

Veteran's Name: Paul Madden
Interviewer: David (O'Shea) Meyer
Date of Interview: August 26st, 2006
Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel
Chicago, Illinois
Transcriber: Rose M Goni
(VHP Court Reporter project)
Transcribed: Sept 18 – 21, 2007
Log D. Meyer July, 2025

00:00 Introduction. August 26, 2006 Interviewer: D Meyer son of Earl D Meyer CoH/379th IR/95th ID

Finding a place in Paul's memories to continue after the finish of last year's interview with Paul at the Hampton Va reunion

00:21 Interviewer has read the letters Paul had written to his mother (29 pages of them) that Paul's son had posted on internet. Much talk about weather. Non controversial details.

01:56 On receiving mail in the service. A big thrill

In Dec 1944 no mail for ten days. Paul has slipped in a bomb crater in a bomb crater in Saarlautern and was out of touch.

Went back to mail coordinator. Mail coordinator said he had been told that Paul was MIA and was holding Paul's letters.

04:00 What's in the mail? Mother sends potato cake in #2 1/2 can (looked like fruit cake) Baked it in the can and seal it so it wouldn't get crumbled up.

05:51 95th history. How the 95th was assigned to 9th Army Sept 1st when in England but when in France early on 95th put on Red Ball Express. After Red Ball finished 95th was reassigned from 9th Army to the 3rd Army (Patton). And Patton until Feb. 3rd, 1945 when reassigned to 9th Army.

06:57 On the Red Ball Express and the drivers and who they were fed

08:30 *When did you first hear shells?* When shifting from 9th into 3rd Army, 95th was bivouacked in woods for a few days Rained whole time. Mess kits would fill up with water. Could hear shells

- 09:37 Then 379th regiment was moved up and took over the foxholes of the 11th regiment of 5th Infantry on E side of Moselle. Late in the day. Muddy. Crawled in a two person foxhole. Story of wet pillow turned out to be German fur jacket.
- 11:06 Describes the foxholes 3 feet below surface, Couldn't sit up. On guard duties. Duties down at listening posts. How traded off sleep
- 12:16 First casualty. From a mortar shell. Petersen hit bad and lost an eye.
- BREAK (for bathroom)
- 14:07 Return.. On Peterson's injury. Joe Mantilla, a Zuni from New Mexico. was wounded too
- 15:05 Crossing a Bailey Bridge over the Moselle. Artillery shells over head. Took over other's foxholes.
- 16:16 Cold?? Description of terrain. Muddy until ground got frozen. First snow was fifteen of December.
- 17:39 Description of Bailey Bridges Came in sections so could be lengthened. If transversing a lot of water, then pontoons. Size of bridge determines which engineers called to build them. On building Bailey bridges. Heavy planking laid across . Bailey bridges could take lighter tank
- 19:38 Crossing the Moselle in smoke. Trying to keep direct observation from Germans
- 20:18 *Where were you?* We were Southwest of Metz. Never knew the big picture. Only knew what was gong on where we were. Got the bigger picture from the publication, Stars and Stripes. Knew they were close to Metz.
- 21:16 First attack – in the Manze Ravine outside of town of Gravelotte. Memories of conditions. Wet Grass on side of hill slick.
- 22:19 Crossed a wide open field to the Mance Ravine. Came up east back between two forts. Fort Juissy Nord (north) and Juissy Sud (south) Bunkers were underneath . Ft. Boise le Dame was south. Juissy Sud was Paul Madden's objective.
- 24:29 Earlier the morning, when crossing field to ravine 1st casualty, at ravine, more and then at Ft Boise la Dame most of one squad killed at same time

- 24:53 When we were attacking Juissy Sud found it was already occupied by our B company so plans changed and we were sent to Ft. Bois la Dame. A Big fort. Of concrete with a few little openings Paul's company only has bazookas so no way of getting in. Description of Ft. Bois la Dame
- 27:59 Fight at Ft. Bois la Dame. Rocket grenade comes in from fort and kills four or five of us outright (names the dead)
- Some of us got back to the woods but we got cut off. German in the ravine. We are surrounded. Cut off. November 14, 1944
- 28:38 Paul is the runner for the platoon.
- On Paul's job as the runner during this time when they were cut off. Carried a light radio. Max range 3 miles Stayed with the platoon leader mostly relaying messages,
- 32:36 Didn't attack out of the fort area until Nov 18th so now (Nov 14) they were pinned
- 33:26 On the rescue. How they survived How they got out
- 34:26 Food dropped in.
- 34:50 About 40 in our platoon. At end of day down to 25.
- 36:30 Memories of the night of Nov 14th. Cold. The enemy kept us in a "box of artillery fire"
- On Nov 18th Paul attacks out and US artillery drops fire all around them protecting them.
- 38:09 Ste. Ruffine. Finds a German flag (which he still has). Carried it with him the rest of his time until he got back to his duffel to sthough sometimes he had a change to put it in his duffel.
- 39:56 Stayed in a few days in St. Ruffine in regimental reserve. Stayed a few days the relieve a unit at Ft. Plappeville.
- 40:38 Thanksgiving 1944 Turkey brought up in Thermite cans.
- 41:23 Interviewer asks Paul Madden to explain the triangular division setup. For next 10 minutes **Paul explains the setup with clarity and precision.**
- 43:35 On artillery Battalions.
- Talks Battalions and their companies - 3 rifle companies and one heavy weapons company. Companies A B C D are 1st Battalion; 2nd is Co. E F G H. Third I K L M

- 45:02 Also there were Corps Battalions carrying 155 womtoms and two howitzers And on tanks.
- 46:47 Riding tanks. Also Medical Battalions. And Engineer battalion Company of MPs. Signal Corp attached Others, too
- 59:50 Talks about the Platoon Sgt Dixon is killed in front of Paul just feet away. A tank fired an 88 and it went through the end room of the building where Paul was standing. Everyone drops to the floor but the Sergeant just slumped over dead
- Paul knew him from the time Paul joined the company
- 53:22 After Ft. Plappeville. 379th was in reserve. Went S around the City of Metz. Heading toward Germany. Sometimes walking all the day. Sometimes "leapfrogging" with trucks. Nov 29 to Dec. 2nd
- 54:31 Night of Dec 25, 1944.
Co B moves into German barracks across the river.
Morning Paul crosses in little boats 8 men in a boat
- 55:18 No shelling. Bridge secured before Germans knew it. Later that day, Germans shell but can't destroy the bridge. Bridge still there but built over
- 59:00 One CD filled so stop while Meyer "finalizes" the CD
- 59:42 Shows on map where he crossed the river.

Talk about the bridge and the taking of the bridge.
- 1:01:53 Looking at map, Mr. Madden traces the movements of 95th
- 1:02:57 In a house at Christmas. Co. Commander plays "Silent Night" (from German recording so in German) over the sound part of his phone. "where we could hear it."

In a holding pattern
- 1:04:00 Might clear a block of houses during the day and pull back at night let the Germans back in.
- 1:04:53 *When you got your orders where did you go?*

We fell back went in troop trucks through Luxembourg City, Bastogne, to a little community in Belgian mountains call C-e-f-f-a-l-u.

- 01:06:06 Day after Bulge, Paul goes to hospital with frozen feet
Paul, the historian relates the movements of the 95th – attached to British Army for 2 weeks and then returned to 9th army.
- 01:07:04 On frozen feet. Didn't know it was happening. Platoon commander had Paul sitting on back of Jeep.
After trip in the cold, Pauls feet begin to hurt. Later couldn't go to sleep from the pain.
- 01:07:50 Difference between Frozen Feet and Trenchfoot. Trenchfoot was your fault - Frozen Feet was not necessarily your fault.
- 01:08:44 Patton gave order to give fresh pair of socks with rations. Always had three pair. How one kept ones socks dry. Stick inside shirt to dry.
Combat boots Later part of January boot with rubber all around the top. Swapping socks. Rotating them. Wearing one
- 01:10:10 Paul's mother sends socks.
- 01:10:27 How Long in hospital? No treatment for you.
Talks about way they made their beds .
Feet stuck over from bed. Theory perhaps they would thaw out at room temperature.
- 1:11:30 After 21 days in hospital. Sent on repple depple (Repo Depot – "replacement depot"). Returned from hospital to the Repple Depple - a lot of guys were returned to different companies – Paul worked through the system but ended up back with the 95th.
- 1:13:06 Paul in hospital in Bordellen When got out felt something wrong. .
Had Jaundice. Goes back to evacuation hospital in Holland to be flown to England. Weather bad so no flight. End up in truck to...
- 1:14:35 General Field Hospital in Liege. Doctor makes him get off his feet. Puts him on hospital train to Paris.
- 1:15:15 Story of eating fried chicken at hospital. Hadn't eaten. Someone points to mess tent. Gets friend chicken. Dr. finds out next day. Angry. ive him when not supposed to

- 01:15:45 Doctor puts him on liquid diet. Different diets in hospital Made a bed patient which makes Paul a litter patient
Go to 194 General Hospital. Had been a boys highschool Four stories high. Good description. Liquid diet to soft diet.
- 01:17:49 Was in hospital until end of April. Then to another Repo Deop
- 01:18:13 When Roosevelt died. Had been President 12 years. People not used to another. Too bad he wasn't there to see the finish.
- 01:19:18 Finally got back to his Company about May 3rd. Germany surrenders May 8th
95th had had its last combat April 20th n Northside of Ruhr pocket
- 01:19:52 95th goes into Military Govt. Policing its own assigned area, British have an area, etc. Each regiment had its own area.
- 01:20:13 Have to keep the displaced persons. Guarded so they didn't go after the Germans. That's what they were doing when Paul gets back
Pauls company moves aound. From Hofelhof where he rejoined the 95th then moved around near Hamm in a villages BokenHubble.
- 01:21:23 Whole company in school house. Did you see German civilians.
Families had evacuated in Saarlauterns. As we moved forward, see civilians.
- 01:22:20 Interviewer asks Paul to backtrack and tell story of a close call when a shell hit a building and the ceiling fell in. January, 1944. Stationed in a two level basement.
Went upstairs 1st floor to sit in chair. Shell comes through hole in roof, explodes on 1st floor. Knocks up a chunk of floor and Paul finds himself in basement
- 01:24:53 On the point system. 5 points for purple hearts. One point a month a month. Those in Paul's Company with over 85 points, transferred .
- 01:25:35 To tent camp – Camp Old Gold. Camp Lucky Strike near La Havre from which point they are to return to the USA
Stayed in tent camps at Camp Old Gold. On tent camps.
- 01:27:00 Shipped out of LaHavre and 95th was third in line to go to the Pacific.
- 01:27:41 My group went to Camp Shelby Paul goes on 30 day leave and joined 95th at Shelby

- 01:28:31 Atomic bombs are dropped. War ends. Talk to send 95th to Japan as Occupation troops.
- Men who have been in 95th since 1942 at Camp Swift who had a lot of points transferred out in Europe
- 01:29:23 A lot of new men into Company A. The older veterans at Camp Shelby don't want to be part of occupation troops.
- 95th Division is then deactivated while men are in Camp Shelby.
- Since 95th was to be third division to invade Japan it was still at Shelby while the 1st two division to part of the invasion had already been sent to the Pacific. They are deactivated in the Philippines. 95th deactivated from Camp Shelby, Miss.
- 1:30:12 *Where were you when Bomb dropped ? Were there parties? Don't remember any parties. Elated after second bomb.*
- 1:30:50 **Photos.** Saarlautern January 1944.
- Paul holding a .45 caliber grease gun. Held it. Points out the the collar of his jacket was buttoned at the top button. "This was January when the Bulge was still on.
- In Dec. when reissued gas masks (everyone had thrown them away) were given order that anytime outside one must wear the gasmask and have top button buttoned. Show that you were an American (not a German)
- 1:32:45 Reads a letter he wrote home in December 1944. 3rd Platoon Co. A. Saarlautern-Rodin.
- Highlight. Firing at Germans who drop out of sight behind a fence. See if killed or wounded. Saw that one had rifle, other I thought might have pistol. Good souvenirs.
- Asked for permission to go after dark and check to see if the Germans. Gets it but has to go with someone. Find the bodies and find the pistol take it – a P38. Took info from pockets
- 1:35:55 *if you came upon a German did you take his dog tags?*
- Don't remember German's with dogtags. Had a passport like thing with records. Soldat buch.. Paul never took a Soldat Buch (some soldiers collected0

- 1:37:07 Several years ago was one of our men got in touch of German Lieut. Who gave him written account (from German side) of encounter with men from Co A in a mill. Germans on 2nd floor throw grenades down on Americans on 1st floor.
- 1:38:40 Another account from same German Lieut. From Saarlautern. And diary when he was caught and imprisoned by Russians.
- 1:39:03 What would you say about going into service now. If you go to with the right mind, okay.
- 1:39:29 Paul had volunteered for inducton while in summer school, July of 1942.
- 1:40:03 *Where were you and what were you doing when you heard about the Pearl Harbor attack?* 16 years old throwing a football around at a birthday party for his Grandfather in a little town 30 miles from Shreveport, LA. Family comes to celebrate at Aunt's house. Someone hears on the radio
- 01:41:14: Paul finishes high school in 1942 (just 11 years required then in Louisiana – 7 years grammar 4 years high). Volunteers to be inducted. Was afraid the war would be over before he could get in.
- 1:42:07 On close calls and fear. Difference between fear and apprehension.
"I have seen situations and one guy holds back 'I'm sick'" and drops out while the rest of his group continue on.
"He was afraid but.... They were afraid too." Paul likes to use "apprehensive" rather than "afraid."
Majority of people went to do to what they should or what they were trained to do while two or three guys would drop out of the group.
- 01:44:40 War as a young man's game. Paul's first squad leader was drafted in his 40s (born in 1901) and didn't have stamina of the younger men under him. How that squad leader acclimated.
- 01:46:19 When we went to France, "he (squad leader) got tired."
- 01:47:07 On Irony of transferring out from points.
Since anyone with more the 85 points had been transferred out of the 95th in Europe, when 95th returned to the US and was disbanded, some

of the veterans at Camp Shelby got out sooner than those who had transferred out weeks earlier

"So we got back before they did."

"War is a young man's game."

01:47:41 Arrival of Mrs. Madden and "We're done."

End of Chicago Interview. – 1:47:49