

Stephen Jamison audio log

Narrator: Stephen Jamison (with wife Marge present)

Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

Date: August 13th, 2004

Venue: Baton Rouge Holiday Inn

Transcriber: Carol Slezak

Log compiled by: David Meyer June 1, 2025

Summary:

In this recount of events during World War II, Stephen Jamison recounts enlisting at Lakewood, New Jersey, and the journey starting at Fort Dix. Highlights include discovering the birth of his daughter just after enlisting, his attempt to become a pilot, and ultimately becoming an advanced mechanic and combat scout. Jamison describes extensive training, including time spent in Worchester, England, joining the 95th ID at Omaha Beach and detailed experiences in combat, such as crossing the Moselle River, getting injured, and the harsh conditions faced.

He mentions emotional anecdotes like witnessing primitive civilian life, receiving assistance from fellow soldiers, and the psychological effects of combat experiences including his first kill. The circumstances of the kill described here, still haunted him 60 years later. The script ends with contributions he made post-war, including writing an inscription for a Purple Heart monument.

Time Code	Subject
00:00	Introduction: David E. Meyer son of Earl D Meyer Co. H/379th. Atrium of the Baton Rouge Holiday Inn, August 13, 2004. Interviewee: Stephen Jamison Co. F/378th Infantry Regiment. Wife Margaret Jamison present.
00:51	Enlisted at Lakewood, New Jersey ten miles from where he lived. Got on bus (Made a corporal) and got the names of all on the bus to Fort Dix NJ (15 miles from where Mr. J lived.)
01:40	Next day, outside during calisthenics – his brother-in-law who drove the garbage truck stops gets out and tells Steve that he had just become a father. (Steve doesn't have uniform or dog-tags yet.) Mr. J asks for pass. Told No. But brother-in-law uses connections and gets Mr J a pass. Superior incredulous and then pissed off but lets Mr J go to Allentown and see wife and new daughter. When he tries to get back on base, has no dog tags so has to talk his way in. Years later Mr J hears that he "got the record" for being at the base the shortest time and receiving a pas.
04:54	Wants to be in Army Air Corps. Knew much about engines and about silhouettes of planes. Took test, came in second. Just have to go before cadet board of five officer. One turns him down. Another gives Steve note to give to CD at next base

- 06:40 Ft. McClellan, Alabama Pass on note. Nothing comes of it.
Told he was to be a truck driver Didn't want to be truck driver. Takes IQ test. IQ high - 138 –
so now not to be a truck driver- now to mechanics school
- 8:25 Duties at advanced mechanic school at Ft. Benning, Ga.
Tested greases in vehicles so you could run them underwater. Made snorkels for jeeps
- 09:45 Tested again. Comes in second. They want to send him to Officers Candidate School. Mr. J refuses – wants to stay with buddies.
- 09:57 Shipped to Fort Meade, Maryland. Everything new. Been in eight weeks. Gets pass and then goes AWOL to see his kid.
- 11:01 Then to Camp Miles Standish, Mass. Then to Weehawken, then board USS Aquitania to Europe. Not with the 95th. Still a replacement Not assigned anything.
- 11:31 Arrival in Gourrock, Scotland and take train to Camp Codford, England
- 11:45 *What was trip across the Atlantic like?*
Bunks (hammocks) 5 high. Couldn't get out until person underneath you got out. 50% people sick. Watered down oatmeal and boiled liver. Terrible.
Zig-zag across but fast so no escort.
- 13:21 Takes train to Camp Codford.
Description. Tent city. Was a squad leader. Hike – run a mile walk a mile run a mile, etc.
Got in trouble because at end of 25 mile hike contradicted orders and had his men “mark” when they were supposed to forward march when supposed to walk. Then last part – “double-time.”
Next morning, Lieutenant calls Steve out in front of everyone make him to makes Steve do 300 push-ups in punishment. Steve see him years later and wouldn't shake his hand.
- 15:39 From Codford to Warminster.. no.. (corrects himself) to Camp Wellington
Sprained ankle so couldn't march. Learned water-cooled machine gun training.
- 16:40 Gets pass to London Picadilly Circus to Rainbow Corner (where they had dancers and singers) First Buzz bomb experience. Bop Bop Put Put. Sirens going.
- 18:49 How did the British treat you. British said we were “over paid, over sexed and over here.” Some friction. Stabbing in a pub and we couldn't go out at night.

- 19:55 to Camp Warminster — same training. Squad leader.
Sent to arrest Mink Coat Mary in tent up the hill. Lady of the evening. Sent one of our guys up there the night before so when he got up Got away.
Another time, rainbow lands close to him. He runs up to “the end of a rainbow.” Sarge forgives him.
- 21:57 Was sergeant-of-guard one time. Men he guarded so would play tricks on him as he marched them around. Knew he wouldn’t shoot them. In Warminster.
- 23:22 Sent down to Southhampton and then sent to for Omaha Beach to good sized boat (liberty ship) then climb down nets into Higgins boat and then on to the beach.
- 23:56 Landing at Omaha Beach Falls into shell hole with full pack. Other guys pull Steve out.
Life at Omaha beach environs. Big piles of food. Distract guard and take canned food. Sleeping in pup tents.
- 25:25 Told they were in “Patton’s Secret Army”
- 25:47 Assigned little jobs. Small patrols. Talks of seeing locals - washing clothes in little water hole on a plank – primitive.
- 27:03 Breaks tooth on hard C-ration brown cracker. Goes to Dentist in Le Mans. Dentist Drill powered by a bicycle being pedaled Crude
- 28:55 About the 1st of November **assigned to the 95th.**
then put on 40 and 8 railroad cars (*WWI vintage – held 40 men or 8 horses*) to St. Lo.
- 29:55 On St. Lo. Most devastated city in Europe. Everything blown up. Devastation. Story of Frenchman who comes out and shares bottle of wine with the Frenchman in midst of ruins. Nice just sitting. Friendship among the ruin.
- 31:11 Skips forward to 1994. Tells story while in Metz. Host excited. News gets to the Mayor of St. Lo. Gives Steve City Medallion
- 32:13 Continues with WWII. Back to 1944. Taken in trucks. Whenever get to bridge, never cross on bridge.. because Germans have them “zeroed in.” So drive down to the water.
Men packed into back of trucks standing close together with rifles (no room)
Told if “shell comes in, don’t duck.” Shell comes in (Makes sound) men forget and duck. Jam rifles in other GI faces. Couple of guys hurt.
- 33:40 Reports to Captain. Looks at Steve’s papers “New Jersey, huh?”
Mr J replies “I spent half my life three steps ahead of the game warden. I can handle myself.” “Oh, a smart ass.”
Days later Captain calls him in, says he wants more like Steve. makes him “First guide.” (First scout.)

- 35:54 Rescuing a Wounded Comrade Rescues wounded comrade. Big man so Steve “half crawls” back to others carrying bigger man on his back.
- How never felt afraid. Told that’s because he his ancestors were American Indians and “taught to be brave.” Always a regimental scout or combat scout before he got hit.
- Make up of unit. Many ASTP in unit, too. High IQs. Job to “raise heck” and reconnaissance.
- 38:25 Talks about the Moselle River. Description of the city of Metz surrounded by forts “most fortified in the world.” Moselle on one side, Saar on th other.
- 40:11 Crossed the Moselle at Thionville as part of Marone’s Marauders. Colonel Marone’s wounded and Col Bacon takes command. They become “Task Force Bacon.”
- 41:23 Crossed Moselle in small boats. Once across.
- 42:00 Skirmish in Railyard. Then helped rescued
- 43:12 Description of Task Force Bacon. Situation at beginning Germans on one side of Moselle, American 90th and 5th division on other. 90th and 5th had the “tar kicked out of them” and withdraw. .
- Task Force Bacon goes ahead and makes infiltrates German line. We were first troops in Metz.
- 43:30 Up to Ft. Julien where Nazis are. Door a foot thick with concrete 3 or 4 feet wide on either side. We blasted away with 155 ml guns. Couldn’t breach door. Eventually the concrete broke
- 44:36 What do these forts look like? Built in side of hill. Most had moat. Some been for years. Good short descriptions
- 46:15 Make the drive into Metz. Breakthrough. Division begins to pour troops in. Descriptions of troops they faced. Street fighting. Thinks his troops were one of the first into Metz.
- 48:53 On mouse-holing in house-to-house fighting. You’ve put a “bee-hive charge” against interior wall of house, blow a hole through it and the next house (adjoining walls) and crawl through. Germans had streets “zeroed in” so couldn’t go outside
- 49:36 How two GIs proceed in house-to-house. One kick the door in, other would cover him. Take turns. Equal chance of being injured.
- Story of kicking door in with buddy Bruno. Find old lady and old man “crossing themselves.” Shell tears out one of room. , Steve and buddy find way out to cellar Find the same old man and woman had beaten them to the cellar. How?

- 50:59 Life on patrol Buddy (a medic) would help him find a place to sleep Developed a friendship
- 52:56 Good description of Close Call while clearing out a house.
Germans get behind Steve. Steve hides in room. Closes door. Germans other side. Doorknob turns, Steve shoots through.
(54:43) Germans push door and throw in Potato Masher (hand grenade). Steve curls up in ball opens mouth to absorb explosion concussion.
Came to bleeding from nose, ear, disoriented. Returns to base but doesn't know password. Gives old passwords. Finally let in to safety. Medic gives "warm milk and aspirin." Sent back out next day. A close one
- 57:01 Story of marching with buddy across a muddy field. Mortar shell lands between them. Explodes blows buddy into air but mud takes the concussion so everything all right.
- 57:53 Story: marching up to a haystack when US piper pilot above flies over and tips wings to show he sees from above an enemy hiding in haystack. Sergeant with Steve says they will go March and Fire. Enemy backs out from haystack. Shots fired. Steve shoots him then goes up to dying man. Dying man wants cigarette. Steve gives and man dies before taking a puff.
- 59:25 Years later at reunion in Gettysburg runs across that US Piper pilot who helped him. Talked to him but never followed up relationship.
Recording cuts off. (CD changed)
- 1:01:30 New CD
Steve shot in leg and back. 4 inches of snow.
Medic cuts off boot. Patches up calf and leg. Gets to work on Steves back and laughs.
Steve had just stuffed C-rations in his back before he was hit. Bullets hit C-ration and they saved him. "You got hit in your beanie-weanies" says Medic.
- 1:03:40 Has to leave Steve to come back later.
Steve's lying in snow, uniform cut, cold miserable. Germans come, plays dead. Then US Tank rumbles up with GIs running beside it with bullets whizzing Rescued Steve.
- 1:06:00 Taken him to a barn. Man next to Steve bums cigarette from Steve takes a puff and dies.
- 1:07:00 Taken to field hospital. Doctor's covered with blood like in slaughterhouse. Steve's the 38th casualty that day. Gets sodium pentothal which keeps him asleep for two days in another hospital Nurse worried.

- 1:08:35 Ambulance to Metz then a hospital plane C-47 to fly to Paris.
Bad weather Plane can't see ground until 50 feet above landing. Hits gas truck on way down but lands. Wing torn off.
- 1:10:14 Operated on in Paris three days. Then to two hospitals in England. One near Exeter.
(1:11:14) Hadn't defecated in seven days. Story of forced enema
On painful wounded leg. Couldn't straighten and couldn't stand pain of therapy.
- 1:12:50 Description of hospital lay out like a "spider form" with HQ in center boardwalks out to wings. While walking to wing, Steve slips on frost, comes down on bad knee and that straightens it
- 1:15:30 Steve wants to return to action but doctor sticks a pin in his foot and Steve feels nothing. Doctor says Steve has to be "Z-I'd — the Zone of Interior – to the U.S.
- 1:16:20 Pub story. British men push him over. Canadians pick him up
- 1:16:58 Hospital ship back. Lands near Norfolk. Sent to recuperate to White Sulphur Springs to recuperate for two weeks.
- 1:17:00 How Steve fools doctor and gets to be sent home. Good story.
Discharged. May or June 1945
- 1:19:28 What else would you like to say?
Two things bother me. (Friend tells him to check for PTSD.)
- 1:19:59 Story of shooting the SS trouper Steve comes up behind him on a hill. thinks to ask him to surrender but knows there would be a fight so shoots him in the back. Goes against Steve's "Cowboy syndrome" - always shoot face to face.
But Left the SS trouper, returns to Captain. Captain sends him back to check the dead SS troopers pockets. Steve returns, rolls the dead SS over and
Its a woman. He has shot a woman in the back. "Tore me up." Still bothers him.
- 1:22:10 (weeps)
- 1:22:33 Steve's wife Margaret reads an inscription Steve wrote for the Purple Heart Monument in Toms River, New Jersey. Reads: "They bled for liberty, selflessly serving their country. They are true patriots, whose boundless heroism has kept us free."
- 01:23:09 Closing
- 01:23:18 End