdain for the Yankees.

HAU: (laughing - *AN OBVIOUS BOSTON FAN*) It must have been.

MEY: It must have been. And you have your one leg.

HAU: (looking at picture) Yeah yeah that was in a cast... (unintelligible) And this in reverse I see. I've never seen this because it's a mirror image...

MEY: Oh it is a mirror image. It's flipped

HAU: Yeah.. look at it this way.

MEY: And you're reading.. you're on some sort of bench ... with your crutches.

HAU: Yeah.. Somewhere. Does it say who took it? No..

MEY: All the ribbons what are the ribbons?

HAU: Well there's the purple heart and the bronze star and the European Theatre ribbon and the Good conduct medal..

MEY: Combat rifleman.

HAU: ... rifle... combat rifle... (looks)

MEY: I see a lot of pictures of you with books... Is that what you did for relaxation?

HAU: Yeah... reading... Nothing... unusual to .. do. I don't think I did any..

Studying until later and I don't know exactly when that was but it was later probably '47 '48 when the Army furnished us a staff car to take a group of us to... a nearby college. In Collegeville - (sound like "Ver-sign-us College")

MEY: Okay this is "The Forge" a picture from a newspaper called "The Forge"

HAU: Valley Forge Hospital paper.

MEY: (repeating) Valley Forge Hospital... (reads) "Basking in the sun outside are eight hospitalized soldiers from Valley Forge General Hospital now studying at (mispronounces) "Ver see nus"

HAU: "Ver Sign nus"

MEY: Oh "Ver Sign nus" College in Collegeville. And there you are..

HAU: We took some courses there... when we are able to do that. So I got credit for the courses I'd taken at Pittsburgh in the ASTP and the courses I took at Ver-sign nus so that semester And uh... then I really pushed in '48 September '48 to get the... to get out.

Because I realized that unless I got back into college that fall I would have to wait a whole year before the courses I need would be given again

MEY: Sure.

HAU: And so I went back to Ohio State then. I got out.. Went back to Ohio State for a year before I got my undergraduate degree.

MEY: And what... what was your course of study?

HAU: In chemistry.

MEY: So you finished in Chemistry too.

HAU: (unintelligible)

MEY: (new picture) This is in Atlantic City... do you think these are the nurses?

HAU: This was a choral group.. Some kind of singing group.

MEY: Oh yeah it is a choral group... Everyone looks very pretty. Woman in uniform... (looking) ... what's that.

HAU: Wrote something on the back. This was one of the families in New Hope (New holt?). March '47 it was when.. after we were in the Summer theatre thing... that's where we were.

MEY: That's a big dog.. so you're out on a ...

HAU: So that's pretty much it..

MEY: Just..Just a couple questions. Before you were wounded... in those early days what did you do for what did you like to do for relaxation in the arm... you were busy moving around... did you like to read or play cards or...

HAU: You mean?

HAU: From the time you...

HAU: Before I got in the army?

MEY: No no .. I mean from the time y- you got into the ..uh.. after you left ... after you left ASTP and you you you got to uh... or when you were in..in Europe. Did you have any time or

HAU: I don't think you had a .. lot of free time. I don't remember whether we had a pass to go into town.. in England.. or when we were at Barton Stacey.

MEY: Who.. who... looking back... who was the most important person to you? In your time in the service..

HAU: Important in what regard? Of course the people you were closest to were your buddies in your... platoon in your squad..

HAU: What were some of their names?

HAU: The important people were the ...sergeant the lieutenant and so forth. Told you what to do and when to do it. And how to do it.

MEY: What did you think of your commanding officers?

HAU: I didn't really have any ... really strong feelings one way or the other. (unint.) Two commanders and the company commander.. and the people you saw mostly you didn't see the higher ups.

Except the one time that George Patton came and talked to ...I think in France.

MEY: Did you see him.

HAU: I think so. At a distance.

MEY: My father talked about one time seeing him ride through. From a distance.

HAU: And the person I've never seen again... was his ... granddaughter.. remember her?

MEY: Yeah... Helen.

HAU: Married to a German I think.

MEY: Yeah.. yeah she is... lives in Luxembourg.(44:52)

HAU: Luxembourg or Belgium or...

MEY: Yeah.. the LeClergs still... I think... last year they were still in touch with her.

HAU: My understanding is... from what my wife said because she was talking with her.. that she and he family have a ... place or a ? in Hamilton... north of Boston. You know not very far from Boston.. you know twenty miles but I don't really know... because they were going to ... be in touch about some charity that she's involved in..

MEY: But you've never heard?

HAU: But it's never...

MEY: Let me ask you some questions from this (*refers to Veterans History Project Bio form*) just some information... Any medals or special awards... what are they Purple Heart I know.

HAU: Purple Heart. Bronze Star... That's about it. In fact.. and you probably know about that.. you know Cy Schnur?

MEY: Yeah.

HAU: He's been pushing Because he got "Le Jour Benalle" (wrong spelling - French medal) from the French consulate which they supposedly give to veterans who have fought in France and been awarded mostly the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. And I .. sort of requested to be considered for that... its now ... almost a year and a half ago... in April and this April I called because I found some additional documents and so on and I faxed those to them... and I haven't heard. And she said.. the secretary said.. "Oh yeah, I'll look into it and call you" She never did call.

So about a week or two later I called her again and she said "Oh yes, I'll talk to the consul and they'll you know and (sounds like "I never heard again.") Maybe they're just waiting for me to die (laughs)

Which is probably not too far away.

HAU: Did you know - Marty Meyer?

MEY: Just the name.

HAU: He was a member. In Iowa

MEY: In Iowa. Going back to Europe... You spoke Austrian and German. One of the people I talked to - who's passed - Joe Switkes, Joe Nordo Switkes- was Jewish.. When he came back he felt a rancor toward the Germans because he had a personal experience with them. Did you feel what did you feel about them..?

HAU: Well I certainly didn't have any ... great love for them I assure you. I mean I lost ... twenty thirty members of my family.. in the Holocaust.

MEY: I'm sorry.

HAU: Couldn't get out. But first I thought... well, nothing's going to happen here.

And my father, too, initially for the first several months even though there were all kinds of measures restricting your movement... you couldn't go to the park or the library and uh... but he said, "Well this is the initial. .. setup thing It will all blow over. Settle back to some kind of...supportable... (unintelligible)... but of course it didn't. (49:25)

And you know where... you could foresee the kind of ... I mean you saw the restrictions.. you know what happened in Germany from 19..33 on to 1938. The Nuremberg Laws and so on but still we couldn't foresee this total ... plan to annihilate... groups of people (49:56)

MEY: In those first few months back with the army did you run across... did you run across any other Jewish people or any people who

HAU: Refugees..

MEY: ... any refugees ... and talk with them?

HAU: No.. not at that time. We weren't running across anything in the ... muddy fields. Where we were... No

No... I didn't feel too kindly towards prisoners that we took. You know. Interrogating before they were shipped..

MEY: Oh.. because you spoke German so you were interrogating...

HAU: Well, I guess they didn't need it or they decided against it at the time the ASTP program was terminated. It would have made sense to me... to utilize my knowledge of French in the intelligence service... but they needed cannon fodder I guess... so that's where you went.

MEY: That's the Army I guess. How... how... silly question maybe in your case but when you look back... how did the war change you.

HAU: (51:54) Well, it certainly changed.. it's hard to see how things would have happened... (unintelligible)

If the war hadn't happened or immigration hadn't happened or the injury hadn't happened that's always very difficult. Of course, the war changed me because I went and got married as a result of the war, if you like. Because at Valley Forge General Hospital there was a dietician whom I got to know.

Then after I finished at Ohio state and came to Boston-Harvard - and didn't know anybody. She lived near Boston so I called her. My only possible contact in the area and she came with her sister to see me where I was living and uh her sister didn't want to come to this reunion. This time.. but uh... she's home.. so we got married.

MEY: Where are you living now?

HAU: Just outside of Boston

MEY: (53:10) What's what's your address.

HAU: In Newton... you mean the exact street address?

It's 47 Windermere Road. Auburndale which is part of Newton.

MEY: What's your zip?

HAU: 04266

MEY: 04266. What was your final rank?

HAU: Corporal.

MEY: Corporal.

HAU: I'm not quite sure how that worked. Everybody sort of got increased one step. And then after the war he were reduced again.

MEY: I'll just say corporal. And you finally got out.. you finally were discharged.. when?

HAU: In September, (19)'48.

MEY: In '48. When did start going to reunions?

HAU: My first reunion was the 50th. Chicago. '99.

MEY: Had you been in touch with people in between.

HAU: No not really. NO I really hadn't been in touch... I don't think I really knew the association existed. Until just a short time before, a year before maybe.

MEY: That's what a lot of people said, they said they just saw ads or they just ran across something that said the association.

HAU: I certainly don't know if there is any kind of a database that will tell us how many of the...what 20,000 people who were in that division including replacements maybe 20,000 originally 15 - 16,000 is the original division and then there were about 4,000 to 6,000 more replacements.
So anybody who'd ever been in that division maybe 20 or 22,000. I have no idea how many are likely to be alive. Would there be 20 percent... fewer.

MEY: Maybe the army has started it's uh..

HAU: Maybe they have that kind of record

MEY: I don't know you can ask the General when you see him or I'll ask him too. (56.07)

HAU: You mean General Archer when he comes?

MEY: Yeah, General Archer. Would you recommend military service now to young people?

HAU: I would recommend not so much military services as some sort of a some sort of service. Which could be military, it could be civilian working in a food pantry.. or... civilian service... In Austria there is an option for civilian - you know there's obligatory military service - but you can opt out of the military part of it and still have the service but do something else other things. And there's one group called "Gedank Diese(?)" which is a Gedank means a memorial service and they have .. these are young people obviously who are representatives who work for a year or 18 months - something like that - in one of twenty different place like the Anne Frank house or the Leo Beck (?) center in Berlin, Auschwitz at the "Ya Rasham (?)" in the United States memorial the Holocaust memorial Museum at I don't know where (unintelligible) places and they work there on Holocaust related issues... and when you say would I recommend military service - not per se but service in some some form like the... that is something. The city ...

MEY: Like VISTA is an inner-city.

HAU: Yeah... there is some service abroad but it's not obligatory.

MEY: When I went ... about a year ago before the last reunion Ken Burns was there with his producers showing an advance hour of "The War" series and I went up to his producer (*note: Lynn Kellogg*) and I asked her, "What's your favorite question to ask people and she said to me her favorite question was "Tell me a story you haven't told anyone before." And I said "That's a helluva question. You have people coming to see you."

HAU: If it's that important or interesting or memorable thing, it's very unlikely not to have told it before.

MEY: Sometimes, sometimes I'll say that to someone and see if anything comes to mind. One person who was in the Pacific all of a sudden remembered lightning hitting the water and the sheet of lightning coming across and another person, who was in Europe, remembered waking up in a foxhole and hearing a - a bird sing and then getting out and stepping in some human feces around the foxhole. It's just different things so I'll just ask you the question one time and if anything comes to mind any small thing or smell I'll just ask you "Tell me a story you haven't told anyone before, any memory any thing comes up."

HAU: Well nothing comes to mind spontaneously. I need to think about it. Come back. Retrieve something. This retrieval business. You know I'm a scientist and it's something that's intrigued me and I've never really figured out how to approach any of this experimentally. I mean especially you know you know something - a name - and you can't think of it and then suddenly sometimes in the middle of the night in the middle of the morning or the middle of the afternoon - "You know... the name was 'David Meyer'" - there was this guy who kept asking questions interviewing people what was his name. No idea. Then it comes to you. Now how does that work?

What is that search engine that's going on.

MEY: And where is it...And how... is there any way to... help it...

HAU: Because... it just comes to you sometimes within minutes sometimes the next day. I mean it happens to everybody...

MEY: It is a search engine.

HAU: It's a .. fascinating... thought...

MEY: It is fascinating...

HAU: So I have to get my search engine going to see what I can think of.

MEY: Okay. Well I'll close off now. Is there anything else you want to say right now?

HAU: No.. I think I pretty much told you everything up to ...

MEY: Something will come to you just tap me on the shoulder cause I'll always have something with me. I'll close off with this is David Meyer son of Earl D Meyer, Company H, 95th Infantry. It's 11:45 (AM) on August 1st (2008) and I've been talking to - could you say your name again...

HAU: George Hauser. H A U S E R. Company E, 377th Regiment, 95th Infantry.

MEY: Thank you very much it has been a great...

HAU: It's always a pleasure to see you .

MEY: It's always a pleasure to see you.

HAU: I'm glad that you came to this reunion.

End of Interview 1:02:51