

INTERVIEW OF PAUL MADDEN, JR.
Co. A, 379th
95th Infantry

BY DAVID MEYER
Son of Earl D Meyer
Co. H 379th, 95th Infantry

HAMPTON 2005

DISK II (revised)

(PAUL MADDEN, JR., HAMPTON - 2005, DISK II)

New Track 1:

PAUL MADDEN JR: (begins where CD1 ends)

We actually landed on Omaha Beach, because we were --

I think it was D plus 100 the day we landed.

But I can remember we walked up the hill you see in the movies all the time or the news reels, where it kind of winds up a _____ and you come around the corner and up to the top of a hill. Anyway, got up to the top of a hill. I looked off to the left and you could see this field of white crosses. And let's see. Then we went -- I think we stayed somewhere close by that night. And then the next day we moved farther inland, and we were in the hedge row country. And our executive officer had us line our tents up out through the middle of the field, you know, just like we were on a parade ground.

And the next day, I think an experienced officer came through and he saw the tents. And after he left, then we took our tents down and moved them over around the edge of the fields where they weren't quite as conspicuous, you know, and that's when they pulled out a number of -- all the division trucks and a number of men from each company who could shift drive. And I remember one of our men was selected. And his assistant driver, he told me, didn't know how to shift. And so he wound up -- instead of driving and resting and driving, he wound up doing all the driving.

And -- but that operation went on for a couple of weeks. And then we got our trucks and our men came back, and then we got the train in Carrington which is prominent

in the Band of Brothers movie. And then we went across France. And that's when we got switched from the 9th army to the 3rd army.

And let's see. We probably spent two or three days bivouacked in a wooded area. And I remember it was raining just about all the time. And then we moved up and was -- our particular battalion went across the Moselle on a bridge that was built by engineers and then up and we were up on the hill line and relieved a portion of the fifth division. And then we had our initial contact with the enemy and were probably up there a couple of weeks.

Q Where? Where was this at?

A I think it was -- it was a town. We didn't see any towns, but I think they called it Corny Woods, C-O-R-N-Y, maybe. And it was south of Metz, like I say on the east side of the Moselle.

Q South of Metz, east side.

A Yeah. And we had some patrols that went out from there, and we went into -- we didn't have to dig fox holes, because we just occupied the holes that the 5th division had -- they had dug in. And they were two men -- they really weren't the fox hole that you think about when, say, one man digs one hole to stand in. These were two people could sleep in them side by side.

Q How deep were they?

A It was deep enough, I would say, maybe three feet. And they were covered over so that where you went in was the only place that was really open. You went in and crawled -- you kind of crawled in one side and then you headed in or

either put your feet in and had your head out.

Q Okay.

A And --

Q What were they covered by?

A Well, they had cut down some -- not logs. Some of them had found pieces of like plywood or something and/or big branches they covered -- and then they covered those with the dirt that they had dug out. So you had pretty good protection from artillery mortar rounds. The first wounded that I can recall, we had two men -- as we were beginning to leave there, we were going to be relieved by the 5th division was coming back. And we were going back to the west side of the Moselle. And we had -- some mortar rounds came in, and we had an Indian, a Zuni Indian from New Mexico was in the company. He was wounded. Joe Pantejo (ph) was his name.

And then one of the AST fellows -- ASTP fellows, Francis Peterson, and he had pretty bad wounds. He lost an eye and maybe most of his ear. And after he got out of the hospital and went back to school, I think he finished. And then he decided he was going to be a priest, and he went back to seminary and became a priest. And after he was ordained, he went to Hawaii. He still lives there. Of course, he is retired now.

And on a trip there several years ago with my wife and another couple, I had called him and he picked us up at the hotel there in Honolulu and we had supper with him.

And, of course, that is the first time I had seen him since '45.

Q Did he have work done on his ear?

A Well, he had a little work on his ear, but had -- he didn't -- he had a black patch he wore on his eye.

Q What was his name?

A Francis Peterson. I think he was originally from Philadelphia. And I had invited him to come to Baton Rouge and do our Catholic mass at the reunion last year. And he wrote me and thanked me and said he had had some heart trouble, and he didn't want to -- the doctor had advised him that if he made an extended aerial flight, that he might have another heart attack or something I guess when he landed or something, you know. So he didn't want to -- he wanted to come, but he didn't want to risk it.

Q So he was one of the first of the wounded, you say?

A He and Pantejo (ph), I think. We did have one fellow before we went on line that said his rifle accidentally went off. And he -- I think the round went through his elbow. And there was some discussion about whether that was an accident or not.

But at any rate, if it wasn't an accident, he probably lost the use of his arm for the rest of his life.

Q That's sad.

A And -- but Peterson and Pantejo (ph) were the first, you know, enemy action casualties. And then when we went back across the Moselle, then we relieved some units of the Czech army position. And they moved up north of Metz where they made their attack across the Moselle. And at that

time, we were in some woods, heavily wooded area. The only time you would see any break in the woods is when you would come to a fire break.

And there again, we occupied their holes, so we didn't have to dig any holes. And we had several patrols went out from there. In fact, they had organized the regimental scouts by that time. And one day, a regimental scout patrol went out to our area, and we had four fellows from our company that went into the scouts. And when that patrol was out, the fellow who had been in our company, Harry Baron (ph) stepped on a mine and was killed. And they brought his body back. They'd gone through our platoon going out and they came back in through our platoon, but they brought Harry back. And he was the first killed from our company, but he wasn't with the company at the time. He was a regimental scout. But he had been in our company. So -- and Harry is buried in Saint Avo (ph) cemetery. Actually, next to him is one of our lieutenants that was killed, Lieutenant Baxter. And I was the platoon runner by that time, and I was with Baxter when he was killed.

Q As a runner, did you go from -- did you give messages?

A Right. I would go from the platoon leader up to the company commander, you know. I -- if the platoon leader had a question and we couldn't handle it by radio, then I would go find a captain and he would make his decision, or they might call and say, "Send a runner up."

Sometimes they would send a runner to us, but

sometimes they'd ask for the runner to come to them and come back to the platoon. And I'd been -- the platoon leader, when we first went online, they'd asked me, you know, be his runner. And so I was a runner for the rest of the time.

Q For the rest of the war?

A Well, until I went to the hospital. I mean, you know, when I came back, there was another runner. So I just went back to a squad. And I think I was made a scout in a rifle squad.

End of New Track 1

New Track 2

Q How you doing? Because I know --

A I'm all right. I am just looking at the time. They are going to wonder where I am in a little bit.

Q Okay. I know.

A What do we want to do?

Q Well, what do you want to do? You know what?

You -- because I want your -- your grandchildren, children, whatever to -- because you have given so much detail.

You -- one thing I was thinking was in both -- the Mr. Januszkiewicz (ph) with his book and Mr. _____'s book, you know, you have different things. You are different.

A The main story that is in Januszkiewicz's book is when I first got back home on a 30-day leave when we came back from overseas, I wrote the story about -- I think I called it Our First Day in Combat, or something like, or One Day in Combat. And this was November the 14th of '44. And

I think I covered that one day in that story fairly well. I was still kind of security conscious, so I really didn't write the names in the story. As I wrote it, I would put numbers in and then have a separate card.

And then it was probably 20 years later or 25 years later that I found it, and I put the -- I retyped it and put the names back in where the numbers had been, because we lost a fair number of men that day. But they are all named in that story. And later on, Joe -- I was, we had just had a talking session. I was saying something. And he said, "Write that up and let me put it in the next book." So think I had two more stories. And one of them was about getting my P 38 that I had.

Q A story about a souvenir?

A Yeah, that was the P 38 story, where I happen to come by that.

Q One of the things that I found, because I think I told you -- or I told someone -- that I had gotten a tape from this place, the Veterans History Project. And I thought, well, this will be good. I will listen to these actors telling these stories from the Veterans History Project. And yet when they did, they were sort of flat.

And I thought, you know, the people I have talking for their families, they -- it's where people pause and people do this, and that brings the story alive. And I thought at the end of the day, it would be nice to have something. And I will do what I can to try to track down the people also in the film to see if there is a way you can get the footage of that stuff. But it's nice to have -- I

have my father telling me a story, one of the stories.

And what you have so far, you have wonderful and very detailed remembrances. If you want to, I thought if -- and in the meantime, you could look at the Januszkiewicz's (ph) book or whatever and tell one of the stories based on that or just tell any of the experiences there, so that they have something of you telling -- even if -- because there is a little different thing between reading them and -- whichever of the ones you feel like talking about.

A Well --

End of track 2

Begin Track 3

Q You talked one time about being pinned down, I think.

A In that -- okay. That's probably when Lieutenant Baxter was killed. It was after -- it was about the time of Thanksgiving. It was after we had gotten out of the fort there at Metz, and we went up to Fort Plappeville which was kind of northwest, I guess, of Metz. And I think again, it was the 378 that contained the fort. I mean they had them covered where, you know, they couldn't come out.

And so we were supposed -- there was one platoon from that particular company that was dug in out in an open field between the woods and the fort itself. And, in fact, they were just as you were getting dug in, just as you were going up the slope maybe to get to the top of the fort and they could only get out at night. So we were going to

relieve them during the night, but they said they hadn't been bothered if just one or two people were out crossing that field. The Germans hadn't been firing.

So they said -- they told my platoon leader -- our platoon was going to relieve the platoon out there at night. So they had a sergeant, I believe it was, from that platoon that was going to leave, take us out, show us where they were. And our platoon leader was going to talk with the platoon leader out there about the time and, you know, the switchover procedure.

And so the guide from the 378 unit, Lieutenant Baxter, who was our platoon leader -- I was a runner. Sergeant Cliff White was our platoon guide at the time. He was just -- it was the four of us. And they say, "Well, they won't bother you."

So we started out across this open field, and there was some firing. And Lieutenant -- I mean Sergeant White and I both dropped to the ground. He was close enough, he dropped into a shell hole and Lieutenant Baxter was hit. And he never moved. I guess he was instantly killed.

And then the guide just managed to get back into the woods. And I laid still for a little while, and I had the little 536 handy talkie radio. And I put the antenna up, and I was going to call and see if they wanted anything in particular for us to do, that we didn't have nowhere to go. And then when I put the antenna up, well, then I could hear a couple of shots, so I put it back down. And a few seconds or maybe a minute, I went over and got in the hole with

White. And we stayed there for a little while. And then he decided, well, let's go back, you know.

So we turned, and they didn't shoot at us. We went back. Later that day, the -- or maybe it was the next day I think it was. Probably later that day. The chaplain -- someone or the other negotiated with a temporary truce to, you know, pick up the bodies. And so apparently, _____ +, but the chaplain just said, you know, he would like for three or four volunteers to go with him out to recover the bodies. It was one out there that I think probably was from the 378 and then Lieutenant Baxter.

And so we got two stretchers. And I think maybe Pat Thornton -- and I think -- I'm not sure whether Isaac _____ said he was on that detail or not. And then another fellow who's written me since then -- I think it was Virgil Dixon -- he said he was in that group, but I don't really remember. And then myself. And we went out and picked up those two bodies and brought them back. And there -- I think maybe this is one of the stories I wrote.

I noticed when I saw the -- this man from the other unit, that he had had a parachute-type carbine. It was collapsible stock so that they could fold the stock. They could fire from the shoulder or they could fold the stock, and it had a pistol grip and just fire just like a pistol, but it was, you know, .30 caliber carbine. And I thought, well, as a runner, that would be a nice, little extra weapon to have and it wouldn't be a lot of weight.

And so when we out there, I told the guy I was helping with the stretcher. I said, "I'm going to pick up

that carbine."

And he said, "Oh, don't do that. They're going to shoot at us."

I said, "Well, put the stretcher down between us and them." And as I lifted the body on or helped lift it on, then I just had the carbine laying alongside it. And so we carried it back.

And then so I was -- later on, I was cleaning the carbine. And Captain Liden (ph) came by and said -- asked me what I was doing. And I said, well, I was cleaning this weapon. And, of course, he knew what it was.

And he said, "Well, when you get it cleaned up, just turn it into the supply sergeant."

And so, of course, I never saw it again. And I often wanted to ask Captain Liden if he had a parachute-type carbine in his possession, but I really never did.

And -- but that might have been the time before a pinned down was concerned. And that -- that might be in Joe's book. I don't recall.

End of Track 3

Begin Track 4

And then -- now, the -- what Toby did, he just said, you know, give your name and just start talking. Well, I kind of talked in a chronological order, and that's what he took. I don't know whether the rest of the fellows did or not, but he was able -- he gave a general overview of a time

period, and then took these tapes and extracted the part that pertained to that time period. And then he would have another time period, and then he would do the same thing. And so you may be -- your story may be in four or five different places --

Q That's okay.

A -- through that book, you know.

Q To me, you know, what I am trying to do is just to give the -- give just an oral record so that you have something so that -- what I hope is that the -- you know, the stories will be in different places all over the place. But then someone will say, "Do you want to hear my grandfather tell it? Do you want to see it?" And this will be something -- and you will have the detail here about Indian Town Gap that doesn't make it into this, because it's not -- has to do with the day-to-day life.

And that -- it's -- you mentioned -- because I know -- I know you have been -- again, if it hadn't -- this is for the record -- if it hadn't been for Paul Madden, I never would have even started, because I got the idea. But when I called up, I remember you had said -- I had written to the people in Chicago, and I said, "This is what I want to do." Didn't hear anything.

And I said to my wife, Cynthia, I said, "You know what, this idea I had, it's stupid. No one really wants me to do it. So I don't know."

So I thought, you know what, just -- I have this name, Paul Madden. I will call him.

A Where did you get my name?

Q Your name was on -- you know, your name was on I think the -- either the list for the hotel or something on the reunion. There was a contact thing. So I called you up, and I said, "Here is my idea." And I said, "I don't know if anyone wants to tell a story."

And you said something like, "Well, those northern boys can -- may not get back to you." You said, "I'll tell you a story."

And I thought -- I said to my wife -- I said, "There is a man in Louisiana who is very friendly and he said he will talk to me."

And I said, "So at least I will go and I will talk to one person." And the irony --

A And we didn't get to talk.

Q That's the big irony, because you were so busy and you ran such a good -- good reunion.

A Thank you, David.

Q Because, you know, you look at everything that could possibly go wrong with one. And your reunion was just -- just went along, just went well.

And you have given so much of your time.

End of Track 4

Begin new Track 5 CD2

Q If your grandchildren were sitting here and you wanted to tell them one more story --

A Oh, gee.

Q What would you tell them? One or two more stories.

Whatever you ever have. But you know your time and your energy. What would you want them to hear in your own voice?

A Well, I'd -- I'd like to think that they would have a concern for other people, stop and listen to them, you know, and listen to what they're saying and try to relate to them and what they are saying and don't form a -- have a preconceived idea about anybody. I mean, you know, they are better than I am or not as good as I am. Look at everybody with the same and find some good in them.

I know we had some people that even now I think have a grudge against their military service for their own reason. And I know we had one man that despised our first sergeant. In fact, I understand that after the war he called him up on the telephone and told him he was going to kill him.

And it was -- I never did really understand what his problem was other than the fact that he said his wife was coming to see him and he was restricted to barracks. Well, just like the fellows that had known him a long time before I did said it was his fault, you know, that he was restricted and wasn't anybody taking -- you know, taking it out on him. He had messed up voluntarily of his own accord. But he never forgot this. And he never forgave the first sergeant.

And in my opinion, he didn't hurt anybody but himself, you know. And to have this thing, you know, gnawing at you so long, I can't understand it, you know. And I would tell my grandkids, you know, don't let anybody ever, you know, get to you to that point that you -- you

can't talk to them and live with them and accommodate them.

Q Those are good words.

A Like I say, lots of things I'd like to say to them.

But I just -- you know, be yourself but let other people be themselves and get along and look for the good.

(continuation from backup CD)

And try to make people enjoy life, And not.. Like I said, some people go around here looking for trouble instead of taking what's there

Like if you're issued a bad deal. You get a lemon. Make lemonade, you know.

End of Track 5

Begin Track 6 (from backup CD not in Transcribers hands)

Q Do you remember where you were when the war was over?

A Yes. I got back to the unit. I'd gone to hospital at the end of January. And uh.. Actually when it was frozen feet. And..It of course there was nothing they could do but kinda let them thaw out at their room temperature and not get them wet where you'd develop trench foot.

But as I was going back to the Repo depot system.. we called it..What'd they call them. Didn't they call them "Reinforcement centers"..Some of them were replacement depots.

Fortunately, a lot of us were able to get back to our unit. I understand that in some places when they came out of the hospital they got assigned to other units.

But my experience. I was going back to the 95th.

And I'd been in the hospital in Verdun, and I got back up into Belgium, I think it was Tongress (?) Belgium and I realized something was wrong with me and so I went on sick call and the doctor just looked at me and said "Have you ever had malaria?"

And I didn't realize it at the time but the whites of my eyes were yellow and I had a... and he had written jaundice on the tag you know and I never heard of jaundice.

But any rate he just tagged me for the hospital and they put me in an ambulance and I think we went up to uh....the back hospital in Holland. And they said, We are going to fly you to the hospital in England But then the weather was bad so they cancelled that and they put us in an ambulance and we went to a field hospital in Liege. I think it was the 16th...General Hospital. But it was a tent.

And we got in there at night. And the ward said Go to such and such a tent I got there and And the ward boy said Have you had anything to eat And I said, "Well Not since breakfast this morning." And said, "Well" he told me how to go to the mess tent Get me you to eat. And I think they had a couple pieces of chicken left -- fried chicken - which I found out that I shouldn't have eaten And then they had biscuits and first biscuits I'd seen in a long time And so I put one in my pocket and went on back to the ward wand got in bed.

And next morning the doctor came around. And I'm not sure what he asked me But he found out I'd gone to the mess hall that night and got Fried chicken and he got rather agitated and he said, "You're a bed patient you're not to get out of bed for anything And I think they put me on a liquid diet." And then he said.. They had a mixture of I think it was Karo syrup or something but They put different juices in them. Like grape or orange or what have you And he said you need to drink four of these a day. And if you don't drink four of these (they were ???? bottles) And he said "You try the different juice and if the one you like better than another you just tell them. And that's what they'll fix." He said "If you don't drink four of them a day we're going to do it interveniously."

Well I didn't have any trouble drinking four a day.

And I was there a few days. And then the put us on a hospital train and And I was still a litter patient. And the train took me back to Paris. And there I believe I was in the 194th General Hospital

End of Track 6

Track 7 (CD2 - for original transcribers TRACK 10, DISK I)

Q Did your feet ever give you problems?

A Yeah, they were -- they were real cold in the wintertime. When you freeze them, I think it affects your circulation.

Q How did they freeze?

A Just being in cold.

Q Just being in the cold?

A I really think -- probably -- I probably did it over a period of time, but I tried to keep my feet dry, because if you got your feet wet, you could get trench foot, and that was bad. But Patton had fresh socks sent up with the rations. So when you drew rations, you know, you could get a fresh pair of socks.

Now, I give Patton credit for that. Of course, on the flip side, he said if you get trench foot, you might get a court martial, you know. But if you kept your feet dry -- if I got my feet wet, the first chance I had to get, I would put on dry socks and then I would take the wet socks and stick them inside my shirt. You know, if they were real wet, I would wring them out and get as much water out. But if they were just moist or something, I would stick them in my shirt and just let the body heat dry.

Q Dry them.

A And then, you know, I would just switch socks or get another fresh pair. _____ get a fresh pair.

But when we went from Saarlautern, we were transferring the 3rd army to the 9th army. Saarlautern, we

were in convoy up to -- well, in fact, our company went to -- through Houffalize to some little town out from Houffalize in Belgium. And the platoon leader said, you know, "You ride in the jeep with me."

Well, I was riding in the back of the jeep. And I think that's really when I froze my feet. It was cold that day and just not being able to move around --

Q Yes.

A -- you know, or get me any exercise.

Q Sure.

A I really think that's when probably when I froze them.

Q So anyhow -- anyhow, I just, it's --

A You going to be in Chicago next year?

Q Yeah. So we will talk --

A If you do, maybe we can finish this.

Q We will finish this thing.

A I overstayed my time.

Q Yes, I know, but you have overstayed your time, but never overstayed your welcome.

This is David Meyer, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th. And I have had the pleasure of talking to Mr. --

A Paul Madden, Company A, 379th.

Q And what was your final rank?

A PFC.

Q PFC. And your serial number again?

A 38520000.

Q Okay. It's August 26th. And we have been talking

for about two hours. Thank you very much. Okay.