

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Veteran's Name: Richard Hunton

Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

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Transcriber: Carol Slezak

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Interviewer: When were you drafted?

Richard Hunton: October 9, 1943.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Richard Hunton: Let's see. In '43, I would have been 19. Yeah. No, I would have been 18.

Interviewer: What were you doing at that time?

Richard Hunton: I was working at the U.S. Naval Observatory as an instrument maker? That's in Washington D.C. I graduated from high school in 1942, and then I took a summer engineering course at George Washington University to prepare me for this job at the naval observatory.

Interviewer: I understand that the job gave you deferment for a while?

Richard Hunton: Yes, I was deferred for three months, and then two months, and then one month, and then it ran out. Had to go then. That was in April 1944 when I had to go on active duty.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Richard Hunton: Yes, I was delivering newspapers for the Washington Times-Herald. And the headlines were about four inches tall.

Interviewer: Did you know it before you picked up the papers that day to deliver?

Richard Hunton: I don't really know that. I probably didn't because we didn't listen to the radio very much and there was no other way to find out. So that was probably when I first knew about it.

Interviewer: When you joined, where did you first go into active service?

Richard Hunton: Fort Meade, Maryland.

Interviewer: Is that where you did basic training?

Richard Hunton: No, I did basic training at Camp Blanding, Florida.

Interviewer: How long was basic training?

Richard Hunton: It was 17 weeks.

Interviewer: Did you grow up in a big family?

Richard Hunton: I had two brothers and one sister.

Interviewer: After leaving your family, what was it like that first night with all those strangers, that huge mix of people.

Richard Hunton: It didn't bother me. It was alright.

Interviewer: Did you make friends right away?

Richard Hunton: Not really. Not really close friends. We all associated with each other most of the time because we were so close.

Interviewer: I heard you once said that training was vigorous.

Richard Hunton: It was horrible. Terrible.

Interviewer: What was horrible about it?

Richard Hunton: The horrible things were the infiltration course, and the forest marches, and the combat course, and the simulated house-to-house combat. Sometimes the guys on the forest march would be lying alongside the road, jerking all over and foaming at the mouth, it was so bad.

Interviewer: After basic, where did you go?

Richard Hunton: After basic, I went to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Interviewer: Is that where you learned about heavy weapons?

Richard Hunton: No, I was in a Heavy Weapons Company at Camp Blanding for about a month. Then I transferred to intelligence and reconnaissance for a few weeks, and then ended up in Rifle Company.

Interviewer: Did you know where you were going—?

Richard Hunton: Oh no, we didn't know that.

Interviewer: So how did you find out—did you just get an order?

Richard Hunton: They took us out of training, and took us where they wanted us. The funny thing about Camp Kilmer, we were not supposed to tell anybody where we were, and the guys would write a poem "Trees," in their letters, because Joyce Kilmer wrote it.

Interviewer: They'd put clues.

Richard Hunton: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did that get through in the letter, or did they censor it?

Richard Hunton: They censored it.

Interviewer: How did you find out you were going to be a rifleman?

Richard Hunton: It was about the 6th or 7th week at basic. The captain came and said there were more riflemen being killed than I & R, so you'll be riflemen [laughs]. Really encouraging.

Interviewer: Did you have to go through more training then?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, the last of the 17 weeks.

Interviewer: What did they teach you then?

Richard Hunton: Well, they taught us of course marksmanship, and combat situations like infiltration course and house-to-house fighting.

Interviewer: What is infiltration?

Richard Hunton: That's where you crawl under barbed wire on your stomach with machine guns shooting about a foot above your head. Sometimes a guy would encounter a snake and stand up and get cut to ribbons. It was awful.

Interviewer: You talked about marches one time when we talked.

Richard Hunton: Yeah, the speed march with a full pack for four miles I guess was the worst thing we had to do. But then, we did have a 30-mile march at the end, which—really wasn't all that bad.

Interviewer: Speed march, is that like a run?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, run.

Interviewer: For four miles.

Richard Hunton: Maybe every 30 minutes or so we'd walk a few minutes then start running again. That's with everything you own on your back.

Interviewer: You had a Swedish commanding officer?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, that's the guy who said there's more riflemen being killed than I&R.

Interviewer: Where'd you go after Camp Kilmer?

Richard Hunton: After that we went straight to New York on the Queen Mary.

Interviewer: You have a couple days in New York?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, we were on the boat maybe a day-and-a-half before we left.

Interviewer: Where were you in the Queen Mary?

Richard Hunton: I was on A Deck, I believe.

Interviewer: How many to a room?

Richard Hunton: Oh goodness, it was horrible. We slept in hammocks, anywhere from three to five layers high. And the rooms were just jammed with this. And if you happened to be on the bottom hammock and the guy on top got sick, you were a mess.

Interviewer: Did you get sick at all yourself?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, I got a little nauseated before we left because the engines were running and we couldn't see out, and I thought we were moving, but we weren't [Laughs] Psychological.

Interviewer: Oh, sure. That happened to me one time. I was in a whale boat. I got sick and we were still in port. How long did it take you to get to Europe?

Richard Hunton: About four and-a-half-days.

Interviewer: That's pretty quick.

Richard Hunton: Yeah, especially because we had to zigzag the whole way there.

Interviewer: How did they feed you on the boat?

Richard Hunton: We had two meals a day. The first meal was breakfast, and that was steamed oatmeal and figs. And then for supper, I don't remember what we had for supper, but we had K-rations part of the time.

Interviewer: Where did you land?

Richard Hunton: We landed in Greenock, Scotland.

Interviewer: What were the people like?

Richard Hunton: The people were very, very poor. There were a lot of people, women especially, who came in little boats and climbed up into the fantail of the ship where all the

trash was, and they would go through the trash and pick out toothbrushes and combs, and things that had been thrown away. They were very, very nice.

Interviewer: How long were you there?

Richard Hunton: Just long enough to get on a train to Southampton, England.

Interviewer: Did you look out the windows?

Richard Hunton: They had window blinds; we couldn't see out.

Interviewer: Once you got to Southampton were you there for a few days?

Richard Hunton: No, we got onto a boat there, an Indian freighter boat. We got on that thing, and on the way over to La Havre in the middle of the night we ran into another boat and I thought we were going to sink, but we didn't.

Interviewer: At this time, what company were you with?

Richard Hunton: I was just a replacement then; I wasn't assigned to any company.

Interviewer: As a replacement, you're—.

Richard Hunton: Just a bunch of guys.

Interviewer: How many guys were there, do you think?

Richard Hunton: I don't have any idea.

Interviewer: Was the Queen Mary full on the way over?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, we had about 15,000 guys on it.

Interviewer: So you run into another boat and you don't sink, then you make it to La Havre. How'd you get off the boat?

Richard Hunton: Well, that's an interesting thing. We had to climb down some nets on the side of the boat to a landing craft. And the landing craft started toward the beach, and the closer we got the faster it went. And there was a big, concrete wall up ahead, and I thought we're all going to be killed. That's the way they land the landing craft. They just shove it up on the beach and you walk out [laughs].

Interviewer: Really, so you just run over the big wall?

Richard Hunton: No, we didn't get to the wall. We just got up on the beach. Then they let the door down and we walked out.

Interviewer: Was it one of those Higgins crafts, like you see—.

Richard Hunton: Yeah, like an LST or something like that.

Interviewer: What did La Havre look like when you got there?

Richard Hunton: Well, it was still burning, and it was pretty well bombed and devastated.

Interviewer: What did you do in Le Havre?

Richard Hunton: Let me get some notes here. Hold on just a second.

Interviewer: This is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th. I'm talking to Dick Hunton, Company I, 378th.

Richard Hunton: Okay. The next day, from Le Havre, we got on a 40-and-train. You know what those are, the tiny boxcars?

Interviewer: Yes, 40 men or eight horses?

Richard Hunton: Yes, but we had 42 men [laughs]. You couldn't sit down, you couldn't stand up, you couldn't lay down. You couldn't do nothing. You're just like a sardine in there.

Interviewer: How long was the trip?

Richard Hunton: It took 24 hours. We got to Givet, France, which is a little place about two miles from the Belgium border in northern France. And then we went to an old fort called Fort Charlemont. Just outside of Givet. And we stayed there for four or five days.

Interviewer: I remember you once told me a story about people running up to the train while you were on it.

Richard Hunton: Yes. They would run up to the train and want to trade cigarettes for Calvados liquor, and they wanted to know where we were from. And if somebody said they were from Chicago, the little kids would [makes a staccato sound], like a machine gun. They associated Chicago with gangsters.

Interviewer: So you're in Givet, and then where did you go?

Richard Hunton: Let's see. From Givet we got in trucks, and went through Verdun, Saint Michel [?], Nancy. Some of the World War I towns.

Interviewer: Where they built up from World War I?

Richard Hunton: Couldn't see; it was dark. We ended up at a place named Neufchateau, and stayed there about two, three days, in some old houses and stables.

Interviewer: Were you with a group of men at this time?

Richard Hunton: Yeah; I guess there must have been maybe 100 guys at that time, getting ready to be assigned to their companies. I didn't get to a company until November 26th, that was about four days later. I was assigned to Company I, 3rd Squad, 2nd Platoon, at Niedervisse.

Time 16:42

Interviewer: What did the countryside look like?

Richard Hunton: The countryside was littered with bombed-out houses, and dead cows and horses. It rained a lot; there was a lot of mud. It was awful. Cold.

Interviewer: When did you first hear any enemy fire?

Richard Hunton: About the next day, November 27th.

Interviewer: Do you remember what it was like?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, I remember some of it. I don't remember it in great detail though. We would get under fire and we would lie down in a ditch or something until it stopped.

Interviewer: Was it Niedervisse?

Richard Hunton: Niedervisse, yeah. We went through a big woods called Vois D'Coume (PH) then we went to several other little towns and villages and liberated them. And a little place called Dollon, in France, as we liberated that thing and went through town there was an old man standing at the side of the road with a bottle of wine and a glass. And he was offering it to the guys. And later I found out when I was corresponding with a man in Dollon that that was his grandfather. So I keep up correspondence with him, still.

Interviewer: By the way, thank you for getting me in touch with [inaudible].

Richard Hunton: Did he finally respond to you?

Interviewer: Yes, we got in touch and I'm going to send him some things.

Richard Hunton: How do you like his website?

Interviewer: It looks great. The tribute is very heart-stirring.

Richard Hunton: Have I sent you my latest CD yet?

Interviewer: I don't think so.

Richard Hunton: Okay, well I'll send you one. The CD is almost completely full of Company I [photos].

Interviewer: Do you go to Company I reunions?

Richard Hunton: Yeah; I didn't get to go to it this year, though. It was in Chicago and I didn't feel up to it. Only five guys showed up.

Interviewer: Will the next one be in Chicago?

Richard Hunton: No, it will be in Oklahoma City. That will be for the whole 95th. I don't think I'm going to make that either, because I just have so much pain in my arms and legs it hurts to drive. And my wife won't fly [laughs]. Too far to walk.

Interviewer: At the reunion, the general was there, and the plan was ideally for every veteran who shows up, they'll assign a serviceman to him as an aid. So once you get there, everything is easy. It's just getting there is the thing.

So you talked to a gentleman named Alain Maas (PH)?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, Alain Maas. I believe he's the one who lives in Dollon. Yeah.

Time 20:45

Interviewer: After Dollon, you mentioned you came up to a hill called the Sauberg?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, the Sauberg. We went through several of those little towns in the next 3-4 days, and ended up on the Sauberg, which is a fairly high hill. It's not a real mountain. As a matter of fact, it's high enough they now have a radio and television transmitter tower up on top of it.

Interviewer: So it's like 700-800 feet high?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, something like that. And they had a real good view of Saarlautern there across the river from there. So it was a very good place to have, and they didn't want to give it up.

Interviewer: What was the weather like when you were there?

Richard Hunton: The weather was foggy and cold, and you couldn't see anything. You couldn't even tell where you were. Then once we got on top there was a big tank trap right in front of us. And we stopped before we got there. And we had to dig in for the night, and the ground was nothing but frozen rock, so we couldn't dig anything and had to lay out on a sleeping bag right on top of the ground while artillery shells came in all night, throwing rocks and dirt all over you.

Interviewer: Holy cow.

Richard Hunton: It was awful.

Interviewer: You can't sleep like that.

Hunton, Richard; Company I, 378th, 95th Division World War II

Richard Hunton: No, you can't sleep too well [laughs]. Every time a rocket hits you, it would wake you up.

Interviewer: What is a tank trap?

Richard Hunton: A tank trap is just a huge ditch that a tank can't get through.

Interviewer: How do you end up getting across it?

Richard Hunton: We just climbed down and climbed out [laughs]. I filled my canteen up in the tank trap, had some water in it, and later on I found a dead German upstream but I kept the water anyway, put some Halozone in it [laughs].

Interviewer: When you first started seeing the Germans, how did they seem to you?

Richard Hunton: They were just ordinary people. A lot of them were old guys. Some of them were Russians, Mongolians, and Asian people. They were just pitiful people. They weren't real fighting people, most of them.

Interviewer: By this time, do you think they were forcing a lot of people into service?

Richard Hunton: Oh yeah, they were. Because all our good guys were getting killed.

Interviewer: After the tank trap, you went into a little town called Altforweiler (?)?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, that was the next little town. Altforweiler.

Interviewer: Did you get resistance going in?

Richard Hunton: Yes. We got attacked by mortar shells. And a couple guys got killed and six wounded, including me and my squad leader.

Interviewer: Mortar hit you?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, it was mortar. It landed about five yards from me. Tore my right arm all up.

Interviewer: The mortar exploded and hit you and your squad leader?

Richard Hunton: Right. His name was Red LaChance. L-a-c-h-a-n-c-e.

Interviewer: Did the mortar knock you unconscious?

Richard Hunton: No, it just knocked me down. But I didn't pass out.

Interviewer: But you were a kid and you knew you were bleeding.

Richard Hunton: Yeah. I could move my fingers but I couldn't move my arm.

Interviewer: What did they do with you?

Richard Hunton: They took me across the street to an old barn and put some sulfa powder in it and wrapped it up and put a splint on it, and told me to walk back to the company command post, which was about a block back the other way. So I did that. I got halfway there, and a mortar shell hit a house I was walking by. Knocked the entire roof off; landed about two feet in front of me. Would have killed me if I'd been two more steps.

Interviewer: Are you walking by yourself?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, right.

Interviewer: So now you're almost killed by a falling roof—how much farther is the command post?

Richard Hunton: Another half block.

Interviewer: Is there firing going on all around you?

Richard Hunton: Oh yeah, more mortar shells coming in.

Interviewer: What's the noise sound like?

Richard Hunton: Bang bang [laughs].

Interviewer: Were there Screaming Mimis going on?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, they were Screaming Mimis. And if they didn't hit you they'd scare you half to death. It was a whistling sound. Real loud, though.

Interviewer: Holy cow. That's frightening.

Richard Hunton: Oh, it was. Because you knew it was coming but you didn't know where it was going to land.

Interviewer: So you got to the command post and then what happened?

Richard Hunton: Well, after it got dark they assigned a medic to me, to walk me out of town to get in a jeep that took me to an evacuation hospital in Metz.

Interviewer: And Metz by this time was secure?

Richard Hunton: Well, mostly secure. There were still a lot of explosions while I was in the hospital there.

Interviewer: What happened to your squad leader, LaChance?

Richard Hunton: I never did know what happened to him. He was in such bad shape he was begging somebody to kill him. To put him out of his misery. And I thought he was dead until a few years ago when I found him in Florida.

Interviewer: Do you still keep in contact with him?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, I call him up every once in a while.

Interviewer: After the evacuation hospital in Metz, where did you go?

Richard Hunton: They took me to a field hospital near Verdun, which was a tent hospital.

Interviewer: Did they operate on you?

Richard Hunton: Yes. In Metz, they just cut away the dead tissue and put a cast on it.

Interviewer: You've said something about them paralyzing your arm?

Richard Hunton: Yes. My right arm was of course broken and they put an anesthetic in my left arm, but they hit the nerve instead of the vein. And I couldn't use either arm for a couple of days. The way I would get something to drink was they would put a cup of soup or coffee on the floor and stick a hose in my mouth and I'd dangle it around until I got it inside the cup and suck it up [laughs]. It was funny.

Interviewer: I've heard you've said something about going to the bathroom?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, the bathroom was right in the middle of a big room and I had to put a bedpan on top of a five-gallon gas can and use that for a toilet. Right out in the middle of a big room.

Interviewer: Were there any screens around?

Richard Hunton: No.

Time 30:13

Interviewer: You just—

Richard Hunton: You don't have any modesty in the army.

Interviewer: Which reminds me—what was the longest you went without bathing?

Richard Hunton: I went without bathing for about three weeks. It could have been a little longer, but about that long.

Interviewer: What's it feel like when you finally take a bath?

Richard Hunton: Well, it was a bed bath in England. I couldn't do anything for myself. I stayed in the field hospital in Verdun for a couple of days, and then I went to England the next day on a hospital plane.

Interviewer: It was awful. It was pouring down rain and the wind was blowing, and the pilot had to fly about 200 feet above the English Channel and he said it was the worst flight he ever had. Thought he was going to get killed.

Interviewer: So then you get to England and get taken to a hospital?

Richard Hunton: I was taken to the 187th General Hospital near Tidworth, England.

Interviewer: What did it look like?

Richard Hunton: It was a Quonset hut. They put me in a bed. It had white sheets and a white blanket. And I told them, Don't put me in there. I'm so dirty I'll mess it up. They said, Well, get in it anyway [laughs].

I didn't think I was worthy of getting in that pretty bed.

Interviewer: What did the doctors and nurses wear? In the movies they're all wearing crisp hats.

Richard Hunton: I don't really remember. They could have had hats. I'm not sure But anyway, they were very nice

Interviewer: I understand they started giving you penicillin?

Richard Hunton: Yeah. Every four hours, day and night. For many days. It must have worked though; it did the job. I was feeling great. Didn't have any pain at all.

Interviewer: What happened next?

Richard Hunton: They changed the cast. I stayed there about two months I guess.

Interviewer: I understand you were made to be ward assistant cook?

Richard Hunton: Yeah. I was a cook. And I'd break eggs left-handed and fry them or scramble them, however they wanted them. And some of them got to complaining about the food so I quit. Next guy was worse, so they got me back [laughs].

Interviewer: You've mentioned that there was one fellow who shot himself?

Richard Hunton: He shot himself in the foot. And nobody would talk to him or look at him or anything.

Interviewer: So he was shunned. Did you see much of that?

Richard Hunton: No. That's the only one I saw. I'm sure there were a lot of them, though.

Interviewer: So your right arm was still in a cast?

Richard Hunton: Yeah. It stayed in a cast for about eight months.

Interviewer: Were you right-handed?

Richard Hunton: Yeah. I wrote my first letter left-handed two weeks later.

Interviewer: That must have been a challenge.

Richard Hunton: It took all day [laughs].

Interviewer: How long did you stay there as a ward cook?

Richard Hunton: I guess about most of the time.

Interviewer: Then did you move from there to another hospital?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, we moved from there in January to an army hospital in Bath, England. Stayed there about 12 days.

Interviewer: And what time of year was this?

Richard Hunton: This was January 27.

Interviewer: So you got assigned at the end of November; you get wounded in early December.

Richard Hunton: December 1st. Yeah. I lasted about five or six days. And I've always felt guilty about not being able to stay longer.

Interviewer: I understand. A lot of people feel that way. In Bath, what was the weather like?

Richard Hunton: The weather was snowing, and the guys who could walk had to sleep in tents out in back of the hospital. And the only heat we had was a little pot-bellied stove. And I was the only one able to carry coal to it.

Interviewer: Really? And you only had one good arm.

Richard Hunton: Yeah.

Interviewer: People were pretty much walking wounded.

Richard Hunton: Yeah, I know it.

Interviewer: So you're a left-handed coal carrier.

Richard Hunton: That's right. And egg scrambler.

Interviewer: Were you still cooking then?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, I cooked breakfast.

Interviewer: So that's in Bath. How many men are you cooking for?

Richard Hunton: I didn't cook in Bath. I just cooked in Tidworth.

Interviewer: How long did you stay in Bath?

Richard Hunton: I stayed there 11 or 12 days.

Interviewer: And where did you go then?

Richard Hunton: We took a bus to Bristol and then a train to Southampton. Got on an old transport plane, I guess it was one of these liberty ships February the 8th. And two days later we left Southampton for the States.

Interviewer: I understand that when you were on the ship you were in a body sling?

Richard Hunton: In a body cast. It went all the way up from my hips to my arm and my arm was sticking out like a statue or something.

Interviewer: Was it made out of plaster?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, just like an ordinary cast. They had to stabilize the arm for the trip. Because the ship just bounced around bad. And if I had fallen down I was going to kill myself.

Interviewer: On the ship, did you stay put most of the time?

Richard Hunton: No, we'd walk around and have fun. Go to the recreation room. This other old guy in there was a sergeant from Tennessee, and he had his left arm in a cast like this. And we'd put on a bathrobe, go down in the rec room, and throw darts at each other's chest, and it would scare the other guys half to death because they didn't know we had a cast on.

Interviewer: What other things did you guys do for rest and relaxation?

Richard Hunton: I read a little bit and, you know, just walk around, and talk. Watch guys play poker. These guys would play poker with English money, pounds. And they had a big wad on them and they thought it was a dollar, but they were four dollars apiece. So they were losing more than they realized.

Interviewer: Did you play poker at all?

Richard Hunton: No.

Interviewer: My father one time got in a game with a couple guys from New Jersey. And they let him win, then they cleaned him out.

Richard Hunton: They're pretty slick in the army.

Interviewer: How long did it take to get across on the boat?

Richard Hunton: Let's see. We left on February 10th, and got there on the 24th. So about two weeks.

Interviewer: Where did you land?

Richard Hunton: Hampton Roads.

Interviewer: In Virginia. Did you go to that reunion?

Richard Hunton: No, I didn't get to that one either. I was in bad physical shape at that time. I'd just had an operation for something.

Interviewer: How are you doing after the incident from a few weeks ago?

Richard Hunton: Oh, fell down? I almost bled to death then, but I haven't had any trouble since then with it.

Interviewer: Good. So from Hampton, where did you go?

Richard Hunton: Went to Camp Patrick Henry, and I forgot where that was. Somewhere in Virginia. About a week later, we went to Camp Pickett Hospital.

Interviewer: Were you still wearing the cast?

Richard Hunton: Yeah. And that was removed on March the 5th, and that was the first time I had a whole bath. So it was somewhere from about October to March without a whole bath.

Interviewer: Do you remember that first bath?

Richard Hunton: No.

Interviewer: They took off the cast, you have a bath, and you've mentioned they put a hanging cast on?

Richard Hunton: A long-arm cast. It went from my axilla down to my hand.

Interviewer: How long did you keep that on?

Richard Hunton: Well, they changed it several times. But the last time they took it off was June the 18th. So it was about three more months after that.

Interviewer: That reminds me. Do you remember where you were when Roosevelt died?

Richard Hunton: Yeah, I was in the hospital in— I believe in Tidworth. When did he die?

Interviewer: I believe in April '45.

Richard Hunton: Yeah, I must have been at Camp Pickett Hospital.

Interviewer: And were you there when Germany surrendered?

Richard Hunton: Yeah.

Interviewer: When you heard that, was there celebration, or what was it like?

Richard Hunton: Well, everyone was pretty happy about it. Most of them didn't feel like getting too enthusiastic, I guess, but we were all very happy.

Interviewer: Did you think you were going on to the Pacific, or did you know you were getting out with your wounds?

Richard Hunton: I would have got out with the wound. There wasn't any possibility of going to the Pacific. I was in the hospital until August the 6th. That's the day they dropped the first atomic bomb. And I was discharged that day.

Interviewer: You have a story about that, don't you?

Richard Hunton: Yeah. They put August 6th, 1946 as my discharge date. And that was about a year later. So I went back and had them change it right away.

Interviewer: When did you hear the bomb had been dropped?

Richard Hunton: Well, I was on a streetcar in Washington D.C., going home, and I heard all these people talking about this bomb that they dropped and it destroyed a whole city. And I stopped and I said, We don't have any such thing, because I've been in the army and I know they don't have that.

Of course, they didn't tell me [laughs].

Interviewer: In a previous interview you said that this allowed you to claim responsibility.

Richard Hunton: Yeah, because when my captain found out I was going to be discharged, he said, How are we going to win the war without Hunton? So they called Truman and he said, Well the only thing we can do is drop the bomb, I guess, to make up for him.

Time 44:31

Interviewer: So you went back home. What was it like?

Richard Hunton: I was treated with great respect and honor. They were proud of us.

Interviewer: I've interviewed other veterans who said when they returned home, and were given their old jobs back, they were met with some resentment.

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Richard Hunton: No there was no resentment at all.

Interviewer: What did you do after you got out of the service?

Richard Hunton: I applied to George Washington University that fall, and I stayed there for eight years, and got a medical degree, and then went to work?

Interviewer: What was your specialty?

Richard Hunton: Family practice.

Interviewer: You've already alluded to some things, but do you remember any times that you felt frightened?

Richard Hunton: I'm not sure it was really fright; I'd call it anxiety maybe. Every time I got into a sort of frightening situation I'd chew gum, and it sort of took my mind off of it. But to be scared to death, I don't think I was.

Interviewer: Do you still chew gum at all?

Richard Hunton: No.

Interviewer: Would you advise people to join the service today?

Richard Hunton: Well, this is a different world now. I don't know. Back in those days war was pretty cut and dried. You knew who the enemy was and you knew how to destroy him. Now you don't know who the enemy is. You don't know where he is. And your friend may be your enemy. So I don't know, it's just a different situation now.

Interviewer: When did you start going to reunions?

Richard Hunton: I went to my first one about, either '99 or 2000, one of the two. I've been to three.

Interviewer: I wish you could find a way to get to this one.

Richard Hunton: I wish I could too because it may be one of the last.

Interviewer: There was a move on the floor to make the Chicago reunion the last one. It got hastily shoved aside and General Archer and some of his assistants said they'd take over everything, that they'd like to do it in Oklahoma City.

Richard Hunton: Well, I personally feel like I'd rather they take it over than the younger generation coming up. Of course, I know there's a lot of sentimentality among the children of these veterans. But I'm not sure they would hold [inaudible] like a military outfit would.

Interviewer: The 95th show up with great respect. I feel honored to be there.

Richard Hunton: They're real proud of the original 95th. I think they maintain that pride in the organization.

Interviewer: Is there anything special you'd like to talk about that we haven't talked about yet?

Richard Hunton: No, I think that pretty much covers it all.

Interviewer: I think so, too. I'm glad you mentioned the dart game [laughs].

Richard Hunton: That was funny. I tried to get in touch with that fellow several years ago, but I found out he was dead. He was in Company A.

Interviewer: This talk follows a lot of what was in the book, but I've always felt it's nice to have it in your own voice. Do you have any grandchildren?

Richard Hunton: Yes, I've got seven. All the way from about 7 to 21.

Interviewer: Do they ever ask you any questions?

Richard Hunton: No, they never have. I've given them my book on my experiences, but I don't know if they ever read it or not.

Interviewer: Well, maybe they'll hear this and they'll have some questions.

Richard Hunton: Yeah, that might help. ... I'll tell you one more thing. Did I ever tell you about getting shot at by an 88?

Interviewer: No.

Richard Hunton: Well, that's interesting because if you hear it, it missed you [laughs]. It's so fast [laughs]. Oh my. I wouldn't take anything for the experience. And as I said, I just feel guilty about not staying longer. But I guess I'd have been killed if I did.

Interviewer: Most of the people I've talked to, only a few have made it a long time in the service. ...

Richard Hunton: I got into the fray about four days after Metz.

Interviewer: Were you around when they took the bridge in Saarlautern?

Richard Hunton: No, I got out two days before that.

Interviewer: So you were in the heat of it for the short time you were there. Well, it's a great honor talking to you.

Richard Hunton: Well, I appreciate your interest.

Interviewer: I'll just do a formal sign off. This is David Meyer, son of Earl D Meyer, Company H, 379th. And I've been talking to—.

Richard Hunton: Richard E. Hunton. Company I, 378th Infantry Regiment.

Interviewer: And Mr. Hunton, before I forget, what is your birth date?

Richard Hunton: My birth date is 12/23/24. That's a long time ago.

Interviewer: And where were you born?

Richard Hunton: [Inaudible], Indiana.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time.

Richard Hunton: Well, thank you. I'll send you this CD, and it's just got a huge amount of stuff on it. David, have you seen the book by Hugh Cole entitled, Lorraine Campaign? It's a huge book about four inches thick and I've got it on the CD. You have to be connected to the Internet, but you can click on every single chapter in the book. It's amazing.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time.

Richard Hunton: Well, I appreciate your time, and your interest.

Interviewer: One more thing. Do you remember your service number?

Richard Hunton: Yeah. 33-748-972. I used to remember my rifle serial number, but I forgot it [laughs].

Interviewer: One more. Is there any food you couldn't eat after you came back because it reminded you of the war?

Richard Hunton: No, no. Once you eat C-rations, K-rations, and D-rations, you can eat anything [laughs]. -end-