

INTERVIEW OF WILLIAM LACEY

August 25, 2006

Transcribed by Susan I. Stuart

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(NOTE: Transcription was done  
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Who put in time code )

Note: At the beginning of this transcription the Interviewer (Q) David Meyer is identified and the Interviewee (A) William (Bill) Lacey is identified. After this time, Mr. Meyer is identified as "Q" for Questioner and Mr. Lacey as "A" for Answerer.

Time codes marked are inexact but close.

MR. MEYER: Hi. This is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th, 95th Infantry. It's August 25th -- excuse me. And I'm with Mr. --

WILLIAM LACEY: Bill LACEY.

Q -- Bill LACEY.

A Company I, 378th.

Q Company I, 378th. And what was your highest rank when you left?

A T-5.

Q T-5?

A Corporal. Technician, fifth grade.

Q What was your -- what's your birthday?

A September 8th, 1925.

Q September 8th, 1925.

Where were you born?

A I was born in Pittsfield, Mass.

Q Okay. And were you -- did you enlist or were you drafted?

:45

A I enlisted. I graduated from high school in 1943.

And all of us boys in that class knew what we were going to do after we graduated, it was just a question of which uniform you were going to put on.

And they offered us the opportunity -- the various branches of service had college training programs for people who would qualify, but you would have to enlist.

LACEY: And we all took -- one Saturday we went down there and took this exam. And I think everybody passed it. But then you had to go enlist. And I went to the Navy recruitment office in Boston. This was -- I grew up in Melrose suburb, Melrose suburb of Boston. And I am missing the index finger on my left hand. That happened to me when I was three in an accident. A bear bit my finger off at the zoo.

Q Did it?

1:40 A Yeah. He just got the first joint. It was a little bear cub. We were feeding peanuts to the bear. I was three and I was with a buddy of mine and his grandma, and we were feeding peanuts to the bears through the wide mesh in the screen. And this little cub thought my finger was a peanut and bopped it off.

Q Ooh.

A And I have no recollection -- I remember being there and I remember afterwards being in the hospital, but I blank on the event itself. But anyway, they wisely, I think, decided they ought to take the whole thing when they got me to the hospital.

2:23 Anyhow, so I went into the Navy and said -- they ask you your health history, if you had any operations and stuff. And I said, well, yes, I had this -- I've had appendicitis and I've got this. I said, "That's not a problem, is it?"

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"Well, we don't know." They sent me all around like an eight-story building. I spent an hour going from office to office while they tried to figure out what -- what to do about my missing index finger.

And finally, I got into a room with a guy with -- you know, like the Manhattan telephone directory.

Q Yeah.

LACEY: He went through "fingers missing." Anything but the

index finger or the first finger -- the thumb or the index finger. And, "Sorry." So that meant no Marines, no Coast Guard.

3:07 So I went over to the Army people, and I said, "Hey, I'm missing this finger. It's not a problem?"  
"No, no, no."

So I joined the Army, I enlisted. But that was in July and my birthday -- my 18th birthday was September 8th.

3:26 So on September 8th I went on active duty. And I went into the college training program. (*ASTP - the Army Specialized Training Program*).

They sent me to what was then called Carnegie Tech. Thought they were going to make an engineer out of me. Boy, that was wrong. I'm not an engineer.

Anyway, the program fell through, and they sent us all into the infantry because we had no other training, no -- nothing I could do. But they did need people who could stand up and hold a rifle and get shot at and not mind it too much. Anyway, that's how I ended up in the infantry and I ended up with the 95th.

Q Now did you start out at Indiantown Gap (*Pennsylvania*)?

A Indiantown Gap, yeah. I joined them. They split us all up, sent us all different places. I didn't know anybody, and I was scared to death.

Q How did they treat you when you showed up, I mean from ASTP to there?

A I didn't have anybody to look at or talk to. I was just completely intimidated. I was completely out of my element. I had grown up in a very polite, suburban neighborhood, you know, knowing one kind of people.

These were roughnecks, these guys, from Alabama and Tennessee and..Texas and, you know, all those -  
I was scared to death.

4:51 LACEY: And I latched onto the first two guys I could find that were anything like the kind of people I had known. And we became -- they became my life-long -- they were both older than I was. One of them was married and had a little boy and a wife back home, and the other fellow was -- he wasn't married, but he was 23 and I was 18. And I just -- I just fell in with these two guys and Just latched onto them and wouldn't let go. 5:20

**And both of them were killed.** One was killed and the other one was badly wounded. I lost them both on the Saar (*the Saar River*)..on that bridge.

5:29 Q On the bridge?

A Yeah. Over the -- yeah. Where eighteen of our guys were killed (inaudible).

Q You knew Mr. Kaufman?

A Vince Kaufman was my best buddy. Vince and Joe Brown. 5:45

Q Vince -- when I -- I went to Germany with Vince's brother.

A Joe, yeah... no..Ed.

Q Ed.

A Ed Kaufman.

Q And he was very shy. He would stand in a corner. And LeClerqs -- the LeClerqs who are here. I said -- I told them -- I told them Ed was trying to get a new name on the plaque for his brother.

A Yeah. Yeah..

Q Because it said "Robert" Kaufman.

*6:20 Interruption old friend of Mr. LACEY, Beth comes in Interruption and then silence until 6:30*

6:39 (Meyer continues So Mr. Kaufman --

MEYER: I was there when he was able to pick out - the LeClerq's got him in touch with the mayor --

A Yeah.

Q -- and he was able to at least -- when I saw him in Hampton last year, I said, "What's going on?" And he said -- I think he had sent them the money, and they found someone to make a new plaque.

A Yeah.

7:02 Q So Vince Kaufman was your --

A He was one of my two --

Q One of the two?

A -- lifelines. Joe Brown was the other. Joe was on the bridge just at the point -- Vince was the lead scout. I've found this out since I've been found again. Muriel (inaudible) found me three years ago.

I put all this behind me when I got back. I wanted just to distance myself and just get on with my life and forget it all. And three years ago Muriel called me up on the phone and said, "Are you, by any chance, the Bill LACEY from I Company, 378th?"

I said, "Well, yes, I am."

She said, "Thank God. I've been looking for you for years." 6:48

Q Really?

A And she had been trying to find me and other people from I Company who they lost contact with.

6:55 Anyway, on that day Vince, I found since then, was the lead scout when they went over the bridge. He and another guy named Dave Franklin. Dave was on the right, Vince was on the left just behind him going across this bridge.

LACEY: Joe was three men behind Vince.

And Joe was right at the point where he was on the -- on the east side of the bridge, the rest of the bridge. The other guys were all on the bridge.

I had been in that company until about two weeks before and then Vince deferred me into the weapons patrol, which pissed me off at the time. I was very upset because I was losing my two buddies.

Well, when the bridge blew, Vince was over there and he was moving down to the side and Dave Franklin was over here. And when he got to the other side, he found a foxhole and a little shelf. So he was able to get under that. And he said -- when I talked to him he said Franklin wasn't that lucky. They got Vince right away.

And Joe was, as I say, right at the point where he was on land and still on the bridge, you know. And when it blew up, he went with it. And he ended up on the bottom of the river with a big chunk of concrete on his back. But he was able to break loose.

And he stayed in that freezing water - which was November 18th and the river was -- was full. He stayed in that water all day, hiding under this pillar that was still left under the bridge, and survived.

Finally somebody spotted him over there and they came over at night and got him and pulled him out.

So I saw Joe. ... (9:51)

LACEY (cont'd): And I had not - did I see Joe that night?  
I'm not sure exactly what the sequence was.

I know the next day we all crossed over in boats. And I came over and I found Vince's body. And I was -- I had heard that six guys made it over and that Vince had been killed. And I remember I spent all that night on my knees praying that this wouldn't be the case.

10:22 And I came over the next morning and I found him. And I was -- I was 19 then, and here was my best friend. I took all of his effects. I took his ring off his finger. He had a ring that his father had given him. And I took the little bible testament that he carried. I took everything...that somebody -- because people did that. They would scavenger these bodies. And I kept all those things and took them with me through the rest of the time I was in -- out there in...huh...the firing range. (11:03)

**And when I got back home again, I went down** to Baltimore and I visited Paul and visited Vince's dad and met his brother -- his kid brother, who to me was such a kid.

Q This was Ed?

A Ed is two years younger than I am.

At that point I thought this is -- you know, this is (inaudible). This is a baby.

And he had an older sister, Rosemary, who was very sweet but who had some sort of -- some sort of -- I think she was slightly retarded. There was some - something there.

LACEY (cont'd): And the father was with them.  
And he dressed windows for a department store.  
And I was able to tell them about their  
son and how much I cared about him and how wonderful I  
thought he was, what a hero he was to  
me and to say I had taken all these things so that they  
would get them. And his father gave me the ring.

And I said, "Don't you want your son to have it?"

He said, "No. I think Vince would want you."

11:17 So I've still got the ring. I don't wear it, but  
**I've still got it. 11:25**

Anyway, these two guys were -- well, I did see Joe.  
And Joe was headed back to the hospital. And he was in  
the hospital for a long time. Then they sent him back to  
the states. And I met his wife -- Joe and his wife after  
I came back to the country. And Joe was -- Joe was back  
too. And they were in New York the weekend that I was  
there for the weekend, and we got together and I met his  
wife.

First drink I ever had in my life,  
his wife sent him a bottle -- of Seven Crown wrapped in a -  
in a -- I thought it was a loaf of bread, but it wasn't.  
Turned out it was a bunch -- she had cut up a loaf of bread  
and packed it in a tin box. And that tin box had a history.

And when she got it done, she asked her father, she  
said, "Do you think this will get through?"

And he said, "I can hear it gurgling."

LACEY (cont'd): So she opened it up again.

She took all the bread out. She opened it up and she filled it up to the top with water and covered it again. Brought it back to her father, and he said, "That's okay, that will probably get through." It got there.

Got there around Thanksgiving time.

The first drink I had ever had in my life was from that bottle. And I thought my throat was going to come out. 12:44

Q Thanksgiving 1944?

A Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Thereabouts. Oh, well.

12:55 Oh well.. Anyway, the story you wanted me to tell you was that... later on after all of this, Vince was gone, Joe had gone back home... and I was still in there.

And we went over the Saar. The Saar was flooded.

In a pre-dawn attack. This was Enfield (?)

I didn't know it at the time. I didn't know it until later. You know, your war is what you see in front of you and what you see to the side of you, and that's it.

13:27 Anyway, we got over there, and all of a sudden all hell broke loose and they were firing on us. There were pillboxes all over this plain. And there was, you know, about a five-foot river bank that we were pinned down behind. And guys were being just mowed down. And I could see all this. I took refuge next to one of these pillboxes

13:55 LACEY (cont'd): And I was wounded when they dropped a grenade out and I got shrapnel in my left chest, but I wasn't seriously wounded.

I could still move, you know, all that stuff. And I thought, you know, nobody knows we're here, nobody knows what's happening to us, I've got to find some people to get us off here, you know, put down some artillery or something.

14:22 So there was a bridge that was collapsed and, as I say, the Saar was flooded. And all of this water was rushing through. And there was debris all along that had been trapped in the superstructure of the bridge. And I put down my carbine in the bank and I went into the water. And I was making my way across to try to get to the other side to go tell someone "Hey, we need help here."

14:52 And I kept feeling more and more pushed than just going on my own. Finally I realized what was happening. It was that the river had broken through in the middle, it had broken through and brought, you know -- it was a torrent going through.

Q Holy cow.

A And here I was being pushed through it. And there was nothing I could do about it. I was already past the point of no return. I couldn't get back, and I kept being pushed forward. And my first reaction was, you know, this can't be happening. I'm only 19.

LACEY (cont'd):

You know, this is not right. And I was furious, I was angry. And then gradually I began -- the reality came to me, well, this is it, this is the day. This is the day you die. You've always known that would come, and today is it.

15:49 And then I had the most amazing feeling of being  
Held -- a loving...force...holding me up and saying this is all  
13.  
right, this is okay, you're (inaudible). And I will never forget that feeling. That changed my life. What happened is I was in this absolute euphoria, just feeling, okay, this is fine. (Inaudible)

16:34 All of a sudden I felt a bump on my back. I yelled out. And it was a boat that in the darkness hit me. And in this boat there were three men. One was Pat Caine (phonetic). Another was Norm (inaudible). The third guy was a guy named Peight, P-e-i-g-h-t. and I yelled, and they said, "Hey, there's somebody there." Hauled me out.

16:57 And I was almost angry. I was almost mad. And I was took back in. And I said, "I was getting ready to meet my God." And I saw Pat Caine here three years ago.

I said, "Oh, my God, Pat Caine. You used to be tall and lanky and now you're just tall," and I said,

"Do you remember pulling me in?"

He said, "Yes. I remember what you said."

Someone had told me that I said I was getting ready to meet my God.

17:29 LACEY (cont'd): And Norm Tillman (phonetic) didn't remember this at all.

And (inaudible) we got over to the other side in that boat. And by then dawn was coming and they could see us and they were shooting at us. But we were able to hide under the bridge. Except for Peight, they got him.

Q They got him?

A He died. I didn't know what happened to him. I just knew He died. But they told me -- this is three years ago. They told me, no, he was shot, he took a bullet. But Pat Caine was very badly wounded. They shot him. They got him in the knee.

And Norm, I don't know what Norm's problem was. I don't know if he was hurt or not.

18:14 But anyway, we got over there. And I got -- I said, "I'll go." You know, because Pat couldn't.

Q Sure.

A And so I ran for it. And I got up, and I ran and I found some guys. And they -- so they sent the word out. And then they said, "Hey, you need some help yourself." They took me and put me in a jeep -- well, put me in an ambulance. And they strafed the ambulance on the way to the hospital, but they didn't get us.

18:46 Anyway, I was in the hospital and Pat Caine was in the same ward with me. And so we sat there for a few days. I wasn't -- he was badly hurt. I think he went home. But I was not.

LACEY (cont'd): They dug me out and patched me up a few days later. 19:03

But I was listed as missing in action. So when I got back to my unit, which was, oh, probably five or six days later, they didn't know -- they thought I was dead. (19:20)

They said, "Hey, it's LACEY. He's back, he's okay." So I got a big, big welcome.

19:28 (Tape skips)

(inaudible)

Well everyone's doing okay so far, so why would at (inaudible) happen? And nobody ever worries about where they were before they got here. Why were we worried about where we were going? And just, you know --

Q So that stayed with you?

A Yes.

Q That's incredible.

19:52 Have you ever talked to anyone else that's had an experience like that?

A I didn't for many years. And then there was Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. Do you remember that name?

Q Yeah.

A Began studying this phenomenon. And I read about it in Time or Newsweek or something and heard her describing exactly what had happened to me, that you go through these three stages. At first the denial and the anger, and then there's the acceptance, and then there's this peace.

LACEY: (Inaudible) And I thought, my gosh, that's exactly what happened to me.

And it's part of the plan that's what happens to all of us.

20:42 So that's why, you know, it takes a big load off the guys --

Q Sure it does.

A -- to go through this veil of tears(?).

Q 20:57 Sure. My father's widow is just at that point right now. She used to come to the reunions. She couldn't come because she's now -- she had osteoporosis and got worse two months ago and pneumonia started to set in...So I think she is -- she may have gone through some of those stages that you're talking about.

A There's worse things in life than being dead.

21:24 Q When you got back home, you said you wanted to put it all behind you?

A Yeah, absolutely. I didn't want to be part of the reserve. I wanted to be out of the uniform. I wanted to get on with my life. I had just done -- well, I was very lucky. I got home early.

After I came back to the -- to the 95th -- that episode that I just described in great detail earned me a Silver Star, which was -- entitled me, since it was fairly early in the invasion for our part of it, certainly not the invasion because we were there a year after D-Day -- we had a thing called temporary duty. And every

LACEY: battalion, which is four companies, had one candidate for temporary duty. The temporary duty consisted of the candidate being sent to some address for 30 days at that address in the states. 22:42 And the time getting there and the time coming back you would rejoin your outfit. But it got you home for 30 days.

22:51 Well, I was told because of my Silver Star that I was the candidate for our battalion for the first one of these. We had rotation but we hadn't been there long enough to get a quota, so this was -- this was something else. And I thought this can't be true. I mean this can't be happening. And -- but time kept coming, time kept coming, and finally they said pack your bag, pack your duffle bags and be there at the station and they're going to take you back. You know, you'll go back home. 23:33 And your 30 days starts when you get back home to Melrose, Mass.

23:40 And so I went there and I waited. And they said, sorry, but you've been bumped. There was another guy in our outfit that -- I've even forgotten his name. But I hated him. He was a skirt chaser, you know. Married. He didn't act like he was married. He was -- anyway.

Q Yeah.

24:04 A His wife had become ill and the Red Cross intervened on her behalf and he got my place. So he went home, and I went back to business as usual.

LACEY: (cont'd) And they said don't worry,  
"You'll get to go, you'll get to go. You're second  
in line, you're the next one up." And I thought, yeah,  
this is going to happen.

And the next month they said, "Okay, you're up. So pack your  
stuff." Okay. All right. So I packed my stuff and I went  
expecting fully that the same thing would happen. 24:38

Q Sure.

24:44 A But the jeep came and took me, and I ended up in Cherbourg  
I guess. And I was there for about ten or eleven days waiting  
for a ride home. And they had hot showers and hot meals and  
movies. And I was in hog heaven. We had shows and stuff.  
and stuff. Oh, it was -- I didn't mind the boat man  
coming.

25:08 But then the boat did come, and it was a victory ship  
And they were little corks that bounced around in the North  
Atlantic. This is in March now. This thing was going across  
the North Atlantic to keep away from the submarines. We were  
alone. We weren't in a convoy.  
And we had -- on board there were a bunch of us GIs,  
none of them I knew but a lot of whom I became acquainted  
with on that trip, and ... about 200 German prisoners. And  
they were separated. They were in this boat. Nobody --  
nobody in our part of the boat was going to be very happy  
about them being on there.

25:55 LACEY (cont'd): So we bounced around for about three weeks in

The North Atlantic. And I had not told anybody I was coming home because I didn't believe I would really get there.

And I ended up down in Cape Cod. Camp Edwards, is it?

Q Yeah.

26:10 A Anyway -- and I thought, well, (inaudible). So I waited. And I -- I took a train. And I got the bus. And I called my father from Boston. And he said, "Oh, you know, send him on. I'll be home in a half an hour." And he said, "Oh, no, your mother has gone to Texas."

Q No.

A My brother was -- I have a brother that's two years older than I, and he was married to his high school sweetheart before he went into the Navy. He was a Navy pilot. And they were having their first baby, so my Mother went down to have the baby with them down in Corpus Christi.

27:05 So when I got home, I called down there. And my mother was in tears. And she didn't know where she belonged -- thinking, "Oh, what will everybody say?"

"Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it."

27:19 Anyway, I got home, and I waited there three days. And then I went back to Camp Edwards. And they said -- well, things were winding down by then. They had gone -- the Bulge was behind us. In the Bulge we were down south. We stayed down there, and the rest of the 3rd Army went up north to fight that battle.

LACEY: We were just stretched out.

And so were the enemy on the other side. So we were -- you know, our company was covering what a battalion would have covered at least.

27:55 I was a runner. I used to go through, you know, wreckage.

Snipers were there. They would shoot at me.

I'd be hearing something. I didn't know where they were.

Just keep running, get to company headquarters, deliver what I was supposed to deliver, and then run back.

Anyway --

Q Was that like Saarlautern and Fraulautern?

A I have no idea. I don't remember what the town was, but probably.

Q Ensdorf?

28:30 A No. We were beyond Ennsdorf, so it was probably --

Q Okay. Or the Ruhr Pocket?

A Yeah. I'm not sure where it was. We weren't there very long.

28:41 Q So what's it like -- so what's it like to be running and all of a sudden hear ping, ping, ping?

A You get used to it.

Q Do you?

A I told you, I wasn't afraid anymore.

Q That's right.

A Yeah. You don't have to worry about that stuff.

Q Did you -- did you talk to any of the people around you about your experience?

A No.

Q You kept it to yourself?

A I didn't tell anybody for years. Because I thought they'll think I'm a lunatic, this is too bizarre. And after I let -- read about Kubler-Ross, I got in touch with her and told her my tale. She said, "We should meet for a cup of coffee sometime." It never happened. But she went on to do more and more. And it all was part of that same thing. You know, it's (inaudible) really.

Q But unless you feel it, it's --

A I wish I could give this to my wife. I can't. I have talked to her so many times about it. She just isn't there yet. I can't make her do that. But I wish I could give it to everybody I know. I wish I could give it to everybody in the world because it makes such a difference in your world. Just an amazing - an amazing thing.

30:22

Q My father didn't have that, but he had his own experience of peace that he would take with him wherever he went. And so that -- that would give comfort.

And he uh... I've had not that, but my own experience, experiences that -- you know, you can tell someone about it, but unless they know it -- I'm an actor. So sometimes you can talk about being on stage. Sometimes there will be a feeling of - uh -- grace that comes where you feel like anything could happen and you'll survive.

A Yeah.

31:16 Q So you're at the camp, Camp Edwards, and --

A Oh, I went back -- they gave me a three-day pass and I went back home. And then I went back to Camp Edwards, and they gave me another three-day pass and I went home. And when I went back the third time, they gave me another three-day pass.

31:30 While I was coming through Boston Common on the way home, three girls came swooping down on me and picked me up and carried me around. It was VE-Day.

So I didn't get back to the -- I went back to Fort Dix. And they sent me through -- they weren't going to send me back, you know -- since the war was over in Europe, they weren't going to send me back there.

32:03 And they sent me to a reclassification and assignment center down in Camp Buckner, North Carolina, which is where all your records get sent. And they bring them up to date, they put everything together. And they recommend you spend three, four days there going through this tedious process. And it culminates in an interview with a counselor who looks at your record and checks your physical condition, you know, makes sure everything is -- all the I's are dotted, T's crossed. And then recommends, in order, three next assignments for you. There's a code.

32:57 LACEY (cont'd) "Two seven five infantryman" was mine --

Q Okay.

A -- was mine. And "275 infantryman" was all I could do. I came out of high school and went right into the -- I had no -- my previous work experience was working in a big bean factory in Malden, Massachusetts that summer before I went on active duty.

Q That's right.

33:20 A So I had no -- so they shipped me out. That's how I got in the infantry in the first place. But there was no place else to put me except the (inaudible) the 375. My health was then -- they had six digits, "1""1""1""1""1""1." And if you saw all "1s", that meant every part of your body was sound, including your head. And if they saw all "1s" and you were a "275" and didn't have any specialty that they needed, needed, that's where you're going to go --

Q Sure.

A -- is Japan. They were still shooting at people over there.

Q Sure.

A So I was sure that's what was going to happen to me. Hey, I'm just not ready for that at all.

34:03 And the guy who interviewed me was a young fellow my own age. His name was Larry Faroon. And Larry Faroon was from Garden City, Long Island. And he took a liking to me. We talked the same language.

Q Yeah.

A And he said, "Wait a minute. Now, do you think -- do you think you can do what I'm doing?"

"Sure. I'd love to."

He said, "Well, I think we need somebody. Let me talk to my -- my CEO." And so he went in and he talked to the captain. And he said, "Yeah, let me introduce you. The captain's name is Captain DeCorsi (phonetic)." And he said -- he introduced himself by saying that, saying in the 16th Century the DeCorsis and the DeLACEYs were like the Hatfields and the McCoys in France.

Q Uh-huh.

35:13 A But, no, he interviewed me and said come on. So I spent the rest of my career in the military doing that. And, boy, what a (inaudible). But it was also a terrible downer because I kept running into these guys who would come in across the table with 111111 and no other experience. I would have to write them up. And they would plead with me, "You know, anything. I'll do anything. Don't make me do that." And I had no authorization. I couldn't. My hands were tied.

Q Sure. Sure.

35:55 A And then also some guys didn't have all ones. And I remember one guy had been shot in the genitals, so he had a "6." And there was nowhere. He wasn't going to go to Japan.

36:20 But, as I said, I kept running into all these guys who just -- I had their fate in my hands, but I couldn't do a damn thing about it. So that was a downer. But I met a lot of good people too. We were able to help some people.

36:35 Q And what -- was this near -- is -- Camp Edwards, is that near Boston?

A Camp Edwards is on the Cape, Cape Cod.

Q It's on the Cape?

A Yeah.

This was at Camp Buckner, though, in North Carolina.

Q That's right.

A Then I went down to -- we were transferred from there to Fort Oglethorpe down in Chattanooga.

Q Chattanooga?

A Well, just north of Chattanooga. So still in Tennessee. No. Still in -- what's north of Tennessee? Kentucky.

Q Sure.

A Yeah. And that's where they had trained the WACs. And the WACs were not still there, but we were. And all these guys would come through there too.

Skip

37:29 MEYER: Mr. Kaufman -- what Ed Kaufman did when we were in Metz was he wanted to sort of -- he had written out this thing for Vince, this memorial. And he wanted to make a CD out of it to memorialize him. And you are the last --

your visit is about the last fifth of the CD. And how -- and he spoke, of course, very highly of you. And I was -- I'm sorry that he's not here. I hope he's okay.

37:50 LACEY: He's okay. I talked to him. I called him when I knew I was (inaudible). I was hoping my wife and I would come in. Two of my four sons were back there. But unfortunately, neither of them was able to make it. The cost of air fare and hotels and everything, we decided this is my party.

38:11 Q I understand. That's what my wife was like. I said, "Well, why don't you come?" I said, "You'll have a good time."

A Well, she had a good time here three years ago because there's a lot of other family. And, you know, it's -- I see all kinds of family here. I see little children. I'm here for Grandma, Great Grandma. And I think that's great, I think that's wonderful. When they value something, then it's part of their heritage. (38:42)

38:50 Q That's why I started to -- one of the things I learned from starting this back in Baton Rouge was that there's a big part of it -- my father would tell some stories, but there was so much a part of the heritage that was kept silent.

A Yeah.

Q And that for reasons that -- everybody had their reasons but, you know, you saw what you saw, put it behind you. I remember one person told me that when he got back, he took -- he took the job of the person -- he got his old job back, and that person didn't like it. And that that person told him -- when he started talking about what he had seen, that person said, "All you guys are full of crap, you're all liars." And then this guy said, "I didn't talk to anyone else for 12 years."

All this was a mystery to me because I thought -- because when someone is silent, you don't think -- I mean growing up so -- now we see how much it is heritage. And that's part of what I think is -- what I'd like to do with this is give it to someone, and then their -- it's not for -- so that their grandchildren or their great grandchildren have something, they'll know a story. They'll know something so that they can look at themselves and think, oh, that's why I think that way or they'll know something -- they'll connect a dot.

A That's why I wish my boys had been able to come. Because I think it meant something today. 40:26

Q You know, until people come, they don't know.

A They've got a pretty good idea.

Q But have any of them had any experiences like yours, the experience of --

A No. But they all know about mine. 40:40

(End of interview) 40 MIN 40 SEC