

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Veteran's Name: Joe Januskiewicz

Meyer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

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[set up chit chat, getting water, story about woman and ketchup bottle]

[1:42]

Meyer: I always start mentioning my dad's name. I say hello, this is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Co. H, 379th, 95th Infantry. Today is August 7, Saturday, 2010. We're in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the Hyatt Regency, 12:28 in the afternoon. And today I have the great pleasure of talking to, Joe, can you say your name?

Januskiewicz: Januskiewicz.

Meyer: And can you spell it?

Januskiewicz: J-a-n-u-s-z-k-i-e-w-i-c-z.

Meyer: And where were you born?

Januskiewicz: I was born in New Castle, Pennsylvania, but we moved very shortly after to Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. So I grew up mainly in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. North of Pittsburgh about forty miles.

Meyer: And what's your birth date?

Januskiewicz: September 13, 1922.

Meyer: And just autobiographical stuff at the beginning. What company were you with?

Januskiewicz: Cannon Company, 379.

Meyer: And when did you join the service?

Januskiewicz: I joined sometime in October of 1942. I volunteered.

Meyer: Volunteered?

Januskiewicz: Yep.

Meyer: What was going on in your life at the time you volunteered?

Januszkiewicz: Well, I just got out of high school and I got a job as a crank shaft grinder at Evans Forge in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania. I was working about 11 hours a day, seven days a week as a crank shaft grinder.

Meyer: A crank shaft grinder?

Januszkiewicz: Yep, for airplanes. The Ranger and the Rolls-Royce engines. I don't know what they were used for. But they were used for airplane engines. Crank shafts.

Meyer: Do you remember what was going on in your life when you heard about the Pearl Harbor attack?

Januszkiewicz: Roughly I remember that I was at home and heard it over the radio. There was an attack on Pearl Harbor.

Meyer: Did you know where Pearl Harbor was?

Januszkiewicz: At that time, yes. [laughs] Yes, I knew where that was.

Meyer: Because a lot of people say, one person today said, "I came home to my mother and said, 'Who's Pearl Harbor?'"

Januszkiewicz: Why would they want to do that?

Meyer: Why would anyone want to attack a girl named Pearl Harbor? [laughter] What was your final rank?

Januszkiewicz: My final rank? High rank of a PFC [Private First Class].

Meyer: Ah, there you go. Honorable rank.

Januszkiewicz: That's right.

Meyer: Just a little background. What were your parents' names?

Januszkiewicz: My parents were Samuel, or Sam; and my mother's name was Amelia.

[Time 5:00]

Meyer: And how many siblings did you have?

Januszkiewicz: A total of three. We had a family of six: Parents and four kids. I was the youngest.

Meyer: Youngest? And did any of the other ones go to war?

Januszkiewicz: Oh yes, my two brothers went to war. My next to the oldest brother was drafted. He was one of the first ones drafted out of Ellwood City. He went in the first draft.

Meyer: He did? Was that the 1940 draft? Before?

Januszkiewicz: Yes, prior to Pearl Harbor.

Meyer: He did. And what did your family, how did they feel about that?

Januszkiewicz: They just accepted it. They knew what the draft was. Of course, my parents emigrated from Poland. Both of them came to this country from separate places, and married in New Castle, and that's where we started our lives. And we spoke only Polish at home.

Meyer: You only spoke Polish at home.

Januszkiewicz: Yes.

Meyer: Do you still speak Polish at all?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yes.

Meyer: Does Kim, your daughter, speak Polish?

Januszkiewicz: No, no, she doesn't. She doesn't speak Polish. No.

Meyer: No? Any of your kids speak Polish at all?

Januszkiewicz: No, none of them.

Meyer: They didn't have any...

Januszkiewicz: Well, the idea was that my wife is Anglo-Saxon, so... Although my wife did learn to speak some Polish to communicate with my mother.

Meyer: So your mother lived with you?

Januszkiewicz: Oh no, no. The brother that was drafted, he never married. He was a bachelor and he stayed with my mother and kept her going. She lived to be 97. A nice, ripe old age.

Meyer: Nice ripe old age.

Januszkiewicz: Yes.

Meyer: What made you decide to join the service then? What was going on in your life?

Januszkiewicz: Well, I was working eleven hours a day, I didn't have much time for anything else. And I'd be listening to good old music – I enjoyed music. But while I was at the plant at Evans Forge my real good buddy Fred Homer came walking down the aisle and he says, "Joe, what are we gonna do?" And I say, "Well we ought to maybe both of us ought to enlist in the Air Corps." I was really interested in the Air Corps. I wanted to become a pilot. So both of us agreed, well, we'll get our parents to sign. At that time if you were under nineteen, the only way I believe you could get in the Army and enlist is you needed your parents' signature. So I said, "Come on, let's both get our parents to sign and we'll get into the Army Air Corps." And he said, "Well, that's a damn good idea, Joe."

He got his parents' permission but my parents refused to sign. I continued talking to them – occasionally I'd come back, talk to them. And I remember that my one brother that was in the

Army already came, he was home. And he said, “He could enlist, but only if we decide which branch of the Army he could enlist in.”

And since I was good in chemistry, my oldest brother—Incidentally, see, since I had parents that were immigrants, my oldest brother, Stanley, took over the role of sort of a parent because he could read English, and understand the bills and anything that had to be done. So he was sort of the master of the house. So he decided, “Well Joe, you can enlist if you get into the chemical warfare service.” “Okay, I’ll do that, at least. At least I’ll get in the Army.”

Meyer: So he dashed your dream.

Januszkiewicz: So he signed my father’s name, and I was able to enlist in the Army. I do remember, however, before I made that decision I said, “Let me go down to the post office.” So I went down to the post office and I was walking down the aisle. There was a Navy, and I stopped there, and I thought, you know, Navy probably would be really good. But the only trouble was, I couldn’t swim. So I said, no, that’s no good. I’ll go to the next place. [laughs] So I checked there and that’s where I got the papers for the Army. And my brother signed for me to get into the Army.

So they shipped me down, first Fort Meade, Maryland, then from there to Camp Sibert, Alabama. Which was at that time when I arrived, the only thing they had there was tents. They didn’t have any barracks. And I remember a little bit about that.

[Time 9:57]

Meyer: I was going to ask you, what’s that like? You’re with all these strangers in tents.

Januszkiewicz: Well, they had wooden duct work because it was so damn muddy there that they had duct work leading up the –I wouldn’t call it a street—a muddy road. And they had a latrine way up at the top of the hill. And it was just like a big, big, long rectangular shed, open on one side to all the elements. And they had a board across with holes drilled into them for the slots where you sit down on, and that was our latrine.

Meyer: And it was at the top of the hill.

Januszkiewicz: Top of the hill, yes. We were down at the bottom of the hill. And tents lined on both sides of the so-called road up the hill. I remember it was like a pyramidal type tent. They had about six or eight of us in the tent, I don’t recall exactly, and a potbelly stove in the center. But it was, I enlisted in October so they didn’t have it moving or anything like that.

Meyer: It was October of 19--

Januszkiewicz: Forty-two, yeah. So I enlisted fairly early.

Meyer: Very early.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. One thing I do remember is that one of the individuals in our tent refused to go, if he had to go to the bathroom sometimes he would just flip up the side of the tent. Well, someone evidently reported him to the higher authorities. I remember sitting on my bunk there

and someone came up to me and said, “The First Sergeant wants to see you, over there. In that tent over there.”

So I went over there and lift the flap of the tent to go in there, and he gave me hell because I didn’t knock. So of course, I said, “Where?” [laughter] Well, there was a two-by-four or something on one of the flaps. And you had to knock on the two-by-four, see?

Meyer: That’s great!

Januszkiewicz: He says, “Hey, how about this individual in your tent? Is it true about such and such, what he’s doing there?”

I said, “Sir, I haven’t seen anything.” [laughs] I refused to say anything or see anything. But that was the end of that incident. But I know that he was shipped out. I don't know whether he went to the guard house or somewhere. He didn’t want to obey orders on anything.

Meyer: That’s such a wise answer to give to authority. Did you

Januszkiewicz: No, there were no repercussions that I knew of. But I didn’t want to get involved. [laughs]

Meyer: No, no.

Januszkiewicz: The guy that was in that tent was bigger than I. I was only about 130 pounds or so. I was very small.

Meyer: What was the name of this camp?

Januszkiewicz: Camp Sibert. S-I-B-E-R-T. Camp Sibert, Alabama.

Meyer: Alabama. Was that near any city? Town?

Januszkiewicz: Let’s see, yes, let’s see. Gee, I don’t recall the town now. Small town nearby, yes. On Thanksgiving, what I remember, on Thanksgiving Day though that they asked who wanted to go to a meal in town. And of course some of us raised our hands. We went on trucks. And they took about four of us, four of us would go into, three or two, whatever. They broke us up in groups and took us to different homes, to people’s homes. And we had dinner with them. And it was really nice.

Meyer: That sounds really nice.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. It was really something.

Meyer: How long were you at Camp Sibert?

Januszkiewicz: Well, I was there till about, let’s see. It was getting close to March, I believe. And I was out in the field exercising and we had a sergeant, he decided he’d give us some unusual exercises. And I tore a ligament in doing these exercises. So they took me to a small house that was on this field. And they put me on a bed. And a doctor came over and said, “What’s wrong with you?”

And I said, “I hurt my leg out in the field.”

He looked at me and grabbed hold of my leg. Of course, it hurt real bad, I couldn’t walk on it. But he said, “Oh, you’re just a damn gold bricker, get out in the field.”

So the two guys who brought me in took me out again. But they took me, instead of out to the field, they took me to the barracks. And the next morning it was so swelled up I had difficulty getting my pants on.

[Time: 15:00]

So I went on sick call. They sent me to the hospital. I remember laying in bed there. They didn’t do anything for us over there at the time. You just laying in bed, and the doctor would come around and look at you, you know. Finally a nurse came by and I says, “What kind of a ward am I in?”

She said, “Oh, this is a heart ward.”

So I says, “Gee, that’s unusual.” She went on. I was thinking to myself, gee, I ought to probably ask to get transferred to somewhere where they deal in legs.

Meyer: Legs. Yes.

Januszkiewicz: I didn’t know the word “orthopedic” at the time. So the next day when the doctor’s coming through, they always come in in the morning, check on the patients. So as he comes to my bed, he just hesitates there. And I says, “Doctor, shouldn’t I be in another ward, where they deal with legs?”

And he said, “Solider, sit at attention!” [laughs] I didn’t know what to do, so of course I tried to sit up at attention there. And he says, “We’ll deal with you later.” And then I found out I was transferred to another ward. That day. But I found out that it was the same doctor that made the rounds in that [heart] ward. And the nurse had warned me after I had left, she said, “Soldier, you should be more respectful.” Of course, I didn’t know any better. Just a young kid.

Meyer: No. No.

Januszkiewicz: What was interesting from there, I should mention, just backtrack, while I was at that camp, I remember someone came up to me, says, “Hey Joe, they’re giving an exam down here tomorrow morning. Maybe you could go into college. It’s called an ASTP program [Army Specialized Training Program].”

I said, “Gee, what time is that going to be given?” I said, “I didn’t see anything about that.”

“Oh,” he says, “it’s just a little notice on one of these boards. They don’t have it in our company, but the other company has it.”

I said, “Oh, good. I’ll take the exam.” Well, I did take the exam. So I didn’t know the results of it. But I was in the hospital now. And one of my buddies came in there. He says, “Joe, your name came up to be shipped to that program, ASTP program,” He says, “They’re shipping out tomorrow.”

So I tried to get out of, asked the doctor if I couldn't be discharged. He says, "No, no, you can't be discharged yet." I think I stayed there about another two weeks in the hospital.

Meyer: Holy cow.

Januszkiewicz: So when I got out of the hospital, I went to the orderly room and I says, "Sergeant, I understand my name was called out to be shipped out to ASTP."

He says, "That's already gone by. You get out there in the field and join the other guys."

I says, "Yes sir, yes sir."

So on my way out to the field I stopped by regimental headquarters. I don't know what made me do that, but I stopped by regimental headquarters on the way to the field. I went in there. I do remember standing at a gate. And one of the guys says, "Can I help you?"

I says, "Yeah, I'd like to speak to someone about shipment. I understand that I was supposed to be shipped out, but I was in the hospital."

He says, "What's your name?" So I gave him my name, He said, "Just a minute." So he went after some files, looked it over. He says, "Well, we'll get back to you."

So I went out to the field. And I remember about three days later or something we were out in the field doing our exercises or something, marching. And a runner came out there. He called my name out or something like that. And they pointed to me. He says, "Get your butt back to the barracks, you're shipping out in an hour."

Meyer: Holy cow!

Januszkiewicz: So I said, "Yes, sir!" [laughs] I went back to the barracks and threw everything in a barracks bag. And sure enough, a command car comes up to the barracks. Wow, I said, I'm getting really good treatment here. He gave me some papers. I got into the back of the command car. He just drove me to the bus station, and he gave me some tickets. He says, "Take this to, get on a bus." The bus that comes in at nine o'clock or whatever time it was, he told me. And he says, "You're shipping to Auburn, Alabama. You're going to go to Auburn College there." And I said fine, good. So I do remember riding on a bus to Auburn.

[Time 19:49]

Meyer: But you don't know what you're going to study.

Januszkiewicz: Incidentally, I was supposed to be shipped out, our company at Camp Sibert, we were being shipped out in a few days to the Pacific. So I missed shipment to the Pacific by being called to the ASTP. Otherwise, I would have been sent to the Pacific.

Meyer: What company were you with at that time?

Januszkiewicz: I don't know whether it was 93rd Chemical Composite – I'll have to think about it. But I think it was 93rd Chemical Composite Company. We dealt with germ warfare or chemical warfare. We learned all about the different mustard gases, phosgene and tear gas. They

just experimented with us on tear gas. They put us in a barn, or a closed in big room like a shed or a little barn, and they pumped tear gas into there. And then they'd say, "Okay, now you'll have to learn to clear the mask and your nose of any gas. Put the mask on, blow it out, stay in there for a while, and then you can come out." And of course, a lot of guys didn't get the masks on in time, or they didn't clear the masks very well. So you cry like hell.

Meyer: Oh, gosh!

Januszkiewicz: But anyway, what was interesting at this camp is this. Everything was, shall I call it, let's see, simulated training. We learned to fire a gun by they gave us a wooden gun. Only one gun, mind you. And they pointed out to, it had the barrel, something round as a barrel, and a stock on it. And they talked about triangulation. Triangulation. And of course it was shortly after that they did take us on a rifle range. And there they had the rifles. They had the 1903 Springfield rifles. They were not issued to us, they were just there. Each of us were given a rifle and we went on to the rifle range there. And the instructor was there. The rifle was at the, not given to us, it was at the range. And an instructor was with the rifle laying there along this place where we were going to be shooting from. We would line up, maybe I don't know, ten guys, twenty guys behind one rifle. And so then we'd get on there and they told us how to shoot down to the range. They'd have the, pull up the [unclear] and what not. And some would qualify and some didn't. I qualified to shoot a rifle there. That Springfield kicked like hell, though.

Meyer: Did it?

Januszkiewicz: Yes. [laughs]

Meyer: When you said 1903, is that just the number of the--

Januszkiewicz: That's the model number. They called it a 1903 Springfield rifle. Yes. Yeah. But it was used in World War II as a sniper rifle. Yep. Mm hmm.

Meyer: So was it a good rifle?

Januszkiewicz: It was an excellent rifle, yes. But the only trouble was, it was not magazine fed, or anything like that. I mean—

Meyer: So it's single—

Januszkiewicz: Yeah.

Meyer: Oh, yeah, that would be a problem. for a sniper.

Januszkiewicz: But I qualified there on the rifle. But that was the last I saw of the rifle from there until I joined the 95th Division to go overseas.

Meyer: So now you're at Auburn?

Januszkiewicz: Auburn College, yeah. And there, that was merely, I understood they were going to ship us to another college. That was sort of a reception center for ASTP. We spent about a week-and-a-half there. And it was very, very nice. I mean, they did start us off on military courtesy first. And we really didn't start studying any subjects. But once they'd get a group

together and they'd decide where they were going to ship us. And I got shipped from there to Penn State College at State College, Pennsylvania, by a rail.

Meyer: How far was that from where you—

Januszkiewicz: From [unclear]

Meyer: No, from where you grew up.

Januszkiewicz: Oh, about, only about 150 miles. But it was very funny because they shipped us by rail all the way to Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. And Bellefonte, Pennsylvania was eight miles from State College. And as I understood it, there was no train service but they had track there, railroad tracks. And they did engage a, there evidently was an engine around there, steam engine around there somewhere. But they shipped us by train from Bellefonte to State College. And that was the last trip, I understand, that that train ever made. But we arrived in State College via train and assigned to, of all things, to fraternity houses. We lived in fraternity houses at Penn State.

[Time 25:15]

Meyer: At Penn State at this time, are you the only male population?

Januszkiewicz: They had the Air Corps there. No Marines, but they had the Navy V-12 program there. I didn't see any male students there, although they had a lot of women students there, though. They had the Curtiss-Wright, I believe women who were working at the Curtiss-Wright factory. And they were there learning drafting or something like that. But they had a nice population of women there. Girl students, yes.

Meyer: Were you able to fraternize at all?

Januszkiewicz: Fraternize only, we were allowed out only on Saturday. And Sunday from I forget what time in the morning till a certain time in the evening. But I think twelve o'clock noon was the earliest we would get out on Saturday. They kept a very good discipline on us there. I remember one of our individuals, a guy by the name of Pitt, Pitts, or something like that, in one of our classes he was boasting how he didn't bother with a curfew. He'd go downtown anyway. Well, it didn't last very long. I think he was shipped out of there the second week he was there. They wouldn't put up with that. Major Mowitz was in charge there at the time. A very strict individual.

Meyer: Did you live in, at the fraternity house, was it like four or five people to a room?

Januszkiewicz: When I first got there we had a room where we could sit, and a small room to either side. One room to one side and one room to the other side. And they had, let's see, bunks in there, there were three to each bunk. We had a total of six guys for that room, to study. The bunks were stacked three high.

Meyer: And what did they have you study?

Januszkiewicz: They began us in basic engineering, civil engineering in our case. We'd march to class, or we'd march from the fraternities to the main campus, through town. It wasn't very

far, maybe five blocks or something like that. This section of town had a lot of fraternity houses. They called it fraternity row. But we'd march to class in groups. You'd have breakfast there. And after breakfast, you're given so much time to get ready. And you'd march to main campus where Old Main was. And we'd line up, we'd stop there and then they'd dismiss us, and then we'd go to our classes. And it was really wonderful to be able to get a good education there.

Meyer: Oh, it must have been.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. I was impressed with the teaching staff because there wasn't very many students there except for the military. And we got just the best of the teachers. It was just amazing what we got. A good education.

Meyer: How long were you there?

Januszkiewicz: I hate to admit it, but I was there for nine months.

Meyer: You were there for nine months?

Januszkiewicz: Nine months. Out of the war completely.

Meyer: So you got there in—

Januszkiewicz: I got there actually in June, yes, June of 1943. June of 1943.

Meyer: And you were there until March?

Januszkiewicz: March of 1944. Yes.

Meyer: Now before I forget, just to loop back, I'm not sure if I asked you, what was the day you joined?

Januszkiewicz: October, I think October ninth of 1942. So you can see that--

Meyer: So now you're in there and you're studying. I have to remember to take a pill now. Where is this pill? Here it is. Take a quarter of one.

Januszkiewicz: Here's your drink.

Meyer: Thank you. Thank you. You've saved me from stumbling over my bag for my drink. My wife would just shrug her shoulders and shake her head. So you're there for nine months and you're getting a good education.

Januszkiewicz: Wonderful. Yes.

Meyer: Are any of the people here at this reunion, did you know any of them back then?

[Time 30:00]

Januszkiewicz: No, they've all either gotten too old, or died off. In fact this morning I talked to General Archer, who just retired from the 95th Division IT. He called me over, he says, "Joe, I wanted to talk to you." He says, "I was in Roanoke, Virginia, and I noticed in the paper they

were presenting a quilt to a 95th Division soldier at a convalescent hospital or VA home.” And he says, “So I decided I’d go over there and talk to the individual.” So he sat down, he says, “I talked to the guy for twenty minutes. And talked to him also about the 95th Division. And he says, ‘Yes, I know someone that was over there. His name is Januszkiewicz.’”

And of course, Joe Archer says, “Yeah, I knew that guy.”

He’s over there now. Yes. He has Parkinson’s disease and he’s in a wheelchair.

Meyer: Did you remember him?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yes, yes, yes. I remember him. I remember him as an ASTP guy. See, when we joined the 95th Division, they wouldn’t assign a guy from Penn State, two ASTPs to the same company or anything like that. They would spread us out so we would not know another ASTPer. Of course, we’d would recognize the other ASTPers. We were all privates, or made privates there. To get into the AST program you had to relinquish any grade you had and you were made a private. So that we were all at the same level. No one would be sergeants or anything like that. Because I remember we had some guys who were serveants.

Meyer: Going in.

Januszkiewicz: Incidentally the program at Penn State was tough, because out of the six guys in our room after the first semester we only had I think three guys that still remained for the second semester. One of the guys was a guy from the Air Corps, Mr. Webster, yeah, I still remember him. Webster. He was a mechanic for the B-29. I remember about the second week he says, “Joe, I think I’m going to go back to my old outfit. This thing is too tough for me. I don’t want any part of this math.” But he flunked out the first semester, and he asked to be sent back to the Air Corps.

Meyer: When the word came down to take the ASTPers out, did you have any warnings or rumors?

Januszkiewicz: You mean that they were closing down the program or anything?

Meyer: Yeah.

Januszkiewicz: No. No rumors at all. They just announced it and we were out—oh, yes, well, just prior to the end of the program something unusual happened. There were two programs there. That’s right. One was for the Manhattan Project. We didn’t know it was for the Manhattan Project. But they interviewed some of us, and I know the guy said I’d hear from them. But I never did hear from them. But the other one was, they gave a small exam for merchant marine. So I thought well, I’d take the exam. And I heard from them when I was in Europe. Are you going to ask me about that later? Well, okay, I’ll tell you what happened.

Meyer: Talk about it now. What happened?

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. The sergeant called, it must have been somewhere in Germany or somewhere, or France, I forget where it was. Probably France, yeah. But the sergeant called me over. Someone said, “Hey, the sergeant wants to see you. First sergeant.”

He said, “Joe, I have some good news for you, and some bad news.” He says, “You were expected to go to the merchant marine at New London, Connecticut.” Boy, that’s really great. “The bad news is, we’re not going to let you go. We need you here.” (Meyer laughs) That was the end of that.

But later on I know I wrote a letter somewhere when I was at Indiantown Gap [in Pennsylvania]. I was inquiring about the, had the name of a lieutenant or something that I said I had taken an exam, I was just wondering the results of it. I didn’t know it was the Manhattan Project. But I never did hear from them, as we were shipped out, shipped out of Indiantown Gap. Went to—

Meyer: It would be a whole different life.

Januszkiewicz: Yep. What was interesting, my first day at Indiantown Gap, I remember they assigned me to this Cannon Company.

[Time 35:03]

So I was walking in one end of the barracks and the guys were coming in out of the other end of, the regular guys who belonged there were coming in the other end of the barracks and they were muddy as all hell. The bunks, the only thing on them, they had the bunks in there lined up like a regular barracks, all mattresses rolled up. It was very stark. And the guys were coming in at the other end. They had just came off of an infiltration course. Actually up to that point, I never went through an infiltration course, never really shot a rifle except on a rifle range, and here I’m joining a good company.

In fact I went overseas pretty much the same way. Because when we were at Boston they were going around asking, “Has anyone never thrown a hand grenade?”

I said, “Yeah, I’ve never, what’s a hand grenade?”

He said, “Okay, you don’t qualify overseas but you come with us.”

So they took us to a little place there, a field. And it had a big ditch, a mound of dirt. You stood up in that ditch and the mound’s over your head, of course. We were one-on-one; there was a sergeant with me and he says, “This is a hand grenade. Nothing happens until you pull this pin.” He said, “But even then nothing happens until you release this pin and allow this hammer or this lever to come up. Once this lever comes up it actuates this detonation thing. And you’re supposed to throw it. When you pull the pin you throw it, and you have so many seconds and then it explodes.” He says, “I’m here to make sure you know how it works.” So he illustrated it, you know, what you have to do and all that. He says, “Okay now, you pull the pin and then you throw it over this mound.” So I said okay. I did it properly. I think he was there so in case I didn’t throw it over he’d pick it up and throw it for me. But I qualified. That qualified me for going overseas.

Meyer: What is infiltration?

Januszkiewicz: Infiltration course is where they have a, you’re supposed to crawl under this barbed wire. And at the other end they have machine guns firing ... [interrupted by phone call]

Meyer: [resuming]: Today, when I think Mr. Celentano or someone was in the back of the room—

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, Frank Celentano.

Meyer: When Frank Celentano was there and he said, “Yes, I was an ASTPer too, and I remember you guys needled us.” And then they sort of laughed. He said, I was sitting next to Mr., I think, Whittington. And he said, “I remember how you used to, you made it a little rough on us.” When you got to Indiantown Gap, different people felt different things. But did you feel like it was rough at all?

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, the first week that I was there with Cannon Company, I was assigned to kitchen duty. KP, kitchen police. And my first job was to clean out the grease trap in the kitchen. I was so damn disgusted with it because evidently it was never cleaned out before. But I had to clean it out, you know. Then they give you pots and pans, and they give you steel wool to clean out these pots and pans. And at the end of the day, I remember I had steel wool stuck in my hands. It hurt. But I was a week, full week on kitchen duty. I think they didn’t want us there.

Meyer: No, they didn’t. No, they didn’t want you.

Januszkiewicz: And then another thing they did, they assigned me to keep the fire going. Each barracks, they were good because at least they had barracks over there. But they had a, each barracks had their own furnace. And they assigned me the one time to keep the fire going. And that was on a, I’m pretty sure it was Sunday morning, Sunday, that I was supposed to keep it going all night or all whatever morning. But anyway, the damn fire went out. [laughs]

Meyer: No!

Januszkiewicz: But there were clinkers in there. See, I didn’t know what they do with the clinkers. But anyway, it ended up there were three sergeants down there in my cell. But no one gave me hell or anything like that.

Meyer: What’s a clinker?

Januszkiewicz: A clinker, they consolidate it, and it was like a big thing that wasn’t burning.

Meyer: Oh, I got you.

Januszkiewicz: They didn’t even bother showing me. They just did the work and got the fire going. That’s the last time I was ever on fire duty. (Meyer laughs)

[Time 40:09]

I have to tell you this. Yes. My first assignment, one of my first assignments in the Army at Fort Meade, before I went to Camp Sibert, I was put on guard duty. And they handed me a pistol. They didn’t tell me anything about it. They just handed me the pistol, they gave me a holster, and I was on guard duty. Then all at once they called us out for inspection. And they says, “Okay, all you guys just line up here, and the lieutenant will come by and check you out.”

So they came out. And the guy beside me says, “When they comes by here, you’re supposed to pull that pistol up and hold it up like this.” I says, okay.

So he comes by. And when he comes to me, I have the pistol up there, And the guy next to me whispers again. He says, “You’re supposed to press that thing and wiggle it like that to open the barrel.” So I’m wiggling it – and the lieutenant says, “Never mind.” So I put it back. (Meyer laughs)

What I do remember about guard duty and I’ll never forget it is we had the bunks between guard duty where you’re actually on two hours on and four hours off. You go into this one barracks where you lay down on a bed. The only thing the bed is the springs are just there, no mattress. And they have bare light bulbs staring you in the face for the four hours that you’re off. But to this day, I never like a room that has just bare light bulbs, or the overhead lights. Just to this day, I still resent that.

Meyer: Sure.

Januszkiewicz: I couldn’t help that.

Meyer: I’m glad, glad, this is perfect. And when you had just the springs, did you put straw matting on the springs?

Januszkiewicz: No, no, they just had the, just the springs on it. The springs were just this wire mesh, you know. Not real, like a spring mattress. It was just springs.

Meyer: And you just lie—

Januszkiewicz: Lay down on there. Yeah.

Meyer: You just lay down on there. That’s great.

Januszkiewicz: For four hours. That wasn’t bad.

Meyer: That wasn’t, I guess not bad.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, to this day, I don’t like bare lightbulbs.

Meyer: No. No. Which reminds me, just a question from the end, but I’ll mention it now. Does it ever come back to you in your dreams? Do you ever dream--

Januszkiewicz: No, that does nt. But I still can picture it, though. Vivid memories of those.

Meyer: Does the service ever come back to you in your dreams?

Januszkiewicz: I try to forget it. When I came back from the war I tried to forget it completely. I wanted to try to make up for lost time. Never did.

Meyer: So you never did.

Januszkiewicz: No, never did.

Meyer: Did you just consciously push it out of your mind?

Januszkiewicz: I tried to. Yes. Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. Not until I don't know how many years ago, when I attended one of the reunions, which was very late. I didn't attend any of the first reunions; didn't know anything about it. But once I started attending them, there was a Cleveland reunion where I wondered, I thought gee, it would be nice to have recollections of some of the soldiers.

And what precipitated that perhaps was the fact that when I was in Ellwood, sometime in Ellwood City I was working for BF Goodrich, and we had high school class reunions. Coming from a small town like Ellwood City, you got to know everyone in our graduating class. I remember they started talking about where did you serve, and what not. I told them where I'd been.

It was so interesting because since I knew all these guys I wrote to them and told, "Hey, give me your most memorable moments." I wrote to all the males in our class. And they wrote me small little incidents of it, you know. So I then went to the library, checked their division or wherever they served, and I wrote something up about each individual and put their memorable moments in it. I did that all on my own, and those guys just loved it. Eventually that brought me back to why I started collecting stories from the men of the 95th Division. That's what started me collecting stories.

Meyer: That's interesting. From going away and showing the stories out.

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yeah. Completely. Completely. I didn't want any part of it. I wanted to forget it.

[Time 44:56]

Meyer: So in some ways it started when you went to the reunion and people started talking about it.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. Started talking about it. Yes.

Meyer: Because again, you're the inspiration for all this. My father on my fiftieth birthday brought me your book ["The Battles of George S Patton's Lowest Ranks"]. He said, "Dave, I'm in this book." And he said, "Here it is."

Januszkiewicz: (laughs) It's a good thing he bought the book.

Meyer: It was a good thing he bought the book. It was my fiftieth birthday present. And then I had a friend who was wonderful at talking to people, Steve Sheridan. And he started talking to my dad. And all of a sudden my dad's talking about things. And the story that was in the book, I'd heard him tell before to my cousins when I was growing up. But the prophet is never honored in his own country. So I would say, "Dad, let Uncle Tommy tell the story." I think I was embarrassed. But my cousins were riveted because my father was in the infantry. I had no idea what it meant to the outside world, until later after my father died, and I would talk to my uncle. And my uncle would just, infantry was just, was given such respect. Now to my uncle though, I

never corrected it, the infantry has such a mystique. He said, “Well, you know your father landed on D-Day.” And I didn’t correct him. I thought, if you want to think that, that’s fine.

Januszkiewicz: (laughs) Yes. Yes.

Meyer: That’s fine. Think whatever you will. But it was that, and he was so pleased. He was so pleased to be in the book.

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yes.

Meyer: Everybody was so pleased just to see it and be able to say, “Here it is.” And that’s why I was happy to go to the Los Angeles library just to make sure. I’ll check the camera and see if I can find the picture of the book on the shelf. Because I wanted to make sure.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. Right. Yes. I’ve got to check Penn State out again, because that book disappeared.

Meyer: That’s right. You have to be diligent. And luckily now I’ve contacts, so I was able to hand walk it in. So anyway, for the record, I’m talking to the man who started it all for me. So I think I started—everyone comes to collecting stories some way. One way or another.

Januszkiewicz: One way or another.

Meyer: One way or another. But once you hear it and you see what it means to people. Just to be heard. It’s a privilege to be a sort of housekeeper for these stories. Caretaker. But now you’re in Indiantown Gap still.

Januszkiewicz: Let me mention this. In basic training, I still remember sitting at, we were just there, a whole new bunch of fellows, sitting on our bunks. And they’re starting to play poker or whatever it is over there. And they yell over to me, “Hey, Joe, come on and join us over here.”

“No, no, I’m reading.”

And I still remember the guy says, “What are you reading?”

I said, “Plato.”

And he says, “Forget it, let him sit there.” [laughs] I had an aversion to cards, incidentally. My dad always used to play cards with his buddies, you know, they’d come to the house. They would play pinochle. I learned how to play pinochle myself. But they would playing their cards, they’d slap their hand down on the table with their cards, you know. And they’d argue, and this and that. And I swore I’d never play cards. That’s why I had an aversion to cards. Never played after that.

But then also at Indiantown Gap I was reading some more books over there. I was always reading, doing something, reading. Then when I got overseas I remember when we were traveling on a truck I’d be reading like *The Brothers Karamazov* or whatever it was. And as I’d read a page, I’d tear the page off and throw it in the air, because I didn’t have much room to carry a book. But I’d always be reading. Okay, back to Indiantown Gap, or whatever.

Meyer: Before I forget, Cynthia, my wife, always asks me at the beginning, she said what's it like that first night when you're there with strangers? People coughing, and just getting along. Do you have any memories of that first night?

Januszkiewicz: You mean like at Camp Sibert, or whatever?

Meyer: Or even the first night you were in the service. First night you were there.

[Time 49:56]

Januszkiewicz: No, just you're homesick.

Meyer: Just homesick.

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yeah. You're away from home. Yeah, yeah, yes, yes.

Meyer: I asked one person what it was like, and he said, "I looked around, and there were a couple of rough characters around." So now, back at Indiantown Gap, did you go on the mountain training [in West Virginia]?

Januszkiewicz: Oh yes, went through. That was my first experience with camping out. Other than sleeping on a bed. We had pup tents, and I got to meet Chet Stanko there. He became my buddy. Partner. You need a partner to pitch a pup tent, two men, you need two men to pitch a pup tent. Because each one only has a half of a tent. Pup tent. But I remember laying on the ground there, and we learned that you should dig a ditch around your tent, to let the water flow away from the tent, and not into the tent. And don't touch the tent because it will leak. I do remember the water coming into the tent. Just a small little stream, so you try to make the stream to go out the tent (*correction from J. Januszkiewicz on proofreading – should read "to make the stream go "away from the tent"*). Not quite, you can't always do it. I do remember that.

Meyer: So if you touched the tent, the water would come through?

Januszkiewicz: The water would start leaking, yeah.

Meyer: Oh, I didn't know that.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah.

Meyer: So you had to watch out when you went in and out?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yes. In and out. Yeah. But it was awful, I just remember it being awful muddy down there. One thing down there, okay, one of our first times that we're out they were passing out C-rations and all of that. So I open up, I don't recall exactly which one I had, but I remember opening up the can that had the nice biscuits. I took a bite of the one biscuit and I said, "Boy, these cookies are really great." And there's a guy across from me. He was an old-timer. He'd been through all the maneuvers from Texas to Louisiana, the desert maneuvers and what not. All I remember is he threw a can at me, and he got me in the leg, cut my leg around the knee. Because I said it was a biscuit, you know. Of course, I rolled up the damn pant leg. The pants were cut. There was a gash on my knee. So I had to go get it sewed up. And of course they

asked me well how this happen. I says, “I was crawling under a barbed wire.” And of course it was not the type of a cut that the barbed wire, in fact I still have the scar on my leg.

Meyer: You do? Which leg?

Januszkiewicz: On my right leg. And it’s funny. It doesn’t show up too well. But it’s a perfect, perfect, it goes around like this and like this.

Meyer: Yes.

Januszkiewicz: But it’s a perfect circle in the size of a sea ration can. [laughs]

Meyer: Now why was he angry because you said it was biscuit? What was wrong with that?

Januszkiewicz: To him it was hardtack.

Meyer: Oh, it was hard, you used the wrong word!

Januszkiewicz: It wasn’t too hard. No, to me it was a biscuit, but it was just a hard cracker to him, because he had had too many of them.

Meyer: [laughs] Interesting.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. I thought it was interesting.

Meyer: Sure. So that was Indiantown. So they did give you hell.

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yeah. They gave me hell.

Meyer: But they must have respected that you always covered up. You didn’t--

Januszkiewicz: I don’t know. What else are you going to do? Get someone else in trouble?

[Time 53:59]

Meyer: Yeah. So I’m going to, before I go, General Archer said to me, he said if you see any time to get a picture, get a picture. So before, oh, here it is.

Januszkiewicz: I can send you a picture.

Meyer: No, I’m going to get a picture of your leg.

Januszkiewicz: No, it won’t show up. It won’t show up.

Meyer: Well, that’s okay. It will show up in my mind. Let’s see. Come on. Come on, what is going on?

Januszkiewicz: It won’t show up. See this, it’s very too light. Too light. Like that, like that. It won’t show up. But it’s not something, it won’t show up.

Meyer: So could you put your finger—

Januszkiewicz: Right here. It starts there and ends there.

Meyer: I'm going to do it like this. This picture to—okay, there we go.

Januszkiewicz: From there to there.

Meyer: Okay. A little something. A little something. (laughter) So you're in the Indiantown Gap. You have the West Virginia maneuvers. You come back. Then do you get called to Myles Standish? [camp in Taunton, Massachusetts]?

Januszkiewicz: Yes, they told us we were moving out. And that's, they gave us I think a furlough or something like that, and we [were going well?]

Meyer: Do you remember where you were when you heard about D-Day?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yeah, sure. I remember that very well. It was I think the last day of our maneuvers in West Virginia. I remember my pants were torn. It was really pretty bad. But we're walking along the highway close to our encampment, and a civilian car stops by and tells that there was a D-Day invasion in Europe.

Meyer: So you knew.

Januszkiewicz: That's how we learned about D-Day.

Meyer: A civilian pulls over and tells you.

Januszkiewicz: Yes, yes. Stopped his car and told us there was a D-Day.

Meyer: Did you hear it from then? Or did it just spread down the line to you/

Januszkiewicz: Well, it was the first I heard of it then.

Meyer: Was from the civilian.

Januszkiewicz: Yes, from the civilians there.

Meyer: Oh, gosh. Do did you think then, oh, it's going to be soon?

Januszkiewicz: Oh yes, yeah, we weren't figured we were going over. I'm sure of that. Yeah. Oh, yes. And being that it was maneuvers in West Virginia, and we're on the east coast, I figured we were going to Europe.

Meyer: So you had no idea up to that time whether you were going to go to the Pacific or to Europe.

Januszkiewicz: No, no idea. But they were mountain maneuvers, I figured probably Italy. That's what I figured. Italy. Yes.

Meyer: Probably. Sure. So, June sixth is D-Day. How long after do they ship you out to Myles Standish?

Januszkiewicz: I think it was in August. Sometime in August. The first part of August that we went.

Meyer: So about two months.

Januszkiewicz: We were shipped out I think in July. By the time they got everything ready, shipped us to Boston. Camp Myles Standish, Taunton. Massachusetts. And we were given one pass, I think, to get into Boston. At least I remember going into Boston once. And I was trying to find a place where I could eat Boston Baked Beans.

Meyer: And did you find a place?

Januszkiewicz: No, no. Because I didn't have the money to go to a good restaurant. And to this day, in fact, I wanted to get, at this reunion, I want to go get Boston baked beans, but I haven't found it yet.

Meyer: And on that tour yesterday—

Januszkiewicz: No, we were pressed for time. We didn't have a chance.

Meyer: You didn't have a chance. But after we're done talking today—

Januszkiewicz: I'm going to look for a place.

There is a place. They mentioned the place where it was invented. It might be, could be the old oyster house that is just in the north end. Ask them at the front desk. Oh! And also the Parker House Hotel, I think.

Januszkiewicz: Parker House Hotel.

Meyer: I think had Boston baked beans.

Januszkiewicz: I'm going to look for it.

Meyer: Yes. Because you should have your Boston baked—

Januszkiewicz: Because I wanted to have it before I went overseas. Now the other thing that another guy, buddy of ours, lived in Providence, Rhode Island. He invited Stanko (PH) and I to visit his parents in Providence, Rhode Island. He was quite confident he was not going to go overseas. We asked him why. He wouldn't tell us. "No," he says, "I know I'm not going to go over." So just the day prior to shipment he said he had a hernia. So he didn't ship over with us. But later we found out that he had his surgery, and he ended up in Italy. And they got yellow jaundice. And got sent home. From Italy. But we shipped out from Camp Myles Standish.

Meyer: Camp Myles Standish.

Januszkiewicz: But I still remember with my barracks bag on my back, with the sling, and they read your last name or something like that, and you give your first name and serial number, and up the plank you go. I still can picture myself going up that plank to get on the ship.

Meyer: And which ship was it?

Januszkiewicz: SS America, USS West Point.

Meyer: And you get on the ship. What's the living conditions like on the ship?

[Time 59:51]

Januszkiewicz: Very poor. We went down where they assigned us a bunk. I only remember the bunk once. I remember putting my barracks bag on it, or something like that. Even that, I may have laid down that evening. But I could feel a little motion [laughs], I knew we were not on dry land, and I was pretty well seasick all the way over across the Atlantic Ocean there. Spending most of the time onboard along the deck, with my head over the side. I had the helmet liner off. My helmet had a little pit in it from I imagine my vomit.

Meyer: From that?

Januszkiewicz: I do remember, I was in the chow line once. I tried it. Damn Sergeant Copeland started talking about these pork chops. Greasy pork chops, see? I know I didn't go through the chow line that day. I moved as fast as I could to where the latrine was, but they wouldn't let me in because they were cleaning it. So I puked right at the entrance to the latrine, then went up on deck. Because I couldn't hold it any longer, it had to come out.

Meyer: No. No. I know what that's like.

Januszkiewicz: But I spent most of my time just onboard the ship. Outside, the first deck.

Meyer: Did you try to eat like candy bars?

Januszkiewicz: No, no candy bars. The only thing I remember eating is the had ice cream.

Meyer: Oh, so you could stomach the ice cream.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah.

Meyer: Oh, gosh.

Januszkiewicz: But I was onboard. I didn't have to go anywhere. Yeah, that was it.

Meyer: And you were not alone in that sickness.

Januszkiewicz: No I was alone. I mean, I was miserable. [laughs]

Meyer: You were miserable like that. But if you looked down the rail would there be other people?

Januszkiewicz: I never noticed. Never noticed. [laughs]

Meyer: Because you were so sick.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. That's why, in fact, I remember my first airplane ride, I get air sick. In fact, while working for Joy Manufacturing as a patent attorney, I remember flying. We had a special case that they wanted pursued. And the chief patent counsel, and myself and the chief engineer

flew down to Washington, D.C. But I remember I got sick on the airplane going down. I used my hat for the bag. Got rid of my hat. So coming back they let me help fly the airplane. So I could keep my eye on the horizon and keep the wings level, pretty much level. And that's how we got back.

Meyer: That's how you got back.

Januszkiewicz: We were going down there, though, he took over, of course. But he had me identify, since I had worked in the U.S. Patent Office, he asked me if I knew where the Masonic Tower was. I said, "Yeah, I know where that is." (per Joe when proof-reading: "the official name is George Washington National Masonic Memorial) So I showed him where the Masonic Tower was, so we could fly at the national airport, land in the national airport.

Meyer: Are you over that now?

Januszkiewicz: Pretty much over it now. All I think of now when I ride an airplane that is bumpy or anything like that, I think of an elevator going up and down, or a bronco bucking, a horse, riding on a horse. So, I got over it.

Meyer: That's smart. So, the Mariposa. So you finally land I think in Liverpool?

Januszkiewicz: Liverpool, England, yes. And I heard the guys talking to the longshoreman, and I really couldn't understand very well. Their English was very bad. They couldn't speak English. (laughter) Or I couldn't understand them. Let's put it that way.

From there they put us on trains. I really enjoyed the trains. What struck me at the trains was there some literature there about, I would say socialism. Socialism. And I was really impressed with it. And later I realized what propaganda you read while you're a youngster. [laughs]

Meyer: Are you at Barton Stacey near Winchester?

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, we were stationed at Barton Stacey. Yes. It's quite a camp. There we had, for beds we had the straw mattresses on wooden plank platforms. They had straw mattresses. And I thought, boy, this is really going downhill fast. Straw mattresses. And I remember they had Italian POWs working in the kitchen, so none of us had KP. We really enjoyed that.

[Time 1:05:07]

And what impressed me was the airplanes flying overhead to and from, above us. I thought, now we're really getting close to the war zone. That really impressed me. That would be in late August or something like that.

Meyer: Late August, something like that. Did you go into Winchester at all?

Januszkiewicz: Once into Winchester. And I remember looking up, I think, looking for, went into the churchyard. They said some famous people in there. I don't recall who was in there, whether Edgar Allen Poe, or whoever it was. I remember looking at the graveyard, looking at names. But other than that the only thing I remember going into was Barton Stacey Town or

whatever it was. Just a small little town really close by. And all they had was chips and whatever it was. Then I'd stay in camp and I'd be reading guys like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

Meyer: Now the books, where did you get the books?

Januszkiewicz: One I got it from the States. I remember now, yes, I never finished reading it. One of these days, I'll finish it. I forget who the author was. It was philosophy. There's two small nice ones I got [Schliting?] our sergeant. He gave me Schopenhauer. And the one I eventually really, I remember one saying from there was, "Happiness is the absence of pain." I remembered that when I was being operated on. Told the doctor, now I knew what happiness really is, it's the absence of pain. But he [the sergeant] got me started on Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

Meyer: On Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. So you're there in Great Britain reading German philosophers.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. Getting ready to be shipped overseas there. I mean, to France.

Meyer: Before I forget, some people carried things with them that made them feel lucky, like talismans. One gentleman yesterday showed me a two-dollar Canadian bill he carried ever since he hitchhiked across Canada in the '30s, and he carried it.

Januszkiewicz: The only thing I had was a little bible that I always had in my vest pocket over here. Always carried that. Had that.

Meyer: Who gave you the bible?

Januszkiewicz: I don't recall where we got that. But I do remember, the only time, I knew one psalm pretty well. And that was when we were being shelled in one of our positions. And that's the 23rd psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures..."

[Meyer: and Januszkiewicz recite 23rd psalm. Januszkiewicz begins to cry.]

Meyer: That happens all the time. That happens all the time. Let me get you a tissue. Only the best for tissues. Here's toilet paper. (laughs)

Januszkiewicz: [unclear]

Meyer: When that happened, what did you remember?

Januszkiewicz: You mean why?

Meyer: Yeah.

Januszkiewicz: I don't know why. Just remembering. Yeah, we got shipped over to Omaha Beach, to France. And we were stationed in the apple orchard.

[Time 1:09:54]

And our first assignment, of course, I remember that one of the guys wanted to trade positions with me. He was a jeep driver. I said, “Yeah, I’ll be glad to be a jeep driver, and trade jobs with you.” He said, “Do you know anything about jeeps?” I said, “No, never drove one.” He says, “You know how to change oil?” I says, “No, I don’t know a damn thing about cars.” [laughs] That was the end of that.

However, then about a week later they made truck drivers out of all of us. What they did was put us on two-and-a-half-ton trucks, and they showed us how to try to shift gears, double clutch. And they had a big rut in a big field, and we started driving the trucks in this field. You couldn’t get out of the rut, I don’t think, no-how. But that’s how we learned to shift, double clutch these two-and-a-half-ton trucks. And we all became truck drivers.

Meyer: On the Red Ball?

Januszkiewicz: And then we became, went on the Red Ball Express, yes. They would always pair us with someone else. Someone that was maybe, in my case I was paired up with Jase Leetch (PH). Fortunately it was not a two-and-a-half-ton truck but it was on a, I think they may have called them a three-quarter-ton truck. It was a smaller truck. But we were the last truck in a convoy. I remember when I was driving it was sort of difficult to keep up to the other trucks. Because like a whip, the first truck would start speeding up, and you wouldn’t see the truck. Then all at once the truck in front of you would start speeding up, so you’d step on the gas and try to catch up to the other truck. And you’re behind him, quite a ways behind him. And as you’re going through a town or small village, people are ready to step out in the street or something, and here I’m going full blast. And I remember what Jase Leetch (PH) finally said, he said, “I said 100 Hail Mary’s when you were driving, Joe. I’ll never forget you.” I still remember chickens flying; I was trying to catch up to the rest of the trucks. I was a horrible driver. But I caught up to the other trucks finally.

Meyer: Would you drive day and night?

Januszkiewicz: Oh yes, day and night. One would drive during the day, or whatever; you’d drive so many hours and the other guy would take over.

Meyer: And at night, did you—

Januszkiewicz: They had cat eyes on the truck in front of you. We traveled slowly, but we traveled.

Meyer: Cat eyes are what?

Januszkiewicz: Small little reflectors or something on the back end of a truck. And that would keep you in line.

Meyer: Did you have any sort of headlights at all?

Januszkiewicz: They wouldn’t use headlights that I knew of. No. Our group didn’t.

Meyer: So you would just wait for the reflection, you would follow the cat eyes.

Januszkiewicz: Whatever's in front of you, you follow it. Yes.

Meyer: So when the moon's out, you're in good shape.

Januszkiewicz: Yep.

Meyer: But if it's a new moon—

Januszkiewicz: Real dark.

Meyer: Then it's hard.

Januszkiewicz: I was a decent driver, it's just that being in the last truck it was just kind of difficult.

Meyer: It is difficult. It is difficult. Because you're the one, you have to keep up.

Januszkiewicz: I learned to speed that way, I guess. [laughs]

Meyer: Is that something you still tend to do?

Januszkiewicz: I've slowed down now. Slowed down. Definitely.

Meyer: How long does the Red Ball last?

Januszkiewicz: I really don't recall. I just remember, I think they finally took me off. I was one of the first ones to get off the Red Ball. I think Jase Leetch (PH) squealed on me. [laughs] I don't remember too much about it. You want to forget those things.

Meyer: So after you were taken off the Red Ball?

Januszkiewicz: We got on the 40&8 [boxcars], shipped out towards the front line.

Meyer: The 40&8s. How many people were crowded on those?

Januszkiewicz: I don't remember how many in ours. But in our case I just remember guys were sleeping with like their legs would be extended over the bodies of other guys. At night, you're sleeping with your feet over other guys. And occasionally someone would light a match and try to find a place to lay down or something like that. Someone put hammocks, or the shelter halves up as if it were a hammock, to try to make more room for other guys. But it was very crowded and you didn't get much sleep. It was a very difficult trip. Just going downhill. You had nice mattresses in state college, and then you had a horrible mattress at Indiantown Gap, then a straw mattress in England, then the 40&8s.

[Time 1:15:10]

Meyer: The floor of a train.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. A real slow train.

Meyer: Oh, was it very slow?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yeah. It would stop, zig zag back and forth. Then start up. It was a long trip. To me it was a long trip.

Meyer: Oh, I bet.

Januszkiewicz: Then we arrived at a position where we took over from the 5th Division. And the position we took was a hilly position, I remember. And we took over Cannon Company 3 of the 5th Division. And I went over to where there was a big shell hole. Evidently a shell hole from a bomb, or whatever. And there was a guy from Ellwood City there, a guy by the name of Jack Snare (PH). I was really surprised to see him. He was a football player. I knew his brother, and I recognized him. And he was telling me about another of my neighbors, Walter Roebuck (PH). He says yeah, he just learned that Walter Roebuck (PH) was killed in action over here at Saint Lo. And I knew Walter Roebuck (PH) real well. In fact I played baseball with him in Ellwood City. And so I remember writing home, but all of that was deleted from my letter when I wrote home.

But then our position was on a hill, and ahead of us were heavy machine gun section. And they said, “Don’t go up over the hill because you’ll be spotted by Germans.”

Meyer: I’m going to change the CD.

End of CD1. Begin CD2

0:00

Meyer: Tell me about what a cannon is, and what a howitzer is?

Januszkiewicz: A cannon was, I understand, a howitzer that had over six inches of the barrel cut off so it would not be a very long barrel. And the trails were smaller; very small. It originally was designed so that it could be dropped by parachute to the troopers. They could drop them down with the paratroopers and have so-called heavy weapons to fire.

There were six cannons in our company, and they would have different charges that you’d put in a canister. And you never fired it full charge because that would burn out the barrels. So its range was really limited. So you’d probably be about a mile from the front line or where you wanted a shell to land. But that was roughly what a cannon was, kind of.

Meyer: Okay. And a howitzer--

Januszkiewicz: It was longer barrel, better trails, and they could use heavier charges.

Meyer: And trails are what?

Januszkiewicz: Support the gun or the barrel of the howitzer or the cannon. You’re supposed to dig in the back end of the trail so that the cannon or the howitzer would move.

Meyer: And what was your job with the Cannon Company?

Januszkiewicz: I would grab the shell. I would help prepare the shell, and it was a canister. They’d say “Charge 5,” or “Charge 6,” and they had all, I think, Charge 8, but Charge 6, and

there would be different bags. And you'd clip them, and you'd drop it into the canister. You'd put the shell on top

(J. J's note from proofreading: should delete "put the shell on top" and replace with "bottom of shell into the top of the canister")

of that. I would grab the shell, cradle the thing in my arm, and at the back end I'd grab a hold of it and ram it into the bore of the cannon and swing the breech block to lock it. However, I had a pair of gloves, I found a pair of gloves that I was wearing. And one of the first, about the third day or something my hand got caught in the breech block. It wouldn't release. So my hand was caught in a breech block. And they cleared the area out, trying to figure out what the hell to do. We couldn't open the breech block. So the sergeant got a—fortunately they had this long rod. At the end of the rod was an arm sticking up. It provided a [unclear] the extending rim [note: an apparatus that provided an extending rim]. A solid piece. So they put that on the end of this ramrod. And he would pound on the shell, the live shell. He'd go from the front. He'd pound on the shell. And I had my hand stuck there and I tried to work the breech block, to release the breech block. And they cleared the area out first, because it could explode if he didn't hit it right. But we managed to get my hand out of there.

Meyer: How long were you in this awful--

Januszkiewicz: It wasn't that long. I don't know how long.

Meyer: A couple lifetimes.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. A lifetime. [laughs] I tried to stand to the side, but if the shell would fire, the barrel would go backwards, recoil, the barrel would come back and possibly—

Meyer: Rip off—

Januszkiewicz: Rip my arm.

Meyer: Holy cow. No was that just an accident? Or was that just something that you were inexperienced at?

Januszkiewicz: Just an accident. After that I never wore a glove. It was a small glove that I had on my hand. It caught in the breech block. But we released it, and then we went on.

Meyer: Live and learn. (laughs)

Januszkiewicz: Yeah.

Meyer: Well, now back, thanks for talking about what a cannon was. So now, oh, one thing, when you get off the trains before they assign you, do you mill around? Or how do you get your assignments of where to go to replace--

Januszkiewicz: Oh, they already, probably it was reconnoitered already by the lieutenant and probably someone else. You get off the train, they had our trucks already there and moved us to our position.

Meyer: Oh, they already, okay.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, they knew where the hell we were going.

[Time 5:03]

Meyer: And did you see the 5th leaving? Or had they already gone?

Januszkiewicz: They were already there. And we took over, put our guns in position and then they moved out after that. And I think they were ready to move out before we got there. But they were still in position. I saw their patches and all that and knew the individuals. Like I mentioned, I knew Jack Snare (PH) from Ellwood City.

Meyer: Sure. Sure. Had they been in action for a while?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, I understand they were in action a long time. In fact, they got there. The 5th Division and the 90th Division tried to take Metz. And the 5th Division tried to attack Fort Driant, and they pretty well got slaughtered in taking the fort. You couldn't, I mean, you make progress on it, but they can't go up against a concrete bunker. And they never knew how. And then they crossed the river at, the Moselle River just a little bit south of Metz, and they managed to get a foothold, I remember, there. A small, what do you call it, beachhead or something?

Meyer: Yeah, beachhead.

Januszkiewicz: But they were driven off of that. They suffered a hell of a lot of casualties in their attempt to take Fort Driant. It became a stalemate after that, and then that's when we joined them. The 90th and the 5th. We took the position between, the 90th was to the north of us and the 5th was to the south of us.

Meyer: So is the 5th near like Nancy, or--

Januszkiewicz: No, they weren't that far to the south. They were actually just slightly below Metz, and we were extending from Metz to Thionville. We didn't go quite as far north to Thionville.

Meyer: And then the 90th are up in Thionville and north?

Januszkiewicz: Yes. We were supposed to originally just have a holding action there in our position, and just keep pressure on the Germans, and reconnoiter to keep pressure on the Germans so they would think we were going to attack and all that. They didn't have any intention for us to attack.

Meyer: And then what changed?

Januszkiewicz: Well, the 90th Division made a crossing just slightly north of Thionville. But as I recall one of their vehicles hit the bridge that they did manage to get, a Bailey bridge, and knocked it out of commission. And that's when they ordered the, I think 2nd battalion of the 378th to make a crossing at Thionville and have a bridge built there. And simultaneous to that action, I forget which battalion was to cross at Uckange to make a false, just as if they were going to go across, then come back. However, they made a crossing there and because of the flooding of the

Moselle River they got stuck on the other side. So that's how you had one, I don't know which battalion it was, the 1st battalion or whatever of the 378th get stuck on the other side.

Meyer: Cut off.

Januszkiewicz: So then with the 2nd battalion of the 378th being at the bridge at Thionville they managed to get to that side. So they got on the east side of the Moselle River. So then the rest of our division started going down on the west side of the Moselle River. And of course like A Company, I remember, 379th, the 1st battalion of 379th, started attacking around for Jeanne d'Arc. So they tried to get around there. Of course they made their attack around Fort Jeanne d'Arc, but they got cut off and they got behind Jeanne d'Arc, and they were stuck there.

About that time, though, about the time we're there, I forgot to tell you about the incident where we were facing our first position. What I remember there is we moved, some of the guys were walking along, and Chet Stanko (PH) says, "Where are you guys going?" "Oh, we're just going down here to the bottom of this hill. There's a little village there, we're going to see what's down at the village." Chet says, "Come on, let's join them!" So I said, okay, we'll go down with them, down to this little village. I don't know how far we walked. I just remember we came into this little village. It was a U-shaped street, houses lined along the base of the U, and along the one side of the U, and around there a little bit. Not very many houses there.

[Time 09:56]

And one guy had to do something. He kneeled down on the street. And as he was down there he says, "Hey fellows, look up on the hill there. Isn't that a German up there?" And we all lined up behind him, all eight of us. We were looking up behind him. "Yeah, that looks like a German, by golly."

So, well, we dispersed. And I remember Chet Stanko (PH) and I got into this house, and Chet said, "Let's see what's upstairs." Okay. So we're going upstairs. I remember Chet managed to get up to the second floor, and I was just ready to step on the stairs, the top step, and a shell came in and exploded close to the house. So we ran downstairs. And as soon as we got to the, we were ready to run out the front door and we saw a helmet go by. And Chet says, "That's Germans, so let's go out the back end."

So we run out the back end of the house and we hear a whistle of a shell coming in. So we drop to the right of the door and a shell hits part of the house on the other side of the house from us, and explodes, see. So we said the hell with that, let's go out the front door, regardless. So we start running out the front door with our carbines, ready to shoot. And we didn't see, it's deserted now. So we work slowly along. Another shell comes in. It hits out in the field there, in a U-shaped area. So we work our way down and we walk into this one house and there's the other four guys just sitting there. "What are you guys doing?" "We're just sitting here, don't mind us," they said.

So we said, okay. So Chet and I, we go down. We want to get back to our outfit. So we work our way around. We walk in a post office, and the post office of course was partially blown up. So we walk around the other side of the U, you know, back side of the U. Finally we come to the very edge of the last house. Let's go back across this field and get into the woods over there from

where we started our trip. And the reason we didn't go this way, because they could still see us. That's why we went around that way. That was still stupid. So we said, "Let's go across this field, let's go back." Okay.

So we ran out of that house and we managed to get out to the center of the street, only from the house, which is maybe 25 feet or so. And the shell came in, exploded in the field close to us. So we ran back into the house. Then we went to the back side of the house. Well, they can't see us here, but they can see us there. What the hell do we do? Well, let's try it again. So we waited a while, and everything died down, nothing happened. We waited a little more. Okay, now's the time, we'll go. We're going to run all the way. So we ran out from the side of the house and start running again. And we managed to get past the road just barely into the field and a shell came and exploded a little bit away from us.

Not bad. We were running like hell now. And the next shell comes in, and we just heard the whistle, we still kept running. It landed close to us—maybe about 25 feet or so—but it was a dud. Didn't explode. So we just kept running. Next one was a dud. We managed to make it to the woods over there. So we were lucky.

Meyer: So you were lucky.

Januszkiewicz: We felt real lucky.

Meyer: You were very lucky. Very lucky.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. We figured we learned our lesson. Don't stick your head out. Stay in a ditch. Never stick your head out. [laughter] So that did me good the rest of my career in the army. That's how, our first action.

Meyer: That was your first action?

Januszkiewicz: That's right. Then at night we always heard Bedtime Charlie.

Meyer: Bedtime Charlie was—

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, he was a German airplane like a Piper Cub or something that was flying over, and we'd hear him. We'd call him Bedtime Charlie. Checking on if he could see anything. That's our introduction to combat.

Meyer: That's your introduction to combat.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. And the other thing is, I've got to tell you this. About three days later I remember I came down with a real high fever, tonsillitis or something. So they put me on sick call. They sent me back to a tent hospital. And I remember they gave me something that really put me out. I just remember going into a deep sleep.

Meyer: Like a paregoric or something?

Januszkiewicz: Not paregoric. That would be for dysentery. Whatever it was, boy, I remember sleeping. Sleeping.

[Time 15:00]

All at once, I remember a nurse waking me up, finally. And she told me to get shaved and come up front.. And get dressed and come up front. And we're in a tent hospital, see. And I woke up, nurse, guys talking beside me in bed. And they're talking about a "Repo Depot." I said, "What's a Repo Depot?" They said when you leave here you go to a replacement center, then they assign you back to a company. Oh.

So I got dressed. All my clothes were right there beside—

Meyer: By the bed?

Januszkiewicz: My bed there, my cot. So I don't put all my clothes on. And I went to the other side of, the back side of the tent, instead of the front side where she was, the nurse. And I crawled under the flap of the tent, see? And I started hitchhiking. Because no way did I want to go to Repo Depot. I wanted to go back to my own camp.

But I remember putting my thumb like this, and a jeep comes by, screeching to a stop just a little bit past me. And there was a major in it. "Where you going, soldier?" I said, "I'm going back to the 95th Division."

"Hop in, I'll take you there. I know where they are." [laughs] And that's how I got back to my outfit. Back to my own company. And I didn't want to leave them again. [laughs]

Meyer: No. No. When you got back was there rejoicing?

Januszkiewicz: I was happy. That's happiness.

Meyer: That is happiness. That is happiness, too.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah.

Meyer: Seeing your friends, too. Your buddies. Is this still before Metz?

Januszkiewicz: This is at Metz. This is at Metz. Yeah.

Meyer: This is during the battle.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. I think where we had, the hill that we were on, I think that was Fort Driant or Jeanne d'Arc. I don't know which fort it was. Below us. Because I remember the airplanes, we're standing at our position. The hill is still just about 50 feet above there. It's quite steep. We fired our cannons there. I don't know why, but we fired.

Meyer: I know the forts are built into the side of the hill. What would you fire at?

Januszkiewicz: We don't know what we're firing at. We just told to fire. When they require action, we fired. But I do remember the airplanes divebombing. They were coming down, and then they get out of sight, and then they come out the other end. We understood they never, didn't do any action. But how do we know? But they were dropping bombs. Dive bombers.

Meyer: Somebody said the 95th you were able to take one of the forts that was an observation post for the Germans.

Januszkiewicz: I don't remember that.

Meyer: And that that made their artillery less active. Were you part of taking any of the forts? Or did you go around them or through them?

Januszkiewicz: I believe they went around them, yes. I know they went around, A Company and B Company went around them. They took the forts that were behind Jeanne d'Arc. Yes. And then the other thing that they then made a flanking movement from the very top, below Thionville where all the Hubert Farm (CK) was and all those. I don't recall what kind of farms. But I think that was the key to where they were able to get behind the forts, and then come on down—

Meyer: Into Metz.

Januszkiewicz: Behind them, yes. Instead of taking them head on, like the 5th Division tried, and got slaughtered.

Meyer: So you're there with your Cannon Company. So you're firing off rounds as you're told.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. We don't know where we're firing or what we're doing. They don't tell us.

Meyer: And they don't tell you. Do they finally just come back and say, "We took Metz, you can go"?

Januszkiewicz: No. All I remember is we went from one position to another position, and another position. Then we end up in a chateau and they says, "Yes, we took Metz." And we spent the night at the chateau, see? All I remember is a nice, beautiful chateau. And they helped bury some Germans. And I remember that night we're on guard duty. Chet and I, they assigned us to guard duty. You always have two hours of guard duty and four hours off. Regardless of, I mean, you're always up doing something at night. So I remember Chet and I coming down the stairs and at the very bottom of the stairs they had a German propped up. (laughs) A dead German.

Meyer: A dead German just propped up?

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, propped up. Someone asked him for a cigarette or something, to light a cigarette. We found out it was a dead German there only. Chet and I didn't bother. We just went around him and went out.

[Time 20:00]

It was real dark that night. All I remember is I had to put my arm on Chet's shoulder, and we went out to our position on guard duty. He had to stand at, they showed us where, one of the guys that we relieved, showed us where. He stood on one side of the tree, and I stood on the other, or next to each other, it was such a big tree. And we faced different directions. But we had to keep track of each other because it was so dark. And I don't know what good it would have done because you couldn't see anyone.

Oh, and just prior to that, in one of our positions now, one of the first positions where we were stationed It was a fairly steep hill, and our guns were pointing up the hill. We never fired there. But I remember during guard duty at night I woke Chet up. I says, “Okay, your turn, Chet.” And then that morning he says, “Joe, I saw a glow last night.” I said it could have been a fluorescent watch or something. He says, “Yeah, well, it could have been. But it could have been a German, too.” From a German watch.

But anyway, we didn’t have breakfast that morning. We just pulled out. The trucks pulled in and said, “Load up,” and we pulled out. I was told that the cooks came back to that position later that morning, or around noontime, and that place was just full of shell holes.

Meyer: Holy cow!

Januszkiewicz: They said no one would have survived that shelling. So that’s when I told Chet, “Chet, you know, that must have been a German.” [laughs]

Meyer: That must have been a German. Yes. (laughs)

Januszkiewicz: That visit us. But anyway, that’s, I remember that. See, prior to Metz being taken. That was, yeah.

Meyer: Where do you go after Metz is taken?

Januszkiewicz: The thing is, we never were told where we were. We’d see signs along the road, but we never knew where we were. They never told us where we were.

Meyer: Or where you were going?

Januszkiewicz: That’s right. Had no idea. Absolutely none.

Meyer: Just move out.

Januszkiewicz: Yup.

Meyer: Read me what you have there.

Januszkiewicz: I made a few notes here. Let’s see. Yes. Oh yes, at one of our first, our first encampment there where I told you about visiting that little village, I just remember Hooper, one of the younger guys, shot himself in the ankle to get out of his action.

Meyer: Was it obvious?

Januszkiewicz: It was pretty obvious, they said. Pretty obvious. But what can you do?

Meyer: What can you do?

Januszkiewicz: That’s right.

Meyer: What did you feel about people that did that? Did you feel sympathy for them?

Januszkiewicz: I didn't know what to think at the time. I mean, why would he do it? You're going to be crippled the rest of his life. You'd better take your chances than to do something like that. It's crazy. Yes. Yeah. Yep. Yep.

I still remember over Felsberg, there's one at the top of the hill and one at the bottom. Over and under Felsberg. But I remember when we landed, at night we reached the bottom of Felsberg. And it was so cold at night that none of us found a place, we didn't try to go to sleep. We walked along the road, back and forth, just to try to keep warm.

Meyer: Just to keep warm.

Januszkiewicz: Just to keep warm. We walked back and forth. I remember that. Yes.

Meyer: Is that in the Ruhr Pocket? Or is that the Siegfried Line?

Januszkiewicz: Prior the Ruhr Pocket. Yes, yes. That was just, I think, entrance into Germany. Up under, under and under Felsberg. And I remember looking up the hill, there was a road you could see where the Germans had real good observation of that road. They said anytime anything would come down there, they're sure to be shelled. But I remember one of the very following days I was on one side of this house, and a guy by the name of Ritz (PH) was on the other side of the house. But the shell that came in killed him, but I was on the right side, the proper side of the house. But that's where we—

Meyer: So, Felsberg?

Januszkiewicz: It was near there, Felsberg, I think. I really didn't know.

[Time 24:56]

Meyer: In your travels back to Europe have you gone back to--

Januszkiewicz: I tried to find that place. Never, couldn't recognize anything. Of course I was only on a tour so I couldn't stop, really stop. I remember there, the other thing there is we had a 50-caliber machine gun mounted on one side of our position there. In case, I don't know why, but I found out it's in case an airplane comes by. But I remember an airplane did come by there, a German airplane. And I remember running to the gun, it was a 50-caliber gun. I reached up, cocked it so it could shoot, and I pressed the trigger as the airplane is coming down towards us, and nothing's happening. But I later learned that in order to activate a 50-caliber machine gun—I'd never shot one, mind you, no one ever showed me—but you had to cock it twice. In other words, you had to pull things twice. Of course, all I did is I just pulled it back once.

Meyer: Sure. How would you know?

Januszkiewicz: And so it never fired. I couldn't fire it, so I just jumped into a hole. Chet Stanko (PH) was coming out. He heard some noise out there. And I knocked him back into the hole. [laughs] But that was, all I remember about that one airplane.

The other time I remember is I found a bicycle there. So I started riding up and down the road here. And all at once I look up ahead, there's a plane. I see a plane coming, you know. So I'm

keeping an eye on it. All at once he's circling back. And as he's coming down, I drop the bicycle, ran into the house. And I waited a while, then I came out. He was gone. So I knew better to, again, the lesson that I learned at the very beginning: Don't stick your neck out.

Meyer: Don't stick your neck out.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. Just like when were at Neuss on the Rhine River, Dusseldorf's on the other side. And I remember walking down. And then there was a house about 100 yards or so, maybe not even that far, from the Rhine River. I remember going into that house, just looking around, seeing what is there. I found a nice clean shirt. And I put on a clean shirt on under my uniform, because I didn't take a bath very often. I mean, you couldn't take a bath. But I put on a clean shirt underneath and then my army shirt over that. But I remember coming out of that house, just glancing to my left there, and I see these tracer bullets coming over. And they're coming closer. So I dove into the hole, because they're coming at me. Tracer bullets. So I dove along in the gutter and worked my way back to where we were. So I learned again my lessons.

Meyer: Keep hidden, don't stick—

Januszkiewicz: Keep hidden. Don't stick your head out.

Meyer: If you wore the shirt next to you, did that make you feel cleaner?

Januszkiewicz: Oh yeah, cleaner. Yeah. Oh, yes. I just remember, we rarely washed over there. The one time we went into a, the night we pulled into position and the guys says, "Well, here's a nice big shed." So we roll in there. And we found out it was a chicken shed. And we woke up in the morning, we were scratching. And there's, I think, I don't know, lice or whatever. We go over there and complain and we all got sprayed with DDT or whatever they had. We open up our shirts and they dump the stuff down us. Our shirts. We didn't take a bath or anything like that.

Meyer: Did you shave? Or did you all have facial hair?

Januszkiewicz: We shaved rarely. I grew a mustache, so I didn't have to shave the mustache. I don't remember shaving, quite frankly. But I know we had to shave. But we shaved rarely.

Meyer: I heard sometime about (*upon proof-reading Joe J. adds "General"*) Patton saying something about socks. He wanted his men to change their socks. Do you remember?

Januszkiewicz: I heard that after the war, that we were supposed to have two pairs of socks. But I only had one pair is all I ever remember. And I'd always take my shoes off, put my socks in the shoes, and put the helmet over the shoes. To keep them warm and dry. Dry them out a little bit. But I don't ever, having two pairs of socks.

Meyer: When you were on the front lines, would you sleep in a slit trench? Or what would you, sleep in foxholes?

Januszkiewicz: We'd dig foxholes, bigger foxholes, and try to cover them if possible.

[Time 29:54]

Because I remember the one time at the [unclear] fire mission, and I'm in this dug out hole. And we put some kind of lumber of something to help make sure it doesn't cave in on us, you know? I remember I got, when they yelled a mission, I tried to get between the wood and the side and there just wasn't enough room there. And I said, "I'm coming, I'm coming." [laughs] I couldn't get out of there until they yelled at me a second time. I finally realized, I'm trying to get behind, there's not enough room there to get out of the hole. But I managed to get out.

Meyer: What's next [in your notes]?

Januszkiewicz: Well, let's see. Oh, yeah. The time that we were moving to another position and we're on a road lined up. And then a plane's coming over us. And unfortunately he came from the rear, we couldn't hear the sound until he's already spraying us. And Dutch Deman (PH) got shot, I remember, he got wounded. And the rest of us scattered. He got hit very close to his crotch. And there was a jeep there; it was some kind of a signal company jeep. I don't know whether it was our company, or whose it was. But the sergeant yelled at Chet Stanko (PH) and I to, when we got back on the road, he says, "Hey, you two, get into that jeep. Finish laying the wire down the road till you run out of the wire. Then you can come back."

So we hopped on a jeep. One of us would drive the jeep and the other guy would start reeling off the wire on the road, see? And he'd stumble and all that. I remember he really got messed up because he fell a couple of times. I drove too fast or something, trying to keep up with me. That's when I learned to slow down again. And then I would be out there laying the jeep. So on our way back, he says, "You know, we ought to apply for a Purple Heart." I said, "C'mon, Chet, forget it." [laughs] We got back to the outfit there. As soon as we got back there, our outfit's ready to move on again. And our sergeant's giving us hell, saying, "What are you guys, goofing off again?"

Meyer: No!

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. We're just trying to do what was assigned to us. And we finished laying the wire and got back to our—

Meyer: Now when you get to the end of the spool, is there someone there?

Januszkiewicz: No, no, we didn't care. We just end it. Left the spool there, end of the spool there. Laid it down, got the jeep back and rejoined. We figured someone, they knew what they were doing. He knew what he was doing. We've got our job, he got his job.

Meyer: So, time to go.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, time to move on. And we got to the next position. I remember as we're pulling into this field it's raining, and the shells start coming in. And I just, all I remember of that, I don't know where I was, or what I did, or whatever. But I still remember looking over there and the guy jumps in this hole and all I saw was this big splash of water. That's all I remember of that. Of the incident or anything.

Meyer: Was that a shell that hit the hole?

Januszkiewicz: No, no. It was an individual.

Meyer: Just swimming?

Januszkiewicz: He jumped in a hole, and just a big splash. Big splash. So you've got to watch where you jump.

Meyer: Where you jump. Where was that?

Januszkiewicz: I don't know where it was. Have no idea. Unfortunately, us privates, we just—

Meyer: But in terms of when it was, was that when you were--

Januszkiewicz: I have no idea. In Germany. I'm pretty sure it was in Germany. In Germany, yes.

Meyer: Okay. What's next on your list?

Januszkiewicz: I also remember we were in another position there, and we're pretty well flat field, and there's about six houses behind us, I remember, and a road behind the houses. And we're firing away from the houses. And I glance around, back, as I'm picking up a shell, and I see a truck loaded with Germans driving down the road. So I'm yelling to the other guys, "There's Germans over there." And they're not paying any attention to me. So I'm ready to go over there, try to get our cannon to turn around and fire at them. There were about four to six truckloads of Germans. They just drove by and that ended it. I glanced back again trying to get their attention; I finally got the attention of the one sergeant. He looks back, "No one there!" So that was the end of that.

[Time 35:00]

The other incident there in Germany, I remember we're at a big field. Maybe 50 feet wide, about 300 yards or something long. Trees on both sides. And we pulled into position on one side of this field. This side of the field there. And I glance across and there's a civilian walking. So I got my gun out, my carbine out, and I yell to the other guys, "Get the sergeant. There's a guy here, doesn't look right." And, "Oh, forget it Joe, he probably belongs just here somewhere." You rarely see a civilian around. And I was ready to shoot the guy. Because they never told us what the hell to do, see. By the time the sergeant cut over, I told him what happened here, and he says, "Oh, forget it."

But within five minutes or ten, I forget, a very short time after that, they start shelling us. And that's when I started again reciting the 23rd Psalm, or whatever psalm that is. But we were lucky. They were coming all around us. I know someone got killed, I don't recall who. But I'm sure that was a spy, or someone that was just relaying a message.

You know, it's funny. They should tell you something about this, something like this, what the hell to do. How to prepare yourself, how to handle a situation like that. Of course, they had no, what did they call it, rules of engagement. They didn't have any rules of engagement there. But civilians should not be around in a war area. If they are there, they're for no good purpose. I mean, if I had my rethinking now, hindsight, I would shoot first and ask questions later. You should not allow something like that to happen. Someone should have stepped in. And I talked about that, and no one ever said anything about it.

And then very shortly after that, I still remember, it was getting close towards the end of the war, we're in the house, just sitting around waiting for whatever is going to happen, whether we're going to move on. I don't recall what the situation is. But we're sitting around in this little room, and I remember Sergeant Schlicting (PH) – and incidentally Schlicting (PH) was a Hitlerjugend, his father came over from Germany just prior to the breakout of the war. He was a Hitler Youth (Hitlerjugend). He became a sergeant in our company. But I remember him sitting across the room from me, and one of the guys came in there, and he had a German automatic. And he hands it to Schlicting (PH) and he says, "Look what I just got." And Schlicting (PH) starts looking at it.

I got up, I could care less. And a guy by the name of Joel Dodd comes in. He was one of the replacements, replaced one of our guys that got killed. But I got up, and I says, "Joel, take my seat." He sat down in my seat. And I managed to get out to the door of the room, took one step to go upstairs, and I heard a shot fired. Accidentally Schlicting (PH) evidently cocked the gun, ripped the automatic and it fired, and of course shot Joel Dodd in the chest.

Meyer: Oh, no!

Januszkiewicz: He managed to get up, and walk just to the door. And as I turned down the steps I caught him and laid him down on the floor. And the other guys called the jeep, and they whisked him away to the hospital.

Years later I called the city of Wink, Texas, and asked for Joel Dodd directory, and he was still living. And I asked him, "What happened? Did they take the bullet out?" He said no, it's still in there, beside his spine. And he's managed to live to a ripe old age, and became a principal in that town of Wink, Texas. We always kidded him, if you winked at the beginning of the city, you'd have missed the city. (Meyer laughs) But that's Joel Dodd.

Meyer: That's Joel Dodd.

Januszkiewicz: Dodd. D-O-D-D

Meyer: D-O-D-D. And the German who accidentally fired the gun, his name was Schlecter?

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. Yeah. It was an accident. They asked who saw it or who did it. I didn't see anything.

[Time 40:00]

I couldn't testify or provide any evidence. I couldn't say it was him. It could have been someone else who got the gun. And none of the other guys identified him either, because they knew it was an accident.

Meyer: Yeah. He must have felt awful.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah.

Meyer: Oh, gosh. When's the last time you talked to Mr. Dodd?

Januszkiewicz: I called down there and found out he had died, about ten years ago.

Meyer: About ten years ago. What's next? These are all wonderful, by the way.

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yeah. The only other thing I remember is, I don't know where the hell it was. In Germany somewhere. We were resting by a barn and a guy in a jeep comes up, stops, not a jeep, someone stopped by us and said, "Hey, any of you guys want a three-day pass to Paris?" Of course all of us, "Yeah!" And he says, "Down the road here, there's a real big barn, and there's a German tank on the other side of that barn. We have a bazooka there, it's all loaded and all that. We don't have too many men down there. But you'll get a three-day pass if you go down there, and go around by that barn. There's a little wooded area. And you fire at that German tank."

No one took him, up of course. [laughs] All I remember is, well, what are our chances in a situation like that.

Meyer: So bizarre! So bizarre!

Januszkiewicz: Yes. Uh huh. Yep.

Meyer: When you look at it, who were the most important people to you? Who was the most important person to you during your time? Was it Mr. Stanko? (PH)

Januszkiewicz: You mean the—

Meyer: In your time in the service.

Januszkiewicz: The infantryman. The guy who put a rifle—

Meyer: But for you, personally.

Januszkiewicz: Personally? What individual name?

Meyer: Yeah. What name?

Januszkiewicz: I can't think of any. In my outfit?

Meyer: Yeah. Mr., was it Stanko? (PH)

Januszkiewicz: Oh no, he was just my buddy.

Meyer: He was just your buddy.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. He volunteered me for too damn many things. He volunteered me to go guard a bridge, you know? And it was the bridge that the 5th Division I think had taken, because we had just taken over the 5th Division position, you know, where they had a bridge head somewhere down near [Corney?]. It was an intact bridge, as I understand it. At least it looked intact when we were down there. But he had volunteered me when I came back out from the hospital. They gave us new clothes, I remember that. And we got to the bridge there and he was on one end of this abutment and I was on the other side. Real big one. And all I remember is there was all at once a this big incoming shell or something, and a big boom, you know? And both of us dive, we both hit the mud, and of course we had clean uniforms up to that moment.

But all I remember, they just fired one shell at us. But I'm pretty sure it was that bridge near Corning (PH) (CK). They never told us where we were. He volunteered me at that.

Meyer: He would volunteer you?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yeah. Together. He was the other guy that volunteered.

Meyer: Yes, okay. So when he volunteered, that meant you—

Januszkiewicz: He volunteered me. I didn't volunteer, mind you. I just got there, he says, "Joe." They came and got me. "Stanko (PH) volunteered you."

Meyer: Oh!

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. So I gave him hell.

Meyer: I bet. How was, now, when you were in England going across, when you were in England preparing to go, you're reading Schopenhauer and you're reading Nietzsche. What do you remember reading while you were in France? Do you have time to read? Are you constantly-

Januszkiewicz: No, not always. In fact, that's why I went into that little village. I was looking for something that I could, like batteries or something like that where I could get some light so I could read at night wherever I am. You know, you could maybe read a little bit.

That just reminded me of the, we only saw one movie while we were in Europe. And they had blankets over all the windows of the house.

[Time 44:56]

And it was Deanna Durbin, I think, or someone like that, *100 Men and a Girl*, whatever it was. But we sat on the floor, watched a movie. Just guys from our company. That's the only movie I ever remember seeing. But I remember the movie was going and there was a lot of noise. We were being shelled and we didn't realize. We were being shelled. And I do remember that [Tauber's?] truck was parked outside by the house. It was to bring ammunition up. And I remember when it was over, there was a dud sitting in his trunk (*Joe in proofreading corrects to read "driver's side"*) of his car (*proofread correction: "his truck"*), right beside the house. So we went into our own house that we had. And then when I woke up in the morning, after our guard duty, what not, I remember early in the morning I came out of there, and there were shell holes all around our position at our house, where we were. And I remember seeing a shell in the ground, not exploded. Another shell had evidently gone into the ground and came out, and it was sticking out of the ground. This is close to our house. Evidently we really got shelled that night.

Meyer: So you got shelled. And you were lucky.

Januszkiewicz: We were lucky.

Meyer: Very lucky. Was it *Mrs. Miniver*? Or one of those shows?

Januszkiewicz: What? Probably [88?] or something, who knows what kind of—

Meyer: No, I was remembering the movie. I remember, *Mrs. Miniver*, she had that going on at the time. But it was a Deanna Durbin movie.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. Deanna Durbin. Yes. Yeah. I always remember that.

Meyer: Okay. Okay. Have you ever seen the movie again?

Januszkiewicz: Oh, yes. Yes. *One Hundred Men and a Girl*. I don't know what it was.

Meyer: *One Hundred Men and a Girl* or something?

Januszkiewicz: Something like that, yeah.

Meyer: Okay. So again, what sort of things do you remember reading while you were in Europe? Did you have--

Januszkiewicz: Oh, I took a correspondence course over there.

Meyer: You took a correspondence course? In what?

Januszkiewicz: Yeah, from Penn State. It was on psychology. It was the worst grade I ever got. I carried the book and just whatever paper that I had, in an ammunition box. A 30-caliber ammunition box. And whenever I had an opportunity, I'd take it out and I'd do maybe a lesson or so. But I remember when we were moving over to Belgium we stopped at a certain town. I don't remember the town. Used to remember the name of the town. And they assigned us a house. And I think I did about, I stayed up all day and all night working on the lessons. I must have done about eight lessons, and sent them all in. You read it, and the answer's right in the book, you know? I don't know why I got a bad grade. I passed the course, though. He gave me three credits, to get through Penn State earlier. That's why, I was trying to make up for lost time.

Meyer: Make up for lost time.

Januszkiewicz: Yes. I never made up for it.

Meyer: Never made up for it.

Januszkiewicz: No.

Meyer: How did the war change you?

Januszkiewicz: I don't know how. I know it changed me, but I don't know how. I know it affected me, but how? You don't know. You don't know.

Meyer: You know, they're not teaching WWII in schools that much.

Januszkiewicz: Oh, no, no, no. You know, it's funny. It affected me more, I guess, after I wrote the book. Collected stories, you know? And then, don't want to talk about it, I guess now.

Meyer: They what?

Januszkiewicz: I don't want to talk about it now. I can do someone else's, but I don't want to talk about my own somehow. I don't know what it is. I don't think I could go up in front of a class and tell them about the war.

Meyer: When we started, you were talking about your own experiences and you were sort of downplaying them as though, you know, I know some people would think, especially people who've seen a lot of their friends and things die. Bob Patrick of the Veterans History Project, the one who wrote the letter. I talked to him before July 4th, and he said he was going to give a speech to some veterans. And he said in the speech he was going to say this was one of the patriotic things they can still do for their country is they can tell their story, because history is lost. He said if they want to take on another duty, that would be the duty. To tell what they know. Because if you don't tell what you know, people don't know. When you tell the truth in front of a grp of kids, they know it. It's a whole different thing between you telling someone else's story and you telling your own story. Because there's a wait, there's a way you pause, there's a whole different rhythm to it. And a lot of them may not be prepared to listen to history. But if you talk to the classes, you will look at them. And you will see two or three. And you will give them the fire. And they will carry the fire with them and they will give it to someone else. Because you have told them. You gave me the fire. And look, I have 200 stories I have from the 95th. I don't know how many. But I've done now—

Januszkiewicz: I have to go to the bathroom.

Meyer: Okay. Let me unhook you here for a second. But I'm just saying, that's what you do.

[end of CD2; begin CD3]

CD 3

Meyer: The minister who was here was talking to me. What do you call it, it's like a focus group sort of effect.

Januszkiewicz: Yeah. Yeah. Now they all were from the same company, though. That's where you need that.

Meyer: That's what you need.

Januszkiewicz: But individual. Where you ask them questions. Yeah. I made notes while I was sitting there. That's why I—

Meyer: That was great. Your notes kept things going in a nice way, too.

Januszkiewicz: Faster pace.

Meyer: Well, let me close off. I have a few more questions.

Januszkiewicz: Sure.

Meyer: And then we can close off. Let's see, where are the questions?

Januskiewicz: Yeah, I remember ASTP very well. (laughs)

Meyer: It's all great. Let's see. And your final rank again was?

Januskiewicz: PFC

Meyer: Was PFC.

Januskiewicz: Didn't get nowhere. They offered me a rank. You know, they want you to stay in the service instead of being discharged.

Meyer: A few things that, just moments that we sort of may have skipped over. When you left for the service, when you finally did, left to go to the chemical company, and you left Pennsylvania, what was that final leave taking like? Was your mom there? Dad there?

Januskiewicz: No. See, we lived in Ellwood City; we had to go ...

[CD 3 ends]