

## Audio and Video Recording Log

1. Name and address of collector or interviewer .

Name of Collector/Interviewer - David Meyer (O'Shea) – son of Earl D Meyer Co.H/379<sup>th</sup> Infantry/95<sup>th</sup> ID

Address (at time of interview) 578 N. Gower Street  
City Los Angeles State California ZIP 9 0 0 0 4

Address (current) "Mardi Gras" 35 Harrington Sound Road, Hamilton Parish, CR 04 BDA

Telephone (current) (441)- 599-4826 e-mail osheadavid@sbcglobal.net

Organization or Affiliation (if any): Veterans History Project: American Legion Hollywood Post #46;  
95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association

2. Full name and birth date of the veteran being interviewed as it appears on the recording label and Biographical Data Form.

Name of Veteran/Civilian John Stanley Komp Birth Date August 16, 1922

3. Recording format (please check)

AUDIO type: Marantz CD recorder with two backups: Maudio flash disk and Apple Ipod with Belkin mike  
If audio: transferred to a DVD as two .wav files Is item: Copy XX

4. Date of Recording : June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Estimated length of recording - 2 files – "File1KompJohn2012June8WWIIforVHP": 01:13:33  
and "File2KompJohne2012June8WWIIforVHP": 02:19:35 Total 3 hr 33 min 6 seconds

5. Location of recording: Airport Marriott, Coraopolis (Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania

. Corresponding materials (please check)

Have you included materials other than the recording? **Yes XX** No \_ - **Full Transcription**  
**included: print and digital (on a CD separate from the DVD of the recorded interview)**

6. Please summarize the topics discussed in the interview in their order of appearance on the recording.

Meter Reading Topics presented in order of discussion on recording  
or Minute Mark

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Please see following summary and log  
(Continue on additional sheets as needed)

**Summary Explanation of VHP log attachments for JOHN STANLEY KOMP**

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*This interview was conducted at the 2012 reunion of the 95<sup>TH</sup> Infantry Division in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania over two different recording sessions on the same day - June 8, 2012.*

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*The VHP copy of the audio interview is on one DVD containing two .wav files:*

- 1: "File1KompJohnWWII2012June8forVHP.wav" - from the beginning until a break for phone calls (01:13:32 - one hour thirteen minutes, thirty-two seconds) and*
- 2. "File2KompJohnWWII2012June8forVHP: - begins after the break and continues to the end of the interview (02:19:34 two hours nineteen minutes thirty-four seconds)*

**Total interview length on the DVD: approximate three hours 34 minutes**

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*John Komp, a retired Colonel of the US Army, served for over 30 years with one small break after WWII. His service in WWII is the focus of this interview (though he jumps forward in time to mention some of his Korean War service when it relates to his WWII service.)*

*Colonel Komp entered as a private and rapidly rose in rank to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant while still stationed in the U.S. He ended his WWII service as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant.*

*Though he served briefly with the 354<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 89<sup>th</sup> ID at the beginning and 60<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 9<sup>th</sup> ID at the end, most of his service was with the 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 377<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.*

*He held many positions in the 95<sup>th</sup> I.D. including company commander, battalion intelligence officer, and assistant Regimental officer serving in the United States and Europe during WWII.*

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*The interview was transcribed by Carol Slezak. The transcript is included in this VHP packet both as a physical document and as a Microsoft Word document on a separate CD from the recordings.*

*This log is done by the interviewer – David Meyer (son of Earl D Meyer – Co.H/379<sup>th</sup> Infantry/95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division). Please forgive length. John Komp talks of his service, duties, where he was stationed, what he saw, etc. with such clarity and detail that the interviewer/logger felt he would do a disservice to the reader to condense the log entries too much. In a few instances, entire excerpts from the transcript are include in case the reader has no time to read the transcript or listen to the interview.*

*Any such excerpts or any important information (like rank, birthdate, etc). are highlighted in yellow. Place names where John is stationed or living are highlighted in blue on the first appearance. Interviewer's questions and comments are in italics.*

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*The log follows the standard VHP form (times in one column and condensation of subjects covered in the time period in the second column).*

*Supplementing this form, the interview is divided into sections with general headings (e.g. "Intro. Family, Delousing in WWII") preceding each section of log entries. Each general section heading is highlighted in green with column one showing the meter times covered in each section (e.g. File 1:00:02:30 – 00:05:45 is "First wav file – 2 minutes 30 seconds to 5 minutes 45 seconds.)*

Meter Reading  
or Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

**Begin first part of interview – on VHP DVD as a .wav file. On DVD the file is named**

**“File1KompJohnWWII2012June8forVHP.wav  
(abbreviated in log below as “File 1”)**

**File 1: 0:00:00 - 00:10:55** **Intro. Family. Delousing in WWII. Ranks through service career.**

00:00:00 Interviewer. David E Meyer son of Earl D Meyer Co. H/379<sup>th</sup> Infantry/95<sup>th</sup> ID. June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Marriott Pittsburgh Airport, Pittsburgh, Pa. (Coraopolis, PA.) Interviewee: John Stanley Komp. Born 16 August, 1922 in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn (NY) – 89 years old.

00:02:55 Father Herman Komp, Jr. Mother Margaret Mary. Older brother (“John” also) died in childbirth but kept secret. John finds out when visiting his Grandfather’s grave. Brother’s grave was nearby. Never mentioned again.

00:05:20 “Anyone else in your family in the service?”

Grandfather Spanish American-War. Father WWI Quartermaster. Father’s brother in the WWI Navy. Father went to France. Didn’t talk about it much. Printed cartoons about “cooties.”

00:06:35 On delousing in WWII. Pumped DDT in your clothing with “something like a flit gun.” John deloused prisoners when 95<sup>th</sup> liberated a POW camp in Lippstadt, Germany.

00:08:50 John’s ranks through his career (retired in 1975.) WWII rank – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut through Europe, promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut upon return to US at Camp Shelby, Miss. As 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant served as company commander, battalion intelligence commander, ass’t regimental officer.)

Korea –made Captain in the 25<sup>th</sup> Division under D(ept) of A(rmy) Ordinance . In Vietnam (1973) Then to Defense Nuclear Agency as Inspector General. Retired 1975 final rank Colonel.

**File 1: 00:10:55 – 00:17:40** **“Ask me how I became a second Lieutenant” Life situation when joining. First days in service: Ft. Dix. Camp Carson, Colorado. for basic and advance infantry and battalion intelligence training. Assigned as PFC with 354<sup>th</sup> infantry, 89<sup>th</sup> ID.**

File 1: 10:55 **Life when entered the service.** Working as a file clerk in NYC. Wants to be a draftsman. Uncle at Brooklyn Navy Yard gets John job as a marine draftsman - defense industry job which can give John a deferment. John’s friends entering service so John doesn’t ask for deferment. When number comes up, John joins (15 October, 1942).

Meter Reading  
or Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

File 1: 00:12:50

Sworn in at NYC then to Ft. Dix, NJ, then to Camp Carson, Co. for basic and advanced infantry.

Becomes intelligence-qualified enlisted man assigned to a battalion intelligence section. Duties: observed traffic on highway playing like observing the enemy. Drew panoramic sketches and profiles, computed range and azimuth.

00:14:50

Promoted to PFC (less than 6 months). 20 years old. John's NCOs want him to go to OCS. He is happy where he is but applies anyway. In 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion, 354<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 89<sup>th</sup> I.D.

**File 1: 00:17:40 – 00:27:35**

**Drilling squads/platoon in close order drill. OCS interview (prepped by friends on "voice of command"). NCO school. Promote to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. Applies to USAAF on leave. Then to segregated training center at Ft. McClellan, Ala. Answers call to 95<sup>th</sup> ID.**

00:17:40

At this time, John is drilling 12 man squads and then platoons in close order drill. Fine description of close order drill.

00:19:30

On the Officer's Candidate School interview. John is prepped: "When the 3 person interview team will ask for you to call close order drill do it in full voice," with the "voice of command" (full projected voice) as though commanding a company. John does it.

Order to go to Ft. Benning as Corporal. Commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Infantry 11 Aug., 1943. Still 20 (almost 21) and in army just a year.

00:22:25

(Backtracks) Before OCS went to NCO school (Camp Wheeler, Va.) as part of the screening out process. Trained and qualified in every weapon the infantry had. Able to assemble/disassemble M-1 in dark.

00:25:35

On leave (after OCS) on leave in Brooklyn, friend of father convinces John to apply to USAAF for pilot training. John does and forgets about it.

00:26:50

To Ft. McClellan, Ala. Segregated training center. Racial segregation. Levee put out for officers for the 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

**File 1: 00:27:35 – 00:32:10**

**Assigned to the 95<sup>th</sup> ID. Meets 95<sup>th</sup> I.D. on train heading to Camp Coxcomb, Ca. desert maneuvers. Put in command of Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon. Description of A&P, its duties and where it fits in to battalion structure.**

File 1: 00:27:35

John joins 95<sup>th</sup> ID on train to Camp Coxcomb, Ca. desert training. Meets his "second": Sgt First Class Chuck Goodell - "best thing that ever happened.. knew what he was doing."

Meter Reading  
or Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

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File 1: 00:28:12

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Assigned to command Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon. A&P duties: explosive clearing; minor engineering: barrier construction, building corduroy road, foot bridges. Pioneer section: engineering tasks. The Ammo section: duties include distributing ammo to the four companies that make up the fighting element of a battalion: 3 infantry companies and a heavy weapons company.

00:30:30

Fine description A and P platoon fits in to battalion structure and how HQ company is structured and how batteries fit in to the structure.

**File 1: 00:32:10 –00:46:30** **Camp Coxcomb. Desert training to the 377<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (95<sup>th</sup> ID). Platoon exercises. Battalion live fire exercise and how John gains notoriety.**

00:32:10

Recap: John is commander of A&P for the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion (377<sup>th</sup>) in California desert training for desert work in Africa.

Desert temperature: night – colder than a well digger’s “posterior in the Klondike;” day - hot as hell.

(34:05) Water discipline. Salt tablets. No worry about “hydration.”

00:35:45

**Duties and Maneuvers at Camp Coxcomb. Platoon exercises.**

Sgt. Goodell takes over training; John sets up problems for infantry platoons to survive/operate in desert with rations delivered to them that they had to divide, prepare, and consume while following a route of attack: for all 3 companies (9 platoons) of 2<sup>nd</sup> btn./377<sup>th</sup>.

00:36:45

**Live fire battalion exercise where John gains “notoriety.”**

Regimental attack exercise on “dug-in” positions. 2 line companies, heavy weapons. No artillery so have to “play smoke” by manually “laying smoke” from smoke cannisters set off by electrical charge.

XO (Exec officer) tells John to take a group of men to “Fritzie’s hill” to “lay smoke.” XO points to it – over 500 yrd away. (Find out later XO pointed to the incorrect hill).

John takes azimuth from where XO points, sets off in morning dark with 6 to 8 men carrying the smoke cannisters . Arrives at hill. Barbed wire. Dummies behind wire. “This must be it.” (No – it’s the wrong hill.)

Meter Reading

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

File 1: 00:39:45

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Puts out six smoke pots on hill. At right time, John sends his men to the charges “Just then the live fire exercise starts” and they are caught on the objective (on the wrong hill) with carbines, rifles, live machine guns” all going off around them.

Leads his men off the hill into a ravine and then up another hill.

00:41:00

Spots regimental C.O. (Galliard) coming up the hill. John shouts, “Helloooo.” Galliard says, “I want an investigation (why these men were on that hill under live fire)... starting with ‘that man’ [John] because they shouldn’t have been there.” John thinks it’s the end.

00:42:15

Investigation reveals XO (Major Crosby) had given John directions to the wrong hill. John is off the hook and the “XO disappears.”

At the shower that night “everyone wanted to know ‘Where’s Komp?’” Heavy weapons CO says to John, “You’re the first one in the division to get your baptism of fire.” “I became famous.”

Reminiscences: XOs; battle memory from Metz, France, back to desert Camp Coxcomb.

**File 1: 00:46:30 – 00:49:45**

**John’s made platoon leader and then he is called to Army Air Corps to interview as pilot. Pilot test. Doesn’t pass – offered navigator. Refuses and returns to 95<sup>th</sup> now moved to Indiantown Gap, Pa.**

00:46:30

End of desert training. Taken from A&P platoon to be infantry platoon leader of 3<sup>rd</sup> (Rifle) Platoon, G Co. 377<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

Before leaving California, ordered to report to **Marine Air Station near Knotts Berry Farm, Ca.** to interview for “pilot.”

00:48:00

In USAAF interview asked “Why do you want to be a pilot?” John answers, “Want to be a commercial pilot after the war.” Wrong answer. They want to hear “that I wanted to be a hotshot pursuit pilot...so that was one mark (against me).”

00:48:35

Lacks manual dexterity to operate all the instruments. Offered “bombardier navigator.” John doesn’t want position, sent back to the 95<sup>th</sup> which had moved in his absence to **Indiantown Gap, Pa.** Assigned back to the battalion to line co. “F” (briefly) and then “G”.

**File 1: 00:49:45 – 00:59:40**

**Indiantown Gap, Pa.: acclimating college kids newly arrived from Army Specialized Training Program with the rigors of infantry Levee for D-Day engineers. Memory of near parachute jump (in Korea). Back to WWII Indiantown Gap, D-Day broadcast.**

File 1: 00:49:45

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Greets incoming kids from newly disbanded Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) as they arrive fresh from universities to Indiantown Gap to get thrown in with the older veterans.

“So here we had to receive these guys (ASTP) who had all kinds of other plans, and ... they’re going to be trained in basic infantry... My job was to welcome them and line them up so they could be assigned to the different companies. ... Some of them had had training, but others not so much. To me, if I’d been in the same boat I’d be in shock mode: You know, “What next?”

On ASTP. How treated. Where-ever there was a slot that needed somebody, that’s were they (ASTP) went. “The exigencies of the service.”

00:51:50

Appendicitis keeps John from West Va. Mountain training. One of the first to be treated with penicillin (instead of sulfa drugs).

00:53:05

Levee (before D-Day) called for those with engineering qualifications for paratrooper training. John wants to be a paratrooper. Regimental Commander Sobesta turns John down.

00:53:55

*Did you ever make a (parachute) jump?* “Almost”

1961 - Korea - on second tour as a Major serving as a Jr. Captain in the UN 8<sup>th</sup> Army, General Staff, grounds operations, planning nuclear battlefield war games. Story of the near jump.

00:58:40

Return to **Indiantown Gap**. D-Day on newscast. Realizes the levee he had signed up and removed from had been for D-Day. “**God was watching over me.**”

**File 1: 00:59:40 – 01:07:20 On God watching over - 1944 Lorraine district of France – Maizieres-les-Metz and Woippy.**

**Replaces commander of 1<sup>st</sup> platoon, G Co, 377<sup>th</sup>. who was “visibly shaking.” Injury at Woippy, France. Soldier dies while holding John’s hand. Taking back prisoners. Loot**

00:59:40

*Did you ever feel there were (other) times when God was watching over you?*

First time I was being fired on by a sniper back... that was close. “When I rejoined B Co., I was excess...all the platoons (were) filled,” but the lead officer said “Stick around.”

Command post was **Maizières-lès-Metz**, France - a small commune north of Metz. John is close by at **Woippy**, another small commune).

File 1: 01:00:59

“At night I was with supply jeep... going up to G Co. carrying food and ammunition in Woippy. Saw Don Moore (commander of 1<sup>st</sup> platoon)... (who said to me) “ ‘Ooh, they’re coming close, they’re coming close’ .... You could see him shaking. And within 24 hours ... I was assigned to first platoon...(as Don’s replacement – John becomes the third commander of this platoon).”

“Don... cracked up under fire. We never heard from him again... embarrassed and ashamed. We had no gripes about that. Having been in combat, we could understand what he was going through. “

01:02:55

**Close call.** “...The battalion command post which (*I was in*) was in some kind of bunker in Woippy ... all in the darkness and you didn’t know where you were ...I came out of the battalion command post and I heard this horrible screaming.... two other fellows came with me, we went to where this guy was ... ended up finding this guy in the corner of the building. We had a blanket with us to go and pick him up... Germans started shelling us...and I felt a little burning in my left thigh, near my butt. ...

(We) picked this guy up in the blanket... [*holding the blanket*] almost chest high, holding his hand and talking about his high school [*ring*]... he had what we called a chest sucking room...and the battalion surgeon just shook his head.. And the guy died right there, while I was holding his hand. I don’t know what his name was. “

01:05:10

Told to take back German prisoners and “...if you lose them along the way, don’t worry (indicating ...).” “But we didn’t do that. We got them back to a collecting point.”

01:05:40

Description of collecting point. Germans happy to be out of the war.

Interviewer asks if encounters with the SS. John no specific memories. Picked up an SS hat in **Saarlautern** (which they nicknamed “**Saar-loot-ten**” because of the loot.)

**File 1: 01:07:20 – 01:08:44 Trip across the Atlantic to Liverpool England on USS West Point.**

01:07:20

On **USS West Point** (converted luxury ship former name “SS America”). Fast trip. “Glad to get off the damn boat.” Arrived in Liverpool birthday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

**Memories of Liverpool, Marching through streets** “ these kids were asking for [in British accent]: “Any gum, chum? Any gum, chum?” And the answer was, “Not a stick, prick.” [laughs]

**File 1 01:08:44 - 01:10:35** Marantz CD #1 is filled. [01:08:44]. Small talk while interviewer safeguards CD #1 and inserts and checks CD #2 into the Marantz recording. Included for VHP to show continuity.]

**File 1 01:10:35 – 01:12:37** Interview resumes recapping banter with British kids. Sent to Camp Barton Stacey. Good advice from wounded veteran. Interruption by cell phone call. First part of interview ends.

01:10:35 (“What did the kids in Liverpool say and what did you say back?”)

**Komp:** [in British accent] “Any gum, chum?” “Not a stick, prick.” Friendly. We were giving them stuff and talking to them.”

To **Camp Barton Stacey** (near **Winchester, England**.) Slept on “straw in a bag.” Small unit training. Patrol exercises.

Wounded veteran tells them what they really need to carry as riflemen. – drop all by the lightest things needed. “Throw that damn pack of stuff away, you’re not going to need that’... You need your immediate rations and you need your ammunition... your weapon, then your survival gear. “

**Cell phone interruption.** John and the interviewer decide to take a brief break to check and answer phone calls.

**End of first part of interview (01:13:33).**

On VHP DVD as first part of interview is a .wav file named:  
“File1KompJohnWWII2012June8forVHP.wav”

Interview resumes after break for phone calls. This second half of interview is included on the DVD as “File2KompJohnWWII2012June8forVHP.wav”

**Begin second part of interview – on VHP DVD as a .wav file. On VHP DVD File is named “File2KompJohnWWII2012June8forVHP.wav” (abbreviated below in this log as “File 2”)**

**File 2: 00:00:00 - 00:04:35** (returning after break)

**Small unit training at Camp Barton Stacey, England. Setting up patrols for platoons. Trip to London. Encounter with prostitute.**

“When you set up a patrol with a platoon, included in that organization you have scouts... the people who precede the main element... responsible to locate the enemy, or be the first one shot, since you know you’re near the enemy.

... whatever the combat formation is, you take that column, and you put people out to the sides so you don’t have anybody surprise you or come up unannounced. ... looking to the rear, so you have to be fully aware of everything – 360 degrees... security for the formation. That even applies to motorized vehicles. You always have your security around you.... Only talking about a platoon.

00:02:20

So you have 40 men, and three squads. You can have the squads aligned one behind the other, or parallel to each other with one in the rear. Or you can echelon them, right or left. And this all goes back to close order drill. (*but*) you’re not as rigid (*as close order drill*), you’re not marching to a cadence, you’re marching to whatever terrain you’re on.

00:03:00

Visit to London and the woman “in Piccadilly Circus... came up to us in the dark... and... she shined a little light onto her ankle.. letting us know that she was a prostitute.” Dutch Sobesta was horrified.

Heard buzz bombs. Saw evidence of bombings. Admired British people for what they put up with.

**File 2: 00:04:35 – 00:08:50 Automobile accident sends John to hospital in Winchester while the 95<sup>th</sup> goes on into France. D-Day survivors. Released and assigned to “replacement packet” and shipped to France.**

00:04:35

On way to a railroad station, John’s truck is hit by “a British seven-ton prime mover... (*windshield*) went out and... little throw-out rod that’s on the side of the windshield went in the side of my skull... and ripped this whole piece of flesh. If it had been a little farther it would have killed me... here I am fortunate... again ...26 stitches.” (Shows scar.)

00:06:20

Taken to British civilian home. Gives towels. John’s driver conducts pulls John’s skin over wound and ties it up. Blood pooling in John’s oilskin slicker. Taken to hospital ward where he’s put on a floor with D-Day survivors from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne in Winchester.

**Interviewer: Did they talk about it at all (i.e. D-Day)?**

No. They weren’t going to talk about it. They would talk about girls.

After discharge, sent to midlands near **Mitch Field Barracks** - sleep on bedrolls in houses with no furniture waiting for replacement packet to be formed.

00:08:15 **Description of a replacement packet.** Number of officers. The senior officer is the packet commander... full of people who have been injured or people who were going as replacements. Shipped out to the beaches overlooking Omaha.

**File 2: 00:08:50 – 00:00:00 France. Landing in Normandy. First cup of coffee (in his life).**

00:08:50 Climbing down rope nets from the launch to the Mulberries at **Omaha Beach**. Up the ravine. First night in **Normandy**. First cup of coffee in his life. Becomes hooked on coffee.

00:09:45 Transcription: ... And we got to this area that was open air, and by this time it was dark, and we bedded down for the night and it's raining. And being the junior officer I had the last shift.

So they woke me up at three or four o'clock in the morning and said, "You're on." So I had to get up and walk around, and this is complete darkness in this area, and you don't want to kick anybody who's in a pup tent. Some put tents up, others just slept in their clothing.

And about four o'clock in the morning I see this little light in the distance. And I walk to the light and it's the cook setting up a mess line so they could feed the replacements. And when I walked into the area one of the cooks saw me and said, "Hey, lieutenant, do you want a cup of coffee?"

I had never had coffee. I never drank coffee. My father was a big coffee drinker, but I never drank coffee. So I said, "Yeah." And I had to get my cup out of my canteen, and he pours me the cup, puts condensed or evaporated milk in, and I put it to my lips and I didn't realize the heat that was there! [Owww...]

So that was my first cup of coffee. And I was hooked on coffee."

**File 2: 00:11:15 – 00:21:20 Crossing France by truck and train in replacement packet. Marlene Dietrich show. AWOL trying to get back to 95<sup>th</sup> (sent back before anyone knows. ) Days later, is (coincidentally) sent back to the 95<sup>th</sup> ID legitimately ending up in 377<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Co. G – where he had wanted to be.**

In the replacement packet as a 'military occupational – a number... the system requisitions – by military occupation.' Wants to get back to the 95<sup>th</sup>. Travel across France to Conflans-Jarny (NW of Nancy in Lorraine). Assigned to 3<sup>rd</sup> Army but not to the 95<sup>th</sup>.

00:13:35

Live show featuring Marlene Dietrich. Everyone "wanted to see her legs" and "she comes out dressed like us in GI outfit and boots" doesn't show legs. Plays the musical saw. "She was a flop. Rest of the show was great."

00:14:40

Next day, 11<sup>th</sup> of November [1944], John spots ammo truck from the 95<sup>th</sup>. John waves and yells, "Hey, I'm Komp." Driver stops – he's going to the regiment. John wants to get back to the 95<sup>th</sup> so climbs in and gets a lift to the 95<sup>th</sup> but tells no one that he's left. (so AWOL)

Dropped off at 95<sup>th</sup>'s ammo supply point (service company) Motor officer, Capt. Davis, says "Where the hell did you come from?" John explains. "You're AWOL," says Capt. Davis.

00:17:10

Next to personnel officer, Crocker, who says, "Where the hell did you come from?" Crocker explains "we requisition by infantry platoon leader number", not by a soldier's name." Sends John back to the Replacement Packet (which didn't know that John had left.)

00:17:50

Two days later, John hears his name called, boards a truck. John is being sent back to 95<sup>th</sup> (G company/377<sup>th</sup> Infantry) as a replacement Just where he wants to be.

Sees two Sgts. From 1<sup>st</sup> platoon – wounded. Two wounded men never return to the 95<sup>th</sup>. "That was a big disappointment because I thought they were real good guys."

(Interviewer: *They took the way out?* John: Yeah)

00:19:45

No one had asked for John in particular - just for infantry replacements and John happened to be in that group Could have been sent anywhere but lands up back at his own 377<sup>th</sup> Inf.

**File 2: 00:21:20 – 00:26:50 Back at the 95<sup>th</sup>. Expansion of Woippy wounded story. To Metz. John's coat makes him a target. Combat at Metz.**

File 2: 00:21:20

On wound: after the wounded man (Atkins) died while John was holding his hand, "the surgeon said, 'Are you OK?' (00:22:45) ...referring to how I felt about this guy dying in front of me... And I said, "Well, I have this burning sensation in my butt." Surgeon finds piece of shrapnel. Bandaged. Removed in 1946.

After Woippy, crosses to Metz, France (city on the Moselle River that Gen'l Patton had been trying to take since September, 1944– two months.) Rejoins platoons

00:23:40 Story of how John's coat made him stand out like "a sore thumb."

00:24:40 First time John leads his platoon, man behind John, Ricketts, is shot in the tip of the nose. John calls for medic and left. "You don't stop for wounded on the battlefield." Later, John realizes the sniper had been aiming at John himself (coat makes him a target.)

00:25:30 Arrive at Metz across from the tobacco factory building (where the wounded German commander, General Kittel was being treated). 95<sup>th</sup> takes the building and capture Kittel.

00:26:35 "That's where Miller (Andrew Miller– 95<sup>th</sup> Medal of Honor winner) climbed through the window and captured (many Germans).

**File 2:00:26:50 – 00:32:20 On Medal of Honor winner, Andrew (Andy) Miller – the leading bazooka man in John's platoon and only Medal of Honor winner from the 95<sup>th</sup> during the war. On toughness. On bazookas**

Description of Miller – Co. G, third platoon – leading bazooka man. Kind of heavy set, looked older. Good soldier. Tough.

00:28:05 John explains: Back at Indiantown Gap, Miller (and other men) were sent to bring back a soldier who goes AWOL visiting relatives in the area. AWOL was brought back and sent to John, the AWOL soldier had crapped his pants. "So you ask if he (Miller) was a threatening influence. I don't know but this guy crapped his pants..."

File 2: 00:30:20 When to use a bazooka. Story of Miller firing a bazooka into the tobacco factory and knocking out the German's gun. He was "given the target and told to get that target."

On how things happen in combat – "Everybody looks at something a little different, sees something different." 00:32:00

**File 2: 00:32:20 – 00:37:15 Thanksgiving, 1944. Uses of the helmet. The "G.I.'s"**

On Thanksgiving, 1944, mess sergeant, Eldon Matson, gave John a whole turkey leg.

John tells a story of many uses of the helmet.

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File 2: 00:33:10

In Conflans Jarny, John is hit with an attack of Gastro-intestinal distress and had to separate the liner from his helmet and used his helmet as a latrine. Threw it away on the garbage pile. “All I had left was my liner.”

Next day, tells the mess sergeant, “Boy, I got the GI’s.” Mess Sgt gives John a “No. 10 can, it was cheese. And that’s how I cleared that up. The cheese binds.

File 2: 00:35:40

Interviewer asks about seeing “evidence” of WWI. John answers by saying that he and his friend, Jim McKeon, peed on the stakes in the ground with “1870 on them” marking the border of the Franco-Prussian war. On Jim McKeon.

**File 2: 00:37:15 – 00:41:30 Entering Germany. Combat after Boulay heading toward Saarlautern (now renamed Saarlouis)**

**Good description of “tree bursts.” Death of buddy Conkrite.**

00:37:15

John told to take his platoon up a hill across from Ottenville. The Germans firing long-range machine gun at us. Hear spent bullets falling, hitting the ground.

00:38:50

John’s platoon goes into the forest. **Description of tree bursts:**

The woods were ...the worst place you can be (for) artillery or mortar fire with a point-detonating fuse is on it. That means that anything it hits is going to explode. So if it hits a tree branch it explodes. So that burst is going 360 degrees. And you have shrapnel raining down on you.

In a shallow trench. John has his trench knife and canteen on the bank of the trench. Pitch black. Shelling starts.

00:40:55

“Conkrite says “I’ve been hit.” We can’t see what’s wrong, where he’d been hit.

Conkrite says, ‘I’m going out on you.’ And he died right there.”

**File 2: 00:41:30 – 00:45:55 Description of impromptu burial and marking and Grave Registration.**

00:41:30

“ ..in the morning we took his (Conkrite’s) rifle, put it on the bank of that trench... marked his site with the upended rifle and his helmet on top. The tags stay on him. ... And we left the battlefield. Continue down the road. John is limping. Sent to Aide station.

Meter Reading  
or Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

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Sergeant at Aide station says to John, “You reported Conkrite as KIA.. We don’t have his body....Do you remember where it was?” John goes with them, get’s Conkrite’s body, drives to the Graves Registration point.

00:44:20

**Description of Graves Registration.** They put up a barrier, like a maze, that goes around this area. So that in order to go in you go in behind a screen, then there is another screen ... That’s as far as I got. I didn’t go in. But they went in.

00:45:20

John describes how one used a “shelter half” (half of a two man tent) was preferred to pick up the dead and carry them away.

**File 2:00:45:55 – 00:48:55 The 377<sup>th</sup> Infantry in Saarlautern (Siegfried line). Close call.**

00:45:55

The bridge over the Saar River had been taken when John gets to HQ there were (still) German pillboxes which lined the river . Could see pillboxes if we looked out back window and if you looked the other way a big German bunker. *Sandwiched in between Germans?*

Yes but the pillboxes weren’t looking at us – they were facing the river. Watched Germans coming out of the bunkers and pillboxes.

00:47:30

While entering a courtyard bullet whizzes past John. John sees a window. Jim McKeon takes a grenade and “pops it right into the window, and whambo, no more sniper.”

German set up a 20-mm anti-aircraft gun at river’s edge using it as ground fire – firing at the stone cornice above us to try and collapse it on us. “We had concrete raining down from that fire.”

**File 2: 00:48:55 – 00:50:20 The destruction of the menacing German 20-mm anti-aircraft Taking prisoners.**

00:48:55

US tank drives up and John gets tank commander’s attention. (John tries through the telephone on the back of the tank then bangs on the tank). Tanker driver opens up the turret, and I said, “There’s a 20-mm. gun around the corner.” Commander maneuvers and knocks out the German gun.

File 2: 00:50:00

Surrendering Germans laugh at John “because I’m hollering ‘Macht schnell, macht schnell (go fast, hurry up)’ And they were like, ‘Who’s that guy?’

**File 2: 00:50:20 – 00:55:30 Crossing the flooded Moselle River – sitting ducks. Death of Andy Miller. Ed Cappela and “sticking it out.”**

Moselle River is wide because flooded. 377<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (John's) crosses in engineer boats. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion crossing further up had been hit by the Germans who blew up a Fort (Fort Belacroix) when the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion arrived.

Priests and ministers on the bank of the river comfort the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion as they get ready to cross. Smoke generator units put smoke on the river but “not what you’d call ‘cover.’” Sitting ducks. Description.

*Interviewer tells of how a French woman had told him that she saw “those poor (American) boys cross the river” (and being shot). Would that have been you?*

**John:** “Yeah. Yeah.”

00:52:45 At the German border, Andy Miller shot and killed while leading his squad across a field on the left flank on the German border.

00:53:35 On Ed Cappela who saw Andy Miller shot... Ed was a former schoolteacher and had been looked down on by a platoon sgt and another leader as a “weak sister.” Cappela was “probably the best squad leader we had.. He stuck it out. The other two didn’t.”

*Interviewer: Tells story about his own father, Earl D Meyer. Wounded. Taken to field hospital. When told he could go home, Meyer says, “I prefer to go back to my friends,” and returns to action. Interviewer realizes (File 2: xx:xx:xx*

In Saarlautern, when in building behind the pillboxes, John looked out a window. Bullet slaps into the frame of the window. Don’t look out a window, again. now) the significance of returning.

File 2: 00:55:30 – 00:59:00 Replacements. **Part I of two-part story with artillery observer Thompson. Part II – strange coincidence - ends in Korean War.** Close call. Thompson, calls artillery onto the German location. “Hide-away.” “Fire for effect.”

00:55:30 On replacements? Sometimes didn’t get a chance to know them because they got hit before you knew their names.

Meter Reading  
or Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

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File 2: 00:56:00

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In Saarlautern: **Part one of story that ends in the Korean War six/seven years later.** Artillery forward observer **Thompson and**

**John.** In building behind the pillboxes, John looks out a window. Bullet slaps into the frame of the window. Don't look out a window, again.

Go to the attic with Thompson to observe the enemy: lifts slate shingle, shims it and observes bunker. Calls in range and azimuth. "We've got hide-away. (Corps artillery – 8 inch naval gun)

We're on "gun target line" – (allied) shell arcs over our heads – sounds like an express train, hits the bunker. Germans "running around outside from the shock." Thompson calls "Fire for effect" (means the artillery should focus on what this one gun just hit so a concentration of fire.)

### Cut to Part II - Korean war coincidence and continuation.

File 2: 00:59:00 – 01:04:30

**Korean War Pusan Perimeter – about to be overrun in Haman. (CD error interrupts). Resumes. Saved by a WWII savior (Thompson) who had saved John in Saarlautern years before. Thompson calls in "Pickle Barrel" (Marine air support) saves John's regiment. Unfair criticism of John's regiment.**

"Shift to Korea, Pusan Perimeter, Part 2: Haman.

Our regimental command post is about to be overrun. ... Have already lost people ... We'd reformed the line, but we're still hanging on by our fingernails....

We can't go anywhere because the North Koreans are shelling us with 120-mm. mortars. And you don't hear them coming. They hit...

59:55

[John bangs his hand on table and causes CD error.] [New CD put in Marantz recorder . For purposes of this VHP submission, the .wav contents of this new recording are just appended onto the .wav file from the injured CD. The resultant .wav file is "File2KompJohn2012June8WWIIforVHP"]

File 2: 01:00:00

Recording resumes. Explantion of CD error.

Pusan periment. John's carbine has been stolen so John's firearm is a pistol from year before taken from German prisoner at Saarlautern. Liason officer from artillery asks John about history of pistol.

John tells him pistol's pedigree –WWII, Saarlautern, etc. when John was with the 95<sup>th</sup>. Liason officer says that he, too, was in the 95<sup>th</sup>. John recognizes Officer is Thompson, the artillery guy who called in shelling on the German bunker in Saarlautern and blew it up.

File 2: 01:01:50

North Koreans 300 – 500 yards away fire small arms into command post. John's boss (S-3) shot through both elbows, many wounded – state of confusion.

...

Liason officer Thompson communicates to an artillery spotter plane. Tells John, "We've got Pickle barrel" (air support from the Marines). Two Marine planes fly across our front... "make a big looping turn off to our left... turn around again... treetop level... going right over this body of at least 200, 300 N Koreans and you see this "great big pod of napalm come out and --- pssttt – toast – completely wiped out the target... Saved our butts... God Bless the Marine Corps." John likes to tell that story to Marines

Later, John's regiment given "very poor marks for 'state of confusion'... Tics me off. They weren't there." John (who is leading a segregated blank regiment) thinks criticism was based on racial prejudice. "There is nothing wrong with a black soldier."

**File 2: 01:04:30 – 01:07:35 Korean War. Chongchon. Yalu river. Chinese attack at Kunuri. The "big retreat" to the Han River. Sleeping bag = "Fart sack."**

Brief overview/explanation of Chinese attack at the boundary between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> division at **Kunuri**. Bayonets used. Evacuation all the way south to Seoul – "bumper to bumper" with Chinese and N Korean pursuing. Lucky no air attack. "We were bumper to bumper – all the way back across the Han river."

01:07:00

Didn't feel safe again until across the Han. *Weather?* Coldest he's ever been.. Sleeping on the ground in a "fart sack" (sleeping bag.)

**File 2: 01:07:35 – :01:13:25 Interview returns to WWII and Saarlautern. John becomes "acting XO," Co. G, 377<sup>th</sup> Infantry.**

**Movements into Belgium. Bixry. Policing battlefield (picking up dead Germans under mounds of snow). Full transcription included.**

01:07:35

Saarlautern: Germans running out of damaged bunker.

John acting exec officer (actual G co. exec was in the rear). Last to leave the house. Explanation of "exec officer" – 2<sup>nd</sup> in command - and typical duties.

01:09:20

From Saarlautern to Haargarten to **Bastogne area in Bixry.**

01:09:50

Still with G Co. staying in barn, snow on the ground. Higher ups want to "Police the battlefield to pick up the dead. Don't ask a combat infantry to do that, John says.

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**File 2: 01:10:30**

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**Vivid Description of policy battlefield. transcription follows**

We had been walking from the barn to the mess hall for a good number of days... climbing over these **lumps and bumps** in the snow.

When the snow started to thaw, these were bodies of Germans and ... you could tell which regiment they were from ... because on the sides of their helmets they had the suits of the cards. Diamonds, spades [etc.]. We were picking those guys up there....

Then they asked us to go out into these open fields, where they had burned out tanks, and German wounded. So that's what we did. They asked from the men, volunteers to do this.

01:11:40

They gave the guys [long rubber gloves], and I was volunteered. I was in charge of that group. I didn't pick up bodies, though I viewed bodies, for sure.

So we stacked the Germans – we actually stacked them up [about three feet high]. And we put the Americans in trucks. And took them to wherever they were being evacuated to. After a while we were relieved from there, and got ready to cross the Rhine River.

01:12:50

*Interviewer: Did you here about Operation Marketgarden?*  
No. *The Bulge?* Just that we knew we had suffered a lot of casualties... no one talks at John's "grunt level" about what is going on.

**File 2:01:13:25 – 01:19:35**

**Belgium regrouping. Now as section leader in regimental scouts. On the Regimental Scouts. "Palace Guard." Entering Ruhr Pocket. Clowning as Hitler.**

01:13:25

Regrouped in Belgium. John volunteers to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion section leader of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's volunteers to the Regimental scouts. On regimental commander, **Fred E Gaillard from Georgia ("Gander Neck")**. He walked with us in the front. Good man.

01:14:20

To **Belgium. Millen**. Pass to **Liege** (British had "houses of prostitution." – another story.)

01:15:00

After Saarlautern fighting, John becomes mortar section leader. Co H (heavy weapons). Directing fire-on mortars (81 mm) supporting the infantry. With them but never shot a mission.

File 2: 01:15:45

And then John “was volunteered” as Section Leader in Regimental Scouts. Volunteers from three battalions under an officer. Scouts worked as Reconnaissance platoon. Never got to do much. “The palace guard.” Given one suicide mission – go into communication tunnel under Rhine but called off.

File 2: 01:18:15

In Reg’t Scouts until they enter Ruhr Pocket. In the Ruhr Pocket, to come upon a Wilhelmsruhl (William’s rest) - German officers’ “rest house” – prostitutes working.

Pick up a German touring sedan (like the kind Hitler rode in) and “three of us drove through town and I stood up in the middle and gave them the Hitler salute as we went through .” That was end of regimental scouts. Disbanded us.

**File 2: 01:19:35 – 01:23:45 Crossing the Rhine. Germans surrendering. “The Little Fur Cap.”**

01:19:35

Cross the Rhine at a bridgehead close to Julich. MP directing from a hole in the ground because Germans shelling. We were in constant movement.

01:21:00

By time we get beyond Dusseldorf and Krefeld, many Germans begin to surrender. Send them to the rear.

In the tower of a dam near Soest, some German had written a joke story in English and left behind for us. “For Who is the Little Fur Cap.”

01:23:15

Regular German army seem relieved to surrender but not the SS. SS “were dyed in the wool “we’re going to die for the Fuhrer.”

**File 2:01:23:45 – 01:27:20 Personal questions. Most important person. Marriage. Gambling?**

01:23:45

*Most important person to you during the war?*

Your buddy, for one - the guy who’s going to mark your back. And your family, who’s keeping in contact with you and giving you moral support. Letters from future wife and mother/father/aunts.

At John’s wedding, army buddies were best man and ushers 01:25:30

01:25:40

Married before war was over. Married Bastille Day (14 July 45) in New York. Still in the army. Back in H company. Going to Japan.

01:26:50

*What for relaxation?* Never gambled. Played Hearts once on his birthday traveling on train to Winchester.

Meter Reading

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

**File 2: 01:27:20 – 01:34:45 Finding Hennessey Brandy. Evidence of WWI**

01:27:20 *Did you find brandy?* While with Replacement Depot, signs a pass to Paris for himself and freidns. Ride a charcoal powered truck and MP stops them into **Arpajon** – home of Hennesey brandy. Says “You’ll get in trouble in Paris. Stop here. Airforce town and airforce gone today. So got four bottles to split between three. Fell in love with bartender’s daughter, Giselle. Drank three bottles, woke up in a barn. Play baseball with loafs of fresh bread in the morning. Found a truck to take us back.

01:32:50 Evidence of WWI. Town called “I” “h” “n” – Ihn. (Before Saarlautern.) Pockmarked buildings. Ruins - still wrecked from WWI. Our artillery man said damage never repaired from WWI. *Interviewer tells of his own visit to Naple in the 60’s. Still rubble.*

**File 2: 01:34:45 – 01:37:10 Story of the encounter with Wolf Packs.**

*(Note: In 2004, at the first reunion of the 95<sup>th</sup> ID which the interviewer attended, he met Colonel Komp and John told him this story of war from the Ruhr Pocket. The interviewer asks the Colonel if he could retell it. )*

**01:35:20** **Komp:** Someone else should tell this story. But it was G Co. (John’s old company). I was with regimental scouts, but .. I knew what was going on because I would go to command post briefings.

And they were counting prisoners (at the briefing) .. and what had happened was probably Burton told me this, as Burton was probably the platoon sergeant at that time...

But anyway, he told me that they were in route march and one of the platoon sergeants was leading the 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon...and was at then leading. (Reports what Burton tells John.)

And this Hitler Jungen (Hitler Youth kid) – probably a Wolf Pack thing - popped up out of a hole and shot and killed him (the platoon Sgt.) And then, this is what I was told -- he (the kid) put his hands up to surrender – this is what I was told – they want up and shot him.

And when they were reporting number of prisoners taken, the regimental commander ... said, “We’re not getting prisoners from G Co.” They weren’t taking prisoners. I don’t know how many people – how long it took to realize this, but Hardy was told, “Get your men under control.” Probably the third platoon, my old ...

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**File 2: 01:37:10 –01:43:15** John’s companies/duties in last days in Europe. “Food administrator.” V-E Day hiding from Russian celebratory gunfire. Roosevelt’s death. Protecting a Nun’s cows. Quartering party to **Camp Lucky Strike (or Old Gold)** preparatory to leaving.

01:37:10 After Regimental Scouts breaks up, then to H company. Then becomes food administrator for the district of **Lippstadt**. Distributing food mainly to two Russian POW camps. Couldn’t control them – they were “loose.:

**01:38:00** V-E night. Russians were shooting weapons into the air and we were on lock-down. Invited to celebration at hospital - Cold cuts, slaw, potato salad feast -- plus German nurses.. slept on the floor of gym but couldn’t leave the building because of the shooting.

File 2: 01:40:00 *Remember Roosevelt dying? Big blow to us. What about Truman? All John knows is that Truman saved butts by dropping the bomb.*

Ruhr Pocket story of protecting a catholic nun’s cows from the Russians (*newly released POWs*) who are killing them. Sent one guy out to protect the cows.

Becomes the lead - **battalion representative** with the regimental quartering party – has own map – taking battalion back to **Camp Lucky Strike (or Old Gold)** in France. Two or three days in trucks.

**File 2 01:43:15 –01:49:10** **On showers. On Patton. Franz von Pappen’s home in Wallerfagen. Comraderie of his men. Talisman for luck.**

01:43:15 Longest you went without a shower? Not in Conflans, not in Maizierres, not in Woippy. In **Haargarten** mines – over two weeks - army found showers that miners used in a coal mine. (1:45:00) .

01:44:45 On uniform and underwear. Changing underwear. At “official shower points” got new underwear. Haargarten unofficial so put on your own underwear

Rule about Socks – three pair: one in helmet, one drying under your armpits, one on your feet.

01:46:00 On Patton. Never saw him but didn’t bother me. On Patton finding Franz von Pappen’s home in **Wallerfagen** hadn’t been damaged – so blown up – hit. No one knew who did it – rumors: Patton [laughs]

Comradeship. John's men get sheets from van Pappen's house in Wallerfangen made a hooded jacket for John me out of the sheeting. A Regimental history shows John wearing that jacket. "What the well-dressed officer wore in Belgium." Lost it somewhere.

01:48:40

*Talisman for luck?* A little silver ring with a rosary on it. Said rosary every day. Always praying.

**File 2: 01:49:10 – 01:55:00** **Leaving Europe. Trip across the Atlantic as Mess officer. Land in Norfolk, Va. 30 days leave to Ft. Dix. Married. Honeymoon and return.**

01:49:10

Camp Lucky Strike (or Old Gold) to Le Havre and leave Europe. On the ship was **mess officer** on the ship back to the U.S.

Asks enlisted men to help serve the officers (for extra food.) At end of trip, John tells officers: "You know, you've had all these men serving you and they all volunteered to do it. Would you like to make a silent collection?" So Colonel Gale said, "What do you mean, a silent collection?" I said, "No coins, sir." [laughter].

01:51:20

Ship goes straight to Norfolk, Virginia (not England, not NYC.) No big welcoming.  
30 days leave. John goes to Ft. Dix. June 1945. Mother and father him meet with John's fiancé.  
John gets married on July 14<sup>th</sup>. Hotel Biltmore (room 816) for wedding night. Father gives car with extra gas coupons. Drives to honeymoon in Lake Stockholm, N.J. Stay in Brooklyn until shipped to **Camp Shelby, Miss.** to rejoin 95<sup>th</sup>. Wife Betty comes to Shelby, too. On Bay Street. [Time 01:55:00]

**File 2: 01:55:00 – 02:00:10** **Camp Shelby, Miss. Near mutiny from new replacements. Memories of VJ Day. Thoughts about leaving the service. Not enough points so transferred to Co A, 8<sup>th</sup> Inf. 4<sup>th</sup> ID**

01:55:00

In Shelby. Still in H Co. Not much of anything. Until: **Near mutiny** by Replacements at Shelby with no combat experience). Protesters have signs they "don't want to go to war." General Twaddle (CO of 95<sup>th</sup>) has 95<sup>th</sup> MPs break up formation. **Combat guys pissed off : complainers didn't know combat.** Thinks subversive op was going on. Protest has the sympathy of the press.

01:57:00

Memory of V-J day in **Hattiesburg, Miss.** Ride in Bob Schuler's open car – drive down main street in V-J Parade: Celebrating, horns blowing, and all that stuff. On hearing about A-bomb blast.

01:59:00 *Interviewer: When the war is ended, do you ever think about leaving the service?*

“Oh yeah. I did (leave the service).”

Didn’t have enough points after Shelby so transferred to A Co., 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 4<sup>th</sup> Division (a D-Day outfit, but up on a different beach.)

Man from A Co walking around saying, “Think of something and we’ll write you up a reward” makes bad impression on John.

**File 2: 02:00:10- 02:04:20 Discharge at Ft. Dix. Exit interviewer explains “Reserves.” John joins the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry of NY Reserves – “Silk Stocking Regiment”.**

02:00:10 Discharge at Fort Dix. Exit interview. On battle stars (four for 95<sup>th</sup>).

02:01:30 Ft. Dix interviewer asks, “Would you consider the reserves?... If you join the reserves, then at age 60 you can retire and get retirement benefits.” John says, “OK, sign me up.” Assigned to “Silk Stocking” reg’t – 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry of NY reserves (“snob territory” on Park Ave. in Manhattan.)

02:02: 20 Didn’t get paid in reserves then. Sent on command post exercises but with no troops. “You did everything on the map with telephones. It’s a communications exercise.” Reserves were paid for exercises.

02:03:20 John works as draftsman for engineering co. subcontracted for the building of Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village. Happy. \$1/hr.

**File 2: 02:04:20 – 02:05:20 Final rank – First Lieut. Story of (uncredited) WWII capture of German recon patrol near Wallerfangen.**

02:04:20 Promoted to 1stLieut. at Camp Shelby. Still not enough points to get out -“even after capturing that German patrol.” Never got credit. Leads into following combat story on capture of the German patrol

**File 2: 2:05:20 - 02:12:00 Capture of the German patrol.**

German patrol had infiltrated our lines when we on a plateau looking down at the Saar River in snowy forested area on way to Wallerfangen on approach to Saarlautern.

Listening post thinks Germans operating in the area so John sends night patrol from 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, G. Co., 377<sup>th</sup>. Nothing confirmed. Describes what listening post is.

02:09:00

Next day shooting heard. Listening post says saw signs o movement. Following day, John takes another patrol out himself. 8 people. Go wider and wider. Find “yellow snow” with steam still rising from someone’s piss.

Follow tracks and wonder if it’s a German reconnaissance patrol or German combat patrol. (combat patrol will fire fight, reconnaissance there to get info can call back). This (lucky) was a recon patrol.

02:10:30

We tracked them into the woods and there was a big brush pile in a clearing.

We’re looking at this.... And here’s a German boot right in front of us. They were completely camouflaged in the snow. We couldn’t see this guy. ... everyone starts firing into the brush pile. And we hear the voice, “For the love of God stop shooting. Cease fire, cease fire!”...

...We cease fire and this German officer stands up. And he’s all in white except for a soft cap.”

...“Where are the others?” And they point down the hill. So we ended up capturing about 6 or 7 Germans.

**File 2: 02:12:00 – 02:15:20**

**Interrogation of the captured Germans and how they get them to “spill the beans.”**

02:12:00

Men (U.S.) shoot a little chamois (deer) with a B.A.R. take it to the barn at the command post, cut up deer and clear out. John brings his prisons to the command post. His superior, Hardy, shows up with his bodyguard, Stefani.

02:13:15

Separate prisoner officers and prisoner noncoms. Take the officer to the barn where the deer had been slaughtered. Question the officer. Answers with just name, rank and serial number.

File 2: 02:13:45

Hardy, frustrated, yells “ “Shoot the son of a bitch.” ... So his bodyguard, Stefani, starts to bring his rifle down. Hardy hollers, “No!” and the rifle goes off (misses the officer).

So they move the officer into where John’s office had been –and we bring the noncom out.

The noncom (a sergeant) knows his officer was being interrogated and he heard Hardy yell “Shoot..” and then “NO” and the shot. The non-com walks in the room, his officer is gone and the deer’s blood is on the floor so the German sergeant talks.

He told us what their light signals were (used them to communicate), and whatever else they got out of him.

So when we put the sergeant in the same room as the officer, we heard him say, “Dum azel [dumb ass].” [laughs]

**File 2: 02:15:20 – 02:19:35 Close of interview. Review of John’s career after end of WWII**

02:15:20 Recap. In reserves. Then signs up for a year’s competitive tour – a hurry-up call. Given one day to quit job, pack up and get down to Ft. Dix. John does it. Assigned to Co H, 60<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Fort Dix. “All we do is basic training.”

02:16:50 In Ft. Dix a year, makes the cut, gets commission in regular army – All the WWII time John had in the army is erased. Competes with West Point class of 1948.

Remembers (and gives) 5 digit serial number. 058947

Then to Armed Forces Information School at Carlisle Barracks as information and educational officer - the assistant operations officer at regimental level: counseling people on how they should proceed to get an education while on active duty.

02:18:45 Interviewer closes (Korea portion Col Komp’s experience in Korea, Vietnam, and Uruguay are covered in other interviews at other reunions.)

*Interviewer IDs himself.* John Komp finishes by identifying himself through his association with the 377<sup>th</sup> Infantry/95<sup>th</sup> ID: G Co., H Co., and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Headquarters Co., and the Regimental Scouts.  
*377<sup>th</sup> of the 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry. (02:19:35)*

**End of File 2: 2 hours 19 minutes 35 seconds**

**End of interview.**

**Total interview: 3 hr 33 minutes 8 seconds**