

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Veteran's Name: Edward Hutchins

Meyer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

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Transcriber: Carol Slezak

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David Meyer: Your name is?

Edward Hutchins: Ed Hutchins

Meyer: And you were with what company?

Hutchins: I was with the 6th Artillery Battalion.

Meyer: Battery B?

Hutchins: Battery B.

Meyer: Of the 920th Field Artillery.

Hutchins: Correct. So we went down to West Virginia for mountain maneuvers. The first thing we was going to learn was the mules. So we go down to the corral, and it's all muddy with horse stuff in it. And we all around. And this old guy from World War I with an old army hat on says, wrapped around and everything, and he says, "I'm going to give you the [unclear] of the mule. So he walks around to the back of the mule, slaps him up on the rear, and the mule kicks him, and he's down in the mud and horse shit.

Meyer: Holy cow.

Hutchins: And he has a broken leg. My buddy and I was right there he kicked him, and we started laughing. And something tapped me on the back. I turn around and it's my lieutenant. He said, "You thought that was pretty funny?"

I said, "Sir, it's the funniest thing I ever saw in my life."

He said, "Well I hope you enjoyed it. Tomorrow morning go down to the kitchen. You got a week. KP." (laughter)

So anyway, this night we're going to have this march up the mountain. I drew the mule that has the two wheels—they break this little cannon down. So it's a dark, midnight march. In about two or three hours we're pretty far up. And one of the mules go over the side.

Meyer: No!

Hutchins: And all the rest of them brayed and everything. And I headed for this big tree. It was pitch dark. In the morning they gather us all up and I happened to be on the first one to the left. And they said everybody who had a mule, put their hand up. And of course I was the first one. And he said, "Well, what happened to your mule?"

I said, "Sir, well, I have no idea."

He said, "What do you mean you don't have any idea?"

I said, "When that other mule went out and everyone started braying," I say, "see that tree right there? I spent the rest of the night right behind that tree."

Well everybody else bust out laughing. And he didn't think it was too funny. (laughs)

He said, "Do you know what that mule cost?"

I said, "I have no idea, Sir."

He said, "Well, \$630 and you're a private. How long is it going to take you to pay for that?"

I said—I shouldn't have said this—I said, "But, Sir, I'll be alive to pay it."

And everybody broke out laughing again. So I was two weeks on KP [(laughs). That's my mule training.

Meyer: That's a great story. Can I ask you, do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor? What you were doing?

Hutchins: No, I really don't.

Meyer: What's your birth date?

Hutchins: January seventeenth.

Meyer: What year?

Hutchins: Twenty-two.

Meyer: Nineteen twenty-two. And where were you born?

Hutchins: I was actually born in New York, but my family had moved down to Maryland. But what would have been my aunts is two big nurses in a hospital. And they insisted that my mother come back up and have the baby there because we didn't have very good things down in Maryland then, where we lived. So on my record in the Army they had New York, but I only stayed in New York for two days. (laughter) So my first sergeant hated New Yorkers. So I was in trouble there, too.

Meyer: So even though you were only a New Yorker for two days, he hated you.

Hutchins: Yeah.

Mrs. Hutchins: He didn't like New Yorkers. You were a New Yorker for two days?

Hutchins: Yeah. I was born there and brought back home.

Meyer: Were you born in Brooklyn or New York City?

Hutchins: New York City.

Hutchins, Edward, 6th Artillery Battalion, Battery B, 920th Field Artillery, WWII

Meyer: New York City. Okay.

Hutchins: Anyway, we were out in the desert for desert training. When we came from Louisiana, all our things were just falling apart because of the heat of three months in Louisiana.

Meyer: In the swamps, yeah.

Hutchins: We finally got new ones. Of course they didn't have my size. So I rolled it up, and I go through. And the first sergeant is there. They had to give you a pill at breakfast for the heat and everything. And he said, "Really snazzy."

I said, "Oh, yes sir." I said, "They didn't have my size."

He said, "This is not zoot suit country. (laughter) And when you finish eating, you report to me."

And I went up there, after I put my stuff away, I went up there. And I said, I told him, report here for another week of KP. And he said, "What in the hell did you do to that man?" (laughter)

I said, "Well, the worst thing is I'm born in New York."

He said, "Is that right?" I said yeah. So he said, well, he says, "I don't think that's right." That was my second week straight. I was only off one day. So this actually went on, I actually did six weeks of KP.

They were going to take the firing tests for the .05's, and my sergeant told Lieutenant Drummond that I wasn't available because I had a week of KP. He said, "What do you mean? Get him off of KP because he's going to be the gunner on number 3 gun." This is for the records. So, I understand that the first sergeant and the battery commander and him had a battle [laughs]. And I got off of KP and went on the [firing test?]. As soon as we get back in the camp, I got put on KP.

[TIME 7:08]

So I finally got a pass to Los Angeles.

Meyer: From Camp Coxcomb?

Hutchins: And I went in by myself. And I walk in the first saloon and this guy sees me, and he, "Come here! All the cooks are back here!"

"I'm not a cook."

"Don't tell me, I see you out there with the feed battery! All the time!"

I said, "I swear! I'm on KP!"

"Don't give me that!"

So the first thing I know, I got a shot and a bottle of beer. But they wouldn't believe that I wasn't a cook [laughs].

Meyer: Because you spent so much time in the kitchen.

Hutchins: Yeah. See when you go out in the desert and you run into some kind of a problem, the kitchen goes back and tries to find someplace with some shade, you know. And we have it

made, because we eat. They're out there eating them K-rations. And we had fine food. So I loved it back there. And the mess sergeant always took it easy on me because he said, "That's not fair, what they're doing to you." Couldn't do anything about it but...

Meyer: No. No. Do you remember the mess sergeant's name?

Hutchins: No, I don't.

Meyer: Is KP, what sort of things would they have you do?

Hutchins: Well, like in here, in the desert, you had all these waste cans, and you have for hot water for the washer, and then rinse water, and so forth. And you have all of the things that they use to cook, see. If we were in camp, we would have dinner at like five o'clock. And I'd be up there scrubbing all these, emptying them all out, scrubbing them, and getting them all ready. And it would be like nine o'clock at night before you'd get through.

Meyer: Holy cow.

Hutchins: And the worst part was, I'd go back to my tent and get a towel go down and take a cold shower, and nobody would talk to me. They were told that they broke, the gunner corporal, and that I was going to be the corporal.

So when they found out, I come back from take my shower one night and they said, "We have a cold beer in the sand under your bunk."

I said, "Yeah, you get the goddamn thing out from under there—I'm in enough trouble."
(laughter)

"Yeah, but, we didn't know that. We didn't know. They told us that you were going to be made corporal."

See, I was a new man. I didn't take the training with the 95th. I was at Fort Bragg when I came in. And I refused, when the first sergeant told me, he asked who, he was going to break two gunner corporals, because he didn't have his stripes on. They went out on a six-day problem. And I had gotten hit with a pick right here [points to somewhere on his body]—

Meyer: Okay, I see.

Hutchins: And they said for me to stay back in camp with the first sergeant. And he told me to come up to his tent and I got a radio, and lamps.

The first day we go eat with service battery. And walking back he says, "I got good news for you, you're going to be third section corporal gunner." And I said no. He says, "Well, I asked the man at the head of all four guns who is the best gunner corporal that isn't a corporal. And he said you, and somebody else." They were going to break both of them. So he said, "How do you like that?"

I said, "I don't like that, sir."

He said, "What?"

I said, "I don't want to be gun corporal. I'm a new man in this. Now you're going to make me gunner corporal over them."

He said, "Well, you had better training than they did and you actually know all this." He said in fact that I'm a better gunner corporal than the previous guy I'm going to replace.

I said, "I can't do that."

Meyer: Yeah, you'll be ostracized.

Hutchins: Which turned out, the battalion [delivers me?] He had gone out and told that I was going to be made a corporal. Of course, I refused. And he said, "You're going to be sorry." And as soon as he came back he said, "You're on KP. Report."

Meyer: No!

Hutchins: So I go up there. So when I come back at night I get my towel and nobody speaks to me. I'd go down and take a cold shower and come back. They'd ignore me. This went on about three days. I'm on KP now. And when they finally find out, that's when they had the beer for me and everything.

Meyer: When they found out you refused?

Hutchins: Yeah. And I said, "What in the hell would you think that they'd be putting me on KP if I was going to be made corporal? How stupid can you be?" I wouldn't talk to them! (laughter) Oh, they were sorry, they were this, they were that. So, I was the hero then [laugh].

Meyer: So you were a hero. So after Camp Coxcomb, so now they're accepting you as one of their own?

Hutchins: Oh yeah. Yeah. I'm their boy.

Meyer: Now you're the boy. Did they have any nicknames for you?

Hutchins: No, just Hutch.

Meyer: Just Hutch. So do you go to Indiantown Gap next, after Camp Coxcomb?

Hutchins: Yes, we went back to Indiantown Gap. And of course we went on mountain maneuvers in West Virginia.

Meyer: Is that where you did the mule training?

Hutchins: Yes.

Meyer: Was it cold at Indiantown Gap?

Mrs. Hutchins: Did you do mule training at Indiantown Gap or was it West Virginia?

Hutchins: West Virginia. But while we were at Indiantown Gap we went down. That's what he's asking. And if you remember they were losing all kinds of men in North Africa in the infantry.

Meyer: Yeah, sure.

Hutchins: They had a program, and to this day nobody knows what the hell it was going to be. But they put all these guys in college. And they didn't take training or anything. I have never found out what these guys were going to be. They were going to be officers. But I couldn't understand why they went that way or anything. And they broke this thing up. There were thousands of them. Different, University of Pennsylvania, and young guys, smart kids, every one of them. They took 3,000 of them and put them in our division.

I felt so sorry for the guys. Everybody picked on them. I gave my section chief, I sat him down. "Who you telling me this?"

I said, "Well, you've given these guys every damn detail." In fact, me and my buddy took one of them aside. They didn't know whether they were coming or going. I said, "I want them trained if they're going to go with me. How stupid can you be, putting them on KP all the time instead of getting the training?"

Meyer: Ah, sure.

Hutchins: Oh, him and I had it out big. He said, "Who in the hell do you think you are? Look at what we've done, we've done all this stuff."

I said, "Yeah, but it's not their fault."

[TIME 15:05]

Meyer: Because you'd been through it yourself.

Hutchins: Right. And we've got to have training. These kids, they don't know nothing. They hadn't gone through the, you know, with the fire over their head and all that kind of stuff.

Meyer: They hadn't gone through that?

Hutchins: No. So they did their, it was real cold and there was like two inches of snow in Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania when these kids went through them. And they start at midnight. And you know they have live ammunition going over them.

Meyer: Sure, going over them. Trying to crawl.

Hutchins: Well, they're practically swimming in this snow and water and mud. And when it came back in, and they go in, you know, they have the big showers, you know. And they were just filthy. And this is tough for them with no training and all. This was the first real bad training they had.

Meyer: Miserable for them.

Hutchins: I just always—I never let up on my part. I don't understand what that helped. I want these guys to know what the hell they're doing. They can cost my life.

Meyer: Sure they could.

Hutchins: And that was the big story with the—

Meyer: So after that, do you go to Myles Standish to leave?

Hutchins: Yes. Well, here's a little story I never told you. I'm blind in my left eye. So, right after Pearl Harbor, it was the 25th of December, I think, if I remember right. Well, about the fifth or sixth of January, my best friend says, "Hutch, let's join up."

And I said, "You know I can't get in."

He said, "Oh, shit, they're taking anybody now."

I said, "I'll go with you but I don't have any hope of getting in."

He said, "Oh, man, they'll take you."

I said, "I'll tell you what we'll do, we go to the ballroom, and they got the marine and navy and right at the [5th regiment?] army." I said, "I'll go through. If I don't make it, we'll go to the next one."

So that day we went to the marines, the navy, and the army. I failed all of them.

I said, "Jay, you might as well go ahead."

"Oh, no. Let's try one more week."

So we went back the next week and did the same thing. So he became a navigator on a B-17. He got shot down in northern Italy on his 49th mission. Worked his way all the way down. Within two miles of the American line coming up, and got turned in by an Italian.

Meyer: Got turned in by an Italian.

Hutchins: He was in civilian clothes. They could have shot him. But the old thing is the German air force, they want to protect their people, and we do, too. So they said they needed him for trying to get some information. So that is how he lived.

Meyer: That's how he survived.

Hutchins: Yeah. So, anyway.

Meyer: So you finally went the last time and the army took you?

Hutchins: What happened, always the last thing they give you is your eye exam. So I went back to work. And this is in the fall. I was the manager of the main PX at 20 years old at Edgewood Arsenal. And I had to go into Baltimore to get some jewelry for a colonel's wife. And it was a nice day in September. So on the way in, driving in, I said goddamn, I'm going to go over and try. I go over there; I go in the navy and get turned down. I go in the army, and they give me everything, and they took me in where the eye, and they said, "He's out for lunch. Just sit there and he'll be back."

Sure enough, 15, 20 minutes he came back. I sit up. He said, “Got refused in the navy, huh?”

I said, “Yes Sir.”

He said, “You want to get in the bad?”

I said, “Yes, Sir.”

He said, “How many times have you tried?”

I said, Six.

He said, “I’m a volunteer here. I’m 73 years old and I’ve retired.” He was a pharmacist. “And I’m doing this for nothing. And I think they ought to take you.” He says, “I tell you what I’m going to do. I’m going to give you an eye exam. I’m going to give you the worst left eye, that they will take you. Now I don’t want you cussing me, because you’re going out to Virginia, put all your clothes on, and get your shots and all. And you’re going to get another eye exam. You might be on KP or something the rest of—you want to take that chance?”

I said yes. So he did.

And he patted me on the back and said, “God, I hope you make it.”

I wish I would have got his address or something. I always wished that.

And I get down to Virginia. The last time I’d eaten that day was noontime. At ten o’clock at night. They give you all these shots. It really makes you tough. And I’d had nothing to eat. And I’d drawn all my clothes and all that stuff. Taking the eye exam. And there’s a little New York guy about my size, maybe a little heavier. And he sat down. He put the patch—in the old days they put the patch over your right eye—and I put it over my left. (laughter)

“What the hell you think you’re doing?!”

I jumped up and he grabbed me right by the, “What the hell do you care?”

“I don’t know. I’ll put it back. You do what the hell you want to do.”

I said, “Thank you.” [laughs]. And I passed the exam. I thought I’m in now.

So we get down to Fort Bragg, I’m in basic training two days. The third morning they call my name out, one name. Report to the orderly room, Class A uniform, at nine o’clock.

[unclear] He said, “I have no idea. That’s my orders.”

Meyer: What does Class A uniform mean?

Hutchins: Well, you know, if you’re—

Meyer: Dress uniform.

Hutchins: Dress uniform. So I report up there, and here comes the sergeant with a jeep and he takes my duffle bag and everything. I said, “Where are we going?” No, that wasn’t the duffle bag. I was just going over to the main post.

So they take me over to a lieutenant colonel’s office. And I go in there and he says, “Have I got news for you.” He said, “Pull that chair up.” And he pulls the chair up. He says, “I’ve got good news for you. I’m picking you as one of a hundred men. We’re pulling you out of that basic training and you’re going on another basic training. And when those guys are over in the PX in the evening, drinking a beer or eating an ice cream cone, you’re going to be studying three nights a week. And when they go on a twenty-five-mile hike, you’re going on a thirty.”

Meyer: Holy cow!

Hutchins: It went on and on. I says, “I don’t understand.”

He said, “Well, we get through that, you’re going to school for four weeks here at Fort Bragg. And when we get through that, you’re going to come here for the artillery unit.”

I said, “Yeah?”

He said, “And if you pass all that, you’re a lieutenant.”

Meyer: Holy cow!

Hutchins: “How do you like that?”

I said, “Sir, I don’t like that,” I said, “I volunteered to get in fighting.”

He said, “Don’t worry, son, you’re going to get in fighting soon enough. You can’t pass this up.” And I knew I was out then.

So, we go through this PX. My basic training was, you know, I got in trouble later because I let somebody know that I knew how to lay in a battery. So we started the four weeks after the three months of [unclear] I go, I knew they were going to send me for an examination, a physical. First week, nobody went. Second week, nobody went. I thought they can’t possibly do this, because I knew, I worked at Edgewood Arsenal. I knew these kinds—

Meyer: You knew how it worked.

Hutchins: So the third week, Monday morning, they take fifteen guys and send them over to the main base. Second week, they didn’t call me, fifteen up. I knew I had to [be in?] So the third week, they call me and I went over. And I was out. You know.

Meyer: You were, oh.

Hutchins: They didn’t say, you know, I asked the first sergeant what, he says you report [the first sergeant?] And he tells me that afternoon, “You turn in your gun and everything. You be in Class A uniform tomorrow morning and somebody will pick you up.”

[Time 25:08]

So nine o’clock the next morning, they pick me up. And it’s a staff sergeant. I say, “Where am I going?”

He said, “I don’t know. I’m to take you to a building out here.”

And essentially, he goes out to where the CC barracks were, and they were like tar paper. And they got six of them there. And he said, when we get out there, he said, “You go right in there, number 56.”

I go in there. It’s January now. They’ve got these iron beds in there. Just have the mattresses, it’s rolled up. And I go in where there should be the non-coms, there’s nobody there. So I go in, all five others – nobody’s in the whole place. I’m the only one in the whole place.

Meyer: Yeah. You’re the only one in the whole—

Hutchins: It's cold. I've got an overcoat on and everything. And finally, the last time I remember, I looked at my watch and it was two o'clock. I must have fell asleep. The first thing I know, somebody is kicking my boot, with a flashlight in my face. "You're holding the campaign up!"

I said, "I'm not holding a goddamn thing up." (laughs)

He took my duffle bag, and he threw in boots, I mean he's going down fifty miles an hour in them damn back roads. And we come to the opening, they got two steam engines pulling this great big Pullman train. And there was about seven or eight guys out in the middle of [inaudible]. A full colonel out there and a bunch of stuff. Pull up there. And this lieutenant, "Where in the hell have you been, you're holding up the whole—"

And this colonel pulls him back and says, "Evidently it's not his fault."

I said, "I've been over in this building since nine o'clock this morning."

And he said, "Well, son." He talked to the corporal and he gave him my envelope and my stuff. He said, "You're not supposed to have this." Because they got them all locked up. He said, "When you get where you're going—"

I said, "Where am I going, Sir?"

He said, "I can't tell you that." He said, "When you get where you're going, you give them this pack. And you don't open it." And he told this guy, "Take his duffle bag."

I get in there and the guy says, "We got one up on the top of the bed. You're a little guy. Can we just put, i can sleep on the floor if you want."

So I said, "I haven't had anything to eat since 6:30 in the morning."

He said, "I don't know, they've got a," he said, "I'll be right back." He came back in about ten minutes and he said, "They're making coffee down there. All the cooks are having coffee. They can make you a couple of ham sandwiches."

Meyer: Oh, good.

Hutchins: So I got two ham sandwiches and two cups of coffee.

Meyer: Where are you now?

Hutchins: This is at Fort Bragg.

Meyer: This is at Fort Bragg.

Hutchins: Where they're shipping you out. And nobody knew where we were going, of course. They don't tell you that.

Meyer: No, they don't tell you.

Hutchins: So we end up in San Antonio, we ended up--

Meyer: Oh, do you end up at Sam Houston?

Hutchins: Yeah. They were out, they took me to service battery. And the guy told me, he said, "You're assigned to B Battery. We'll have somebody take you over to your bed. There's nobody

else there. They're out in the foothills around San Antonio. And they'll be out for six days." He said, "You report to service battery every morning. You can do anything you want. Ten cents you go uptown to San Antonio, and right in front of your barracks."

So I went over and sure enough the guy showed me my bed and everything. I didn't look at this paper that first night. Until I going out the next day, I said I'll go up to San Antonio, what the hell. I didn't stay there for hours, I came back. But it only cost ten cents to go out there.

So, the second night I was there, I said, shit, I'm opening that thing. I open that thing and it's got block letters, whatever they call it, on other words.

Mrs. Hutchins: Limited duty, stateside service only.

Meyer: Limited duty, stateside service only, it says in your—

Hutchins: And I just take—

Meyer: You took that out.

Hutchins: I took it out and put the other one back and turned it in when they came in.

Meyer: Oh, so it's a good thing they were gone for those six days.

Hutchins: Yeah. So I was assigned to B Battery.

Meyer: So what were your duties with B Battery?

[TIME 30:06]

Hutchins: I was in the 105, one of the guys in, you know, you've got nine men in there.

Meyer: Nine men? Did you have a usual position on the gun? Or did—

Hutchins: Yeah, after Louisiana maneuvers, I wasn't the gunner corporal, but I did a lot of the gunner corporal duties. The rest of the guys didn't know anything about it.

Meyer: Did everybody know that you had one bad eye?

Hutchins: No. No.

Meyer: Nobody knew.

Hutchins: No, I didn't say anything for a long time. My glasses were really thick then, too, not like this. You remember how they—(laughs)

Meyer: Yeah, sure.

Hutchins: So we were out in the desert and a friend of mine, a wise guy, said, “I don’t have, give me your damn glasses to light this cigarette.”

Meyer: Oh, he lit a cigarette?

xHutchins: Yeah!

Meyer: With your glasses? (laughs)

Hutchins: In the desert. Then they start getting a little, you know.

Meyer: Suspicious?

Hutchins: Yeah.

Meyer: I have a question. When you’re in, a lot of people, do you remember the boat you went across in? Was it Mariposa?

Hutchins: SS America. It was brand new.

Meyer: Brand new.

Hutchins: And they had two of them.

Meyer: The West Point.

Hutchins: Yeah.

Meyer: They changed the name. And some people, how was the boat ride across?

Hutchins: Wonderful. We went out, they had a balloon, what do you call them, with us, until we got so far out, and that thing took off. We didn’t go with other ships. We went south.

Meyer: Okay. You went south.

Hutchins: And the aircraft took off. It was like balmy. [interruption, drink of water] So we went south like that, nobody with us, just the fast ship. Two new ones they had. And when they head this way, it’s just like—well, what we did, we went south, and then we went—

Meyer: North. You zigzagged.

Hutchins: Yeah. But we were way down like where the desert is at. So when we get across, we come all the way north and come up to Italy.

Meyer: Were any people sick on the boat?

Hutchins: Well I was sure I was going to be sick. I dreaded it. Because when I was a kid, if I rode ten miles—

Mrs. Hutchins: With a bad eye you're—

Hutchins: I couldn't ride in a car ten miles. I'd throw up. Of course, I outgrew that. And I never got sick. And this boat was not bad, I mean, it wasn't no storms or anything.

Meyer: Okay. Good.

Hutchins: And I had no trouble coming back. [water break]

Mrs. Hutchins: You know when he did the mule pack training, that's what they were carrying, the guns. They had got those 155's—

Hutchins: No, not 155s, they were little Pack Howitzers ...

Mrs. Hutchins: Oh, whatever.

Hutchins: They weren't [our?] guns.

Mrs. Hutchins: So, that's what they were carrying. Somebody carried the wheels, and somebody had the barrel.

Meyer: Oh, that's what they were doing. Okay. Sure.

Mrs. Hutchins: See, that's what he was doing when he was doing that mule pack. And that's when those mules went over the side of the mountain.

Meyer: Because of carrying so much weight.

Mrs. Hutchins: Well, no. One got scared. And once one got scared--And he didn't know a damn thing about mules.

Hutchins: One must have been, something shook him. And I heard them go over the side. I heard all this--

Meyer: So it wasn't just one that went over the side.

Hutchins: Oh, no.

Meyer: All of them.

Mrs. Hutchins: They whole pack. Yeah, all of them. And one guy had a mule, didn't you say?

Hutchins: Yeah, one guy.

Mrs. Hutchins: One Kentucky guy.

Hutchins: Right. All the city guys, their mules are gone.

Mrs. Hutchins: Did you tell him about the guy who was patting the mule on the butt and breaking his leg?

Hutchins: Yeah, I thought of that that first.

Meyer: Yes.

Hutchins: That was the funniest thing I ever saw in my life.

Meyer: What were you going to say?

Mrs. Hutchins: He's been in some weird situations, like his eyes deal and then the mule. But when got to Indiantown Gap, they told him he was going to be a prime mover (laughs) So they gave him one of those great big trucks, and his training was once around a parking lot. And he was ready. He was qualified. Then they hooked the--

Hutchins: Let me tell him about the gun?. So, we had all kind of different training, rope climbing and all that stuff. And then this night, this night we were going to have the whole battalion go down these roads, you can look straight down to the tops of trees. And they're very narrow, and you're pulling a 105, and you've got 50 rounds of ammunition, and you got nine men on the truck.

[TIME 35:12]

Meyer: Where are you now?

Hutchins: Up in the mountains.

Meyer: Up in Indiantown Gap?

Hutchins: No, down in West Virginia.

Meyer: In West Virginia. Okay.

Hutchins: So they call me to go over to the lieutenant. And I went over. And he says, "You're driving number three."

I thought he was kidding. I said, "Oh yeah."

He said, "Yeah, you got your driver's license, don't you?"

I said, "Yes I do."

He said, "Well, we have a night march tonight and we're going down."

Meyer: No!

Hutchins: Now when they go, on the back of the 105 they put a flashlight and they cover everything; they leave just a little light.

Meyer: In the barrel? [unclear]

Hutchins: I said, "I'm not driving that truck, Sir."

He said, "You've got" [inaudible].

I said, "Yes, and do you want to know what my training was?"

He said, "Yes, I'd better."

I said, "I drove around the truck. I have never geared down. I've never been over twenty miles an hour. And I didn't have a gun on the back and nine men."

He looked at me. He said, "Send your sergeant over here."

Meyer: The sergeant went.

Hutchins: And he caught hell and everything else up there. And he said, "The man didn't have no driving [unclear] Good thing he had the nerve to tell me that." Because I wasn't going to drive nine men down there.

Meyer: No, no. You would kill them.

Hutchins: I mean you look right straight down like this. And these little roads are not wide.

Meyer: Sure. No. And plus, you don't have any training. Plus—

Hutchins: I don't even know how to gear it back. Like you had to--

Meyer: Holy cow. Let me ask you something. So when you get to England, I know you get off in Liverpool. And then some people said you went to Winchester Camp Barton Stacey.

Hutchins: That's where I went. Straight across on the other side.

Meyer: Straight across. Did you mingle with the British at all? Did you talk to them?

Hutchins: No. Not very often. We were locked up. Well, at the time, they had a big fence around, all the way around like that. And they had these, what do you call them, little steel like [barbed wire]—

Meyer: Yeah. Sure.

Hutchins: And they took us into London one day. Like six o'clock in the morning, we were back that night. And that's the only time we weren't all fenced in.

Meyer: Mrs. Hutchins said they didn't want you to get around those girls. I think that's probably true.

Mrs. Hutchins: Was that the place, was it in England that they had the girls that were hookers and had the disease?

Hutchins: Yeah, well—

Meyer: What happened?

Hutchins: That's another story.

Meyer: Tell that story.

Hutchins: Well that's why they lock you up. They didn't want you outside. But they had trouble with black and whites while we were there. They had a big thing at that time, just before we got there. A few of them got shot. Anyway, the first morning we were in these huts and this kid, "Come here, come here!" There was a pup tent out there and a big black guy gets out, stretching. This is right out in the camp! We were fenced in [unclear] And then this girl gets out, and she's putting her clothes on.

Meyer: No!

Hutchins: And they started yelling, and that gal was cussing worse than what those guys were. (laughs) Oh, everybody had to get back in—I think the tent wasn't there long.

Meyer: You think that was her tent?

39:14

[Recording ends abruptly]