

David Leyshon audio log

Veteran's Name: David Leyshon

Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)

Date of Interview: August 6, 2010

Transcriber: Carol Slezak

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Log compiled by: Teresa Bergen, September-October 2022

Track 1

- 00:00 Meyer introduces himself and the interview
- 00:34 Leyshon introduces himself. His father immigrated to the US from Wales. Leyshon changed pronunciation of name because people were always mispronouncing it
- 01:16 Leyshon was born April 28, 1924 in Denver, Colorado; served in K Company, 378th of the 5th Infantry; was in military from May 1943 to September 1945
- 01:49 his highest rank was private first class
- 02:12 was reading comics on the living room floor at home in Wheaton, Illinois when he heard the news of the Pearl Harbor attack on the radio
- 02:50 father was a printer for the Chicago Tribune
- 02:59 Colonel R. McCormick who lived in Wheaton and served in WW1 funded a scholarship that Leyshon won to go to The Citadel
- 03:23 but the war interrupted his education; enlisted in Army Reserve and sent to Indiantown Gap with the 95th Division in March of 1944
- 04:13 inducted into the army at Camp Grant in Illinois
- 04:51 army was rough on very intelligent guys—some couldn't hack it, no matter how brilliant they were
- 05:28 K Company sent to England in August 1944; spent a month in Normandy; took four-day boxcar ride to Thionville north of Metz
- 06:37 the 95th replaced the 5th Division south around Metz
- 07:05 K Company bivouacked in a small village called Lorry for two weeks

- 08:08 on patrol one night, a German soldier approached; one of Leyshon's trigger-happy comrades shot him. "And that sort of haunted me ever since." It was the only dead soldier Leyshon saw during the war
- 10:22 attack on Metz in November 1944; Germans retreated so Leyshon's group spent a cold night in a school that had served as a German barracks
- 11:59 next morning, he was shot in the leg; his lieutenant was killed
- 14:59 litter-bearers finally showed up late at night and took him by jeep to an abandoned factory; a medic bandaged him
- 16:29 taken to a MASH-type hospital near the front lines where he got a skin graft
- 17:50 wound kept reopening when he walked
- 18:08 airlifted back to hospital in England; spent November through December 1944 there
- 18:23 at the end of January 1945, loaded onto RMS Mauretania in Liverpool Harbor; the ship had a hospital deck and carried pilots returning home after 50 missions, and 125 English war brides
- 19:24 rough North Atlantic crossing to Staten Island; had dinner with the family of Moses Leavy, his foxhole buddy who was from Staten Island
- 20:51 thinks Leavy eventually died of throat cancer
- 21:17 Leyshon feels very lucky because he got wounded in his first battle and never had to see more war horrors; he's still upset about the one dead German he saw
- 22:20 Leyshon is a peacenik who thinks the Vietnam and Korean wars were useless and that the military gets too much money
- 23:30 at first he was afraid he'd get sent back to the front after being wounded; bullet just missed his gonads
- 24:40 when President Eisenhower left office, he warned citizens to beware of the military industrial complex
- 25:54 memories of Moses Leavy, his foxhole buddy, with whom he was very close; Leavy managed to observe Jewish holidays even during the war.
- 29:00 Leyshon had no trouble readjusting to civilian life. "The people who had problems adjusting to civilian life were the second lieutenants in the air corps who were treated as super fellows."

- 29:30 sent to O'Reilly General Hospital in Springfield, Missouri, which specialized in skin grafts. "...all these guys that had been burned in tanks and in battle were in there getting their faces rebuilt."
- 30:18 he had a scholarship to The Citadel but wanted out of the military; used the GI Bill to study chemical engineering at University of Michigan
- 31:00 spent his career in chemical engineering, didn't retire until 2000 past the age of seventy; traveled to China, India and Senegal many times for his work in fertilizer and chemical plant design
- 31:41 Muslim requirement of praying five times a day is a way to control adherents
- 33:15 Leyshon's wife is currently going through chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer; Meyer promises to send her good thoughts
- 34:37 Leyshon is somewhat of a workaholic and can't remember doing much for relaxation while in the service
- 35:20 describes his job as rifleman, first scout
- 36:53 conflicted feelings about "enemies," who are part of people's families with their own conflicted feelings about war
- 40:15 end audio file 1

Audio file 2

- 00:00 Leyshon describes a TV program about cemeteries worldwide
- 00:56 recalls seeing the Normandy cemetery 90 days after D-Day; "Boy, that was pretty sobering. Nine thousand crosses up there."
- 01:38 Thanks GIs organization takes care of cemeteries
- 02:06 the TV program commemorates special occasions like V-E Day and Veterans Day; "It's just sobering to see how many Americans have been killed in wars abroad."
- 03:14 Meyer mentions visiting Cemetery of the Pacific in Oahu
- 03:37 Saint-Avoid is the biggest military cemetery abroad with 11,000 graves
- 03:44 Meyer mentions his trip to Bunker Hill

04:06 more about the cemetery TV show

04:48 goodbyes

05:44 recording ends