INTERVIEW OF

PAUL H. MADDEN, JR.

Transcribed by ROSE M. GONI, September 18-21, 2007

MR. MADDEN: I don't even remember where we left off last year.

MR. O'SHEA: Well, let's see. I'll be able to remind you of that.

A. I need to know where we were, where I was.

Q. Okay. Let's see.

I read all your memoirs yesterday, the 29 pages you put on the Internet.

A. Oh. My son did that.

Q. Your son did that.

A. Well, now, that was -- that was, if I remember right, that was the actual letters that I'd written home.

Q. Yeah.

A. I mean, my mother had saved all those letters that I wrote and I didn't know that.

But when I found them, then I went through. And of course, most of the references were to, you know, the weather because I was severely conscious. And I wish I had gone ahead and written more what I wanted to, you know, about what was going on.

So I really didn't -- other than the weather, I didn't have a whole lot to make up.

Q. Yeah, you always were good about the weather and letting them know how you were.

A. Well, that's all I felt I could say. I couldn't say, you know, my buddy got killed yesterday or something like that. Besides that, that would upset my mother, you know.

Q. Yeah.

A. But, anyway, I sometime back in the '70s, I guess, or maybe even in the '80s, I found those letters. And then I -- you know, that's what I used to write that up.

And I just had it on -- I believe I just had it on -- well, I put it on a computer, where I could print it, you know.

Q. Yeah, you did.

A. And then my son got that. And I guess he scanned it and he put it onto a --

Q. On the Internet.

A. To his Website.

Q. He has 29 pages. It was good.

I mean, one thing I wanted to ask, sometimes -- because you talked a lot about receiving mail.

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. Was that always a big thrill?

A. Oh, it was.

I remember one time in December I didn't get any mail for, oh, a couple of weeks. Well, a week or ten

days. And I generally got mail whenever we got mail. You know, I got some.

Q. Yeah.

A. And previous to that we were in Saarlautern. And we had moved one night from one position to another. And I remember, you know, flipping and falling into a bomb crater going through a railroad yard. And, of course, I went down probably was maybe six-foot deep. And I got back out and just fell into line, you know, later on.

It was after that when I didn't get any mail. And so one night I asked the platoon leader, I said, "Can I go back with ration detail and check with the mail clerk?" you know. Because besides my mother and a couple of aunts and cousins and girls, like I say, I'd get one to three letters every day almost.

Anyway, I got back and I went to see the mail orderly. He said, "They told me you were missing." He said, "I've been holding your mail."

And I had 23 or 24 letters there stacked up, you know.

Q. No!

A. So I was reading the rest of the night.

But mail -- mail was a big deal. I mean, with me.

Q. Sure.

And I notice that they'd send you like food, too? They'd send you candy and things?

A. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Jerry -- I mean, not Jerry -- but Mel Zimmer (phonetic), who's here at the reunion, was in our company. And he said his dad had sent him, it was a can of orange juice.

I mean, you know, orange juice?

Q. Yeah.

A. When he opened it up, it was gone.

And my mother would -- she used to make, we called it, a potato cake. For some reason or another, she got a potato, you know, into it. Looked like fruitcake. Had raisins and stuff like that, nuts. Looked like fruitcake, but more dough or whatever.

Q. Yeah, more doughy?

A. Not as much fruit.

And she would make them in like a No. 2 and a half can. And then they would seal it, you know, looks like a can seal. And they would ship my cake that way. Of course, that way, it wouldn't get crumbled up, you know.

Q. That's perfect. Because I remember you saying you got cake. And I thought, "How'd he get cake?"

A. That was, that particular cake, she just

baked it in that tin and then they put the lid on it.

Q. And sealed it.

I talked -- other people sometimes say if they tried to let like people know where they were, sometimes they'd use code or different things.

A. I think some people had worked out, you know, a code previously, you know. But it probably didn't work because it didn't happen exactly to fit their codes, you know, when they actually got to going.

And I remember one time I tried to do something, tell my mother that we were in the 3rd Army by writing did she remember this fellow that went to the church, you know, and was in the fraternity and his name was Patton.

Q. Ah.

A. And I was trying to get across to her that we were in the 3rd Army, but by the time she got that letter they probably had a national -- we'd been in the 3rd Army for several weeks before they even said the 95th was a part of the 3rd Army.

Q. The 95th started off with a seven-foot arc?

A. Well, no. I was just looking at it this morning. And there's a book about the 9th Army that's named *Conquer*. And it's strictly the 9th Army. And I noticed in it that the 95th Division was assigned to the 9th Army the 1st of September. That's when we were in

England.

Q. Okay.

A. And then we were in the 9th Army when we moved into France. And then that's when they took our organic vehicles and put them in the Red Ball Express.

Q. Okay.

A. And then when we -- when they got off the Red Ball Express and then we started moving up, we were going to the 9th Army. It was during that move that they actually transferred us from the 9th Army to the 3rd Army.

Q. Oh.

A. And then we were in the 3rd Army until, I think it was, the 3rd of February technically when we transferred back to the 3rd Army.

Q. Did you drive in the Red Ball Express at all?

A. No. No, I didn't get to do that. I stayed. They took people that theoretically could drive trucks, you know.

Of course, it was all gear shift.

Q. Yeah.

A. And I remember one of my friends, they took him to be a driver. And, of course, he knew about driving.

Q. Yeah.

A. But they had two people assigned to each truck so they could spell each other, so one wouldn't be driving all the time.

And Finnick told me that the fellow that was paired with him on the truck didn't know anything about truck driving.

Q. Ha.

A. So he'd wind up doing all the driving, and this guy was just trying to keep Finnick awake, you know, when they had long hauls or long hours.

Q. But during that time --

I'm just putting down a cloth because everyone likes to -- everyone does -- I just want to make sure that --

A. When that's tweaking of the red dogs here.

Q. Because you like to move your hands. And that's good, but that way it's less --

A. Have you talked to Dino Billdawbeck (phonetic), the 107th?

Q. Yeah.

A. I found out this morning that he was -- he had a -- he was a cook and was a mess sergeant during the Red Ball time. I was asking him and he said they were set up kind of halfway, you know, between where they started and where they were calling to. And they --

Q. They'd cook them halfway?

A. He said he'd have half of his cooks like cooking 12 hours and the other half looking the other 12 and then he had one fellow that just did the baking.

Q. Really? Just one person did the baking?

A. So I mentioned that. So if you're talking to him, you could ask him about that.

Q. Okay.

Well, when we were talking, you talked about going across, I think, in the forty-and-eights and the train?

A. The train, right.

Q. And you -- we talked through basic training. And you talked about -- I think we got to where you landed in Normandy and Omaha. And then I think we ended up with just coming on the outskirts of Metz, I think. You're just about -- just about to talk about your first -- the first action or anything.

A. Okay. All right.

Q. So do you want to backtrack or do you want to go the train in?

When's the first time you started hearing shells, hearing things?

A. Well, when they shifted us from the 9th to the 3rd Army, then the train, you know, instead of

proceeding on north or northeast, it kind of deviated and went kind of east or south. I'm not sure where we were.

Q. Yeah.

A. But we went into the 3rd Army area. And for a few days we were just big whack in some woods. And as I recall, it rained the whole time. Because I can remember going -- we'd stand in the mess lines and when you'd open your mess kit up --

Because the cook, you know, would put the food in.

Q. Yeah.

A. By the time you got down the chow line, you had a half a big can full of water just from the rain. And it was muddy.

And then in that position sometimes you could hear artillery, you know, in the distance.

And then when we moved from there, we moved up and our regiment, the 379th, relieved a regiment, I believe it was the 11th Regiment of the 5th Infantry Division, within the bridgehead on the east side of the Moselle.

And then we were in that -- we just went into their foxholes, really. And the nasty thing about that, of course, it had been raining and everything was wet. And we were late in the day getting into where their old

positions were. And we just -- a buddy and I, we picked out one of the holes that they had dug, which two men could lay down in to sleep. And they had them covered over with logs or something and then dirt on top of that.

Q. Sure.

A. And we crawled in. I crawled in and I felt this wet, soggy thing. And it felt kind of like a pillow, you know, that somebody had. And so I just kind of pushed it over in the corner. I had to lay and put the blanket down to sleep.

And the next morning my buddy had gotten up before I did, and this wet pillow that I thought it was turned out to be a German fur jacket. And so he got it dried out and he wore that thing the rest of the winter.

But I later got ahold of kind of a vest. It was probably a rabbit fur or something. I guess it was a German-issued thing.

Q. The foxholes, how deep were they?

A. Well, they probably were about maybe three feet below the surface, because you couldn't even sit up in them. You could crawl in and we'd sleep in them. And then during the night, when we were on guard, we had a guard position in what I think had been maybe a small pillbox or something, because it was just broken concrete.

Q. Yeah.

A. And then at night we had a listening post. I think it was three or maybe four men, along about dusk they would go down. We were at the time on top of a hill. And they would go down the hill to this listening post and then spend the night down there and then take turns, you know, sleeping. But then we would have like a two-man watch position.

Q. Yeah.

A. And generally one of us would sleep an hour and then the other one would, you know, alternate sleeping during the night.

And then during the -- of course, it was a wooded area that we were in. And we had our first casualty in that position. Two of the men. I think it was maybe the day we were getting ready to go back across the Moselle.

We had been relieved, again, by a unit of the 5th Division. And a mortar shell came in. And one of them, Peterson was his name, was hit pretty bad. Actually, I found out many years later that he had lost an eye.

And, also, when I finally located him, he had been -- after he got out of the hospital in the States he went to seminary and became a priest. And when he finished, was ordained, he went to Hawaii. And he's still there. And he stayed in Hawaii the whole time, retired.

Q. Have you ever seen him since?

A. In the early '90s the wife and I went with another couple to Hawaii. We spent two or three days on each, let's see, Maui and the big island, Oahu. And when we were in Honolulu I called him on the phone and he came by the hotel and we went out to dinner. And he was wearing an eye patch, and that's when I found out he had lost, you know, an eye at that time.

Q. And he's in Honolulu?

A. Yeah.

Q. Because my brother is a doctor there. So I'll have to --

A. Well, I declare.

I tried, when I was a chairman of the reunion in Baton Rouge a few years ago, I wrote him to see if he would come and do the Catholic mass on Sunday. But he'd had some heart trouble and he said he was not really excited about flying because he -- of the altitude change, and you know, he might have a relapse or something.

(INTERRUPTION.)

MR. O'SHEA: Let me start this again.

What happens is I've learned that after a time to -- I've always learn to do two recordings now at the same time. Because occasionally, no matter what you -- no matter what you buy, these compact disks, there will be

little flaws in them. And so one time in Metz I did a recording of a Mr. Laysha (phonetic). And I got all the way down to the end, like 30 minutes, and it hit a flaw and it ruined the whole thing. So that's why you see me just starting and stopping. That's why I always have two.

MR. MADDEN: Oh.

MR. O'SHEA: So that's why.

Q. So, now, where were we?

A. Well, I think we'd relieved the 5th Division across the Moselle.

Q. And you were talking about Mr. Peterson in Hawaii.

A. Right.

Q. So he was the -- where did that happen?

A. It was when we were crossing the Moselle. In fact, it was just the day we were fixing to be relieved and come back across the Moselle.

He was wounded and Joe Pantilla, who was a Zuni Indian from New Mexico. And he had been in the company, oh, I think from the days in Fort Tim, Houston, long before I got in. But he was our Native American in Company A. And he was wounded at the same time.

And, of course, neither one of them ever got back to the company. Pantilla died a number of years ago, but Peterson is still living.

Q. When you crossed the bridge, was it just a pontoon bridge or was it a regular bridge?

A. It was a Bailey bridge the engineers had put in. It had a smoke screen.

And I remember after we crossed the bridge we kind of went up this edge of an open field going up the hill and an artillery shell came over and it had a different sound I'd never heard before. And I looked up to see what it was, and everybody else hit the ground.

After that I didn't bother about looking. I just hit the ground, too, whenever I heard one that close.

And then we were in those foxholes that had been dug by the unit we relieved, so we didn't have to do any digging.

Q. Was it just open at one end?

A. Right. It's just kind of -- say this was the foxhole that had an opening in this side, you know, kind of down in the ground where you could get down in the ground and start in on all fours and then move into the prone position to sleep.

Q. Was it cold in it?

A. Well, it was just cold, period. And of course mainly wet at that time. Lots of rain.

The snow -- I think the first snow we saw was probably the 14th of December, when we made our first

attack. And that was just kind of mixed with rain. The rain kind of turned into snow. But then after that, I think we had snow on the ground most of the time.

But there were times where, you know, there wouldn't be any snow.

Q. So was it muddy?

A. Oh, yeah. Yes. Until the ground got frozen. Now, once the ground got frozen, you know, then there wasn't as much mud. But when it was just rain, there was a good bit of mud.

Q. Like a foot deep? How deep would it be?

A. If you were in like a plowed area or where there had been a lot of traffic to kind of get it stirred up, you might have about four to six inches deep, I mean, you know. Two to three inches would probably be about it.

Q. So you cross over. When you say the "Bailey bridge," what's that?

A. It kind of comes in sections. And the engineers -- you know, you might have a section long enough to span, you know, just a ditch, 10 or 12 feet wide. Then they put the sections together to lengthen it. There's a lot of water, you'd probably have some pontoons under it.

Q. Okay.

A. The bridge size kind of determines what kind

of engineer unit builds it. The smaller ones were usually done by the division of engineers battalion. The larger you get, the more you have heavy bridge company or something like that.

I wasn't too familiar with the engineers, but I've read about them since then and know that some of them, they would build the longer bridges, like when they got to the Rhine. They were special bridge construction battalions.

Q. Okay. Because I talked to a gentleman one time, he said he was with the Bailey bridge company. So now that makes sense.

A. Yeah. But basically they were just sections. And generally when you see in pictures, you know, small screen crossings, that's what you'll see.

Like do you recall seeing, was it, *One Jumped Too Far*?

Q. Oh, yeah. *A Bridge Too Far*?

A. *A Bridge Too Far*.

Well, now, the bridges that you saw, I think it was the 101st were building, those were Bailey bridges.

Q. Okay.

A. Well, the 101st, an engineer unit that was accompanying the 101st.

Q. Okay. Okay. Thanks. Because I always --

you know, it's easy to -- I asked today someone about -- they talked about getting cans of things. And I asked them, I said I never knew how someone got the lid on a can. And they explained to me how it worked.

A. But, you know, say the railings, the railings would look something like that. And that's what you would see.

Q. Criss-cross.

A. And then they would have heavy planking that they would lay across, you know, this way for the --

Q. Yeah, sure.

And could a tank -- was that strong enough for -- not strong enough for a tank, was it?

A. Well, the medium tanks I think would do on a Bailey bridge.

Q. Okay.

And you said you went across in smoke?

A. Yes. They were trying to keep, you know, direct observation from -- the Germans were in a position where they could see the bridge. And if they saw activity, they would, you know, throw in some mortar shells or artillery shells.

Q. Okay.

A. So there would be, I think it was, a chemical battalion they called them would have

81-millimeter mortars and -- I think or 4.2 mortars. And they would fire the smoke shells, you know, depending on which way the wind was going.

Q. Okay. And how far were you from Metz at this time, or where were you at this time?

A. Looking at a map, we were actually southwest of -- we'll say south/southwest of Metz. But the distance, I really don't know.

That's one thing about it: We only knew what was going on where we were. You know what I mean? You really never had any big picture anytime.

Well, when you would get the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper, you could read, you know, the 9th Army is doing this, the 1st Army is doing this or such-and-such division did something. But basically your knowledge was limited to right where you were and where you could see yourself.

So I really don't know. I'd have to look at a map now to tell you we were five miles southwest of Metz or not.

Q. Okay. Because I remember -- I remember coming into Metz. I remember we came in through Thionville and then Maizieres-les-Metz during -- when I stayed with the clerics. Every day we were someplace else. And we went to some of the forts, but I was -- but I never knew where I was.

A. Well, I never -- I, really, in thinking back -- and I've thought of this several times. I don't think I -- that we actually were in the city of Metz, I mean, at any time. Our main attack was on the west side of Metz. And the plan, general plan to start with, was the 5th Division would come this way and then it would link up and the 95th would come in this way.

Q. The 95th would come in from the east?

A. From the west.

Q. From the west.

A. And the 5th from the east.

And I think when we first crossed the line, say this is Metz in this area, we were back in this area down in here, off of this map.

Q. Okay. So you -- and where are all the forts?

A. Well, let's see. Probably -- the light is not too good. If I had a larger map -- okay. Here's one. Maybe a little bit rough in scale.

Is this -- what is this word right here?

Q. Can't see.

A. You're all right up there. I mean, this is north up on the map.

Q. Okay. There is Nancy, Moselle. Let's see. There's the river.

Vaux is here?

A. That's the little town of Vaux.

Jussy.

V-a-u-x.

Q. Yeah.

A. Jussy, J-u-s-s-y, is right in this area.

Q. Okay.

A. Is this Sainte-Ruffine up here?

Q. I think it is Sainte-Ruffine. Yes.

A. Well, now, we made our first attack, this right here is what they call the Matravene (phonetic), Gravelotte, the town of Gravelotte.

Q. Yeah, here's Gravelotte.

A. All right. We had been in big whack then, in this area, after the 5th Division relieved us. And we came back on the west side of the Moselle. We moved into a wooded area that had been occupied by the units of the 10th Army Division. And we had occupied their holes.

Q. Okay.

A. And then the morning that we made an attack, sometime maybe midnight we started -- marched walking along the side of this hill up here. And I remember it being wet to where when you had grass on the side of the hill, it was real slick and it was hard keeping your feet.

And we went north basically through a wooded

section. And then when we finally formed up to make an attack, we kind of went across a wide open field, which is probably this field right in here. Because we went down the ravine. And it was very steep on both sides of the ravine, which I found out many years later is called a Mance ravine. M-a-n-c-e I guess it is.

Q. Mance ravine, you mean that's the type of ravine or that special ravine?

A. It's just the name of it. Just like the Moselle River, it's a Mance ravine, Mance creek or stream or whatever was at the bottom of it.

And then when we crossed and came up the east bank, we came up and there were two forts, Jussy Nord and Jussy Sud.

Q. North and south?

A. North and south.

And B Company was to take Jussy Nord and the fort north of it. They weren't big forts. They were smaller ones.

But the Jussy forts were just excavations that the concrete bunkers were on the ground. You had a door that went into them and then where they might, you know, slope sleep and then big wide trenches that they would come out and then be in a circle or an oblong circular shape to defend.

And then the Jussy Sud was our objective. And the fort south of it was Fort Bois la Dame, B-o-i-s l-a D-a-m-e.

Q. Okay.

A. And it was about four or five floors tall. And from ground level you could only see maybe the top floor, you know, just a big concrete block building.

And in '99, when the wife and I went with a group for the 55th anniversary of the little __ in Metz, several of us got out and we found it, that area, and got to the Bois la Dame.

And of course earlier that morning, as we went across the ravine -- well, actually, as we crossed that first field, before we got to the ravine, we had our first casualties. And in the ravine we had other casualties. And at Fort Bois la Dame, most of one squad was all killed at the same time.

Q. Holy cow. Did you cross in the field? Did they open up on you?

A. Well, when we made the attack on Jussy Sud, B Company had made a mistake and they had occupied Jussy Sud and Jussy Nord thinking it was their two forts. And so as our platoon was attacking across the field, they were firing, of course, and they heard some hollering. And that's when we found out that B Company was already in

the fort that A Company was attacking.

So then the company commander just turned to us and went south, oh, several hundred yards to Bois la Dame. And the Germans were in there. And, of course, we didn't have anything heavier than a bazooka. And there was no way of getting into that fort.

There was a road that, as we approached it, a little shallow Volkswagen German military semi-tired(?) Jeep, we saw it go down the road into the fort. And it actually drove into the fort, because we couldn't see it.

Q. Oh.

A. And it was just concrete with, you know, openings for like windows except narrower.

Q. Was it underground, most of it?

A. It was like they dug it out of a big hole, a gravel pit or something, and built the fort up in there. Like I say, it was about four floors. And when you were walking along on the surface, you may see the top half of the top floor.

Q. Oh. So was it a big bunker --

A. A big block.

Q. With gun slits?

A. Yeah.

And so when we got up, one platoon went across the road and so they were kind of facing the fort this

way. And say this was the fort. There was a road that went down into it that came out of some woods back in this direction.

And one night, while one of our platoons was out in this area out here and one went across the road and was in this area over here, and this platoon -- I was with the platoon leader right at the edge of the road. And we could, you know, look at the fort. And the company commander had this platoon leader to send the squad down this road to go into the fort.

And as they were going down the road, I think it was some kind of rocket grenade or something, it came from the fort and it killed -- let's see. There was Doggets and Eckert, Weston, Katz (phonetic). It killed about four or five outright.

And then the ones at the back of the squad column, they were able to get back, you know, into the woods there.

And then so the captain, you know, he knew we couldn't do anything with just rifles. So he said we're going to withdraw, and so this platoon came back across the road. And they were firing machine guns from the fort down the road.

Q. Down the road.

A. So one fellow got hit, but they were able to

get him out, I mean, and bring him back to Jussy Sud, which was 200 or 300 yards away. And that's when we were --

And then when we got back in there, in the meantime the Germans had come back into the ravine. So that's when we were, you know, cut off.

Q. You were cut off. But you were in Jussy Sud and Jussy Nord. Are you in the concrete forts themselves?

A. Well, they left Company A in Jussy Sud. And the Company B men that had been in there, they moved up to Jussy Nord.

Q. Okay.

A. So B Company was in Jussy Nord, and A Company was in Jussy Sud.

Q. Now, after -- this is the first day of real battle that you saw?

A. That's right, November the 14th.

Q. November the 14th. So you've just seen all this stuff, and you're the runner?

A. Right.

Q. So were you -- would you run from place to place to bring messages?

A. That's right. I would go from the platoon leader, I would be with him all the time. It's just kind of like a bodyguard.

Q. Yeah.

A. And then I carried a little 536 radio. I think the technical name was SCR 536. We called them handy talkies. They were about this size square and maybe this long and had a little antenna. You pressed a button and held it like a telephone.

Q. How heavy were they?

A. Oh, they probably weighed a couple, three pounds.

Q. A couple, three pounds. And you just held it like a telephone?

A. Right. It had a strap. You could kind of carry it over your shoulder if you wanted.

Q. How long did they -- how far did they transmit?

A. I think the maximum range for that they classified as three miles. Sometimes, you know, you might get lucky in an open area and it might be more than that. But generally it was less.

Q. Okay.

A. And I remember as we went down the west side of the ravine and got to the bottom, at first I wasn't able to use it. And then I could contact the captain, who was kind of leading our company, and the executive officer was bringing up the company headquarters and the reserve

unit behind. And of course, they were trying to communicate with radio.

Well, it turned out that they couldn't -- I could hear each of them talking, but they couldn't hear each other. So I wound up listening to the captain and then relaying the message to the executive officer and then the return.

Q. Okay.

A. And I did that for a while.

And then my radio quit working. And mind you, I wasn't -- I probably wasn't nowhere 100 feet from where the captain was. And I don't know where the executive officer was, you know, I mean whether he was 100 feet away from me or whether he was 1,000 feet away from me.

But the radios were all right, but they weren't real reliable and the batteries were used up in a hurry.

But if the radio wasn't working, my job was if the lieutenant wanted to get a word to the captain, I'd take it. And then if he had a reply, I'd, you know, verbally carry it back.

Q. But if you didn't know where they were, how did you know where to go?

A. Well, generally you knew where -- of course, with the platoon, I was with the platoon leader, so I knew where we were there. And I generally had an idea about,

you know, where or how or what direction to go to find the captain.

Q. But you were running up to them and they're armed. And are they always expecting you, or did you have something you had to yell at the end?

A. Well, no, say if the radio is not working, I mean, you know, they're not getting the message if somebody is sending them a message until the messenger gets there with the message. They're really not expecting you.

Now, the captain might say, when I get up there he'll say, "Well, have Lieutenant Wilder do this," or so, you know, "and then report back."

Well, then I would go back and I'd tell Lieutenant Wilder what the captain said. And then when he gets that going, then I'm supposed to go back and tell the captain, you know, "They're moving," if his plan is dependent on the movement of the platoon.

Q. When you came up to them, did you yell a password or did they just sort of --

A. Oh, no.

Q. -- know?

A. Well, now, at night you would. But in the daytime, you know, you could -- you could identify.

Q. Okay. That must -- so right now you go to

Jussy Sud?

A. Right. Now, we spent -- that was November the 14th. And it was November the 18th when we attacked out of the fort. So we were there four days.

And during that time -- of course, we'd been issued -- each man had been issued three K-rations, which was meals for one day; you know, breakfast, lunch, and supper.

Q. So I missed that last part. So you were there for four days?

A. Right.

Q. And how did you know you were surrounded? You just got fire from all or what?

A. Nobody could get out. I mean, the next day, C Company from our battalion and L Company from the 3rd Battalion of the regiment were going to break through and relieve us or, you know, break -- clear the Germans that were in the ravine so we wouldn't be cut off.

And C Company managed to get through with some heavy casualties. They got into Jussy Sud -- or Jussy Nord I think is actually where they wound up, the rest of them, the ones that got through.

But L Company never did get through the ravine. They had enough opposition that they had to withdraw. And that's -- we knew we were surrounded then.

And then later on, maybe, I don't know, it might have been the second day, the artillery liaison planes dropped some D-bars, emergency rations or chocolate bars. And most of them fell where we couldn't get to them. And they divided those up. And it turned out instead of getting a whole bar --

Like a chocolate bar would have like maybe six sections to it, something like that.

Q. Yeah.

A. I think we got -- everybody got one section, you know, which was a considerable reduction from the whole thing.

Q. Oh, sure.

A. And then by the third day they had dropped some K-rations in. So we had those.

Q. So how many of you were there do you think?

A. Well, the normal strength for the company at that time was probably around 180. Of course then you've got to subtract, oh, for your cooks, your supply people and things like this.

But breaking it down to a platoon, the normal platoon had about 40 people in it; three squads of 12, a platoon leader, a lieutenant, a platoon sergeant, a tech sergeant, a platoon guy, the staff sergeant, and then the runner. And then each platoon has a medic assigned to it

from the medical platoon.

So you had -- if you were all full strength, you had 36. Of course, very seldom you were full strength.

So say a platoon might have 30 to 35 people in it on average. And then that day, by the end of the day, with the casualties we had, we were probably down to maybe, oh, 20 or 25. And of course all of these weren't killed, but there were, you know, several wounded too.

Q. So you were in this big concrete fort building?

A. Right.

And then if you were on guard, then say the box where you would go in -- and they were concrete. And then the little trench around the outside, there would be people on guard out there. And then you'd alternate, you know, sleeping and being on guard duty.

Q. So it was -- now, that night, November, is it 14th?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember that night? Was it cold? Was the moon out?

A. Oh, yes. Well, it did snow during that day.

Q. Okay.

A. And that's -- from then on, you know, it was cold.

Q. Was the moon out or did you --

A. That, I don't remember. I don't remember the moon.

Now, when we finally -- on November the 18th, we attacked out of the fort, continued going in the direction, in an easterly direction. And it was, of course, where the Jussy Sud and Nord were, there were no woods. It was all clear fields around there. And it had barbed wire that had been scattered around the fort, too, you had to go into and out of.

But the artillery fired a preparation for us. And then as we started, say they were firing like this --

Q. Yeah?

A. -- and we started out of the fort, and after we got out so far, then they started dropping -- besides firing on us, they started dropping fire on either side of us.

And then when we got further out, then they started dropping fire in back of us. So we were in a box of artillery fire.

Q. Holy cow.

A. Which it's the ultimate, as far as I'm concerned, with artillery support.

Q. Yeah.

A. They're firing on all four sides of you as

you're moving.

Of course, we didn't run into any opposition, so, you know, it wasn't too long before they just ceased fire. And then we would just move on.

And we didn't see any Germans that day at all and wound up that evening in Sainte-Ruffine. Yeah, one of the other platoons may have captured, you know, one or two men, but I don't really remember seeing any Germans.

Q. So Sainte-Ruffine, that's where the clerics have their house. The clerics, there is an old church in Sainte-Ruffine right near this sort of round castle, on one of the side street, one of the narrow side streets. If you heard any church bells while you were in Sainte-Ruffine, it probably came from their backyard, because they had this one church.

In fact, when I gave your recording, when I stayed with them, the church bells were so clear I recorded them. So I gave you some recordings of --

A. Well, I don't remember seeing any civilians, you know, when we went in.

Q. No.

A. I think we spent -- we might have spent a couple of nights in Sainte-Ruffine, but then we were in buildings, houses, or in office buildings or what-have-you.

And I remember that that's where I found the German flag that I still have. It was a large flag, probably would cover a double bed, you know, that size. And I've found out since then it was probably not a military flag but some kind of governmental flag. Like maybe the German headquarters in that town, that might have been their flag.

Q. Yes.

A. Because they had a swastika. And then up like towards where the stars would be on the American flag, there was a symbol up in there, you know. But it's a pretty heavy flag, which I still have.

Q. My father -- my father had a flag. My brother still has it. And it was pretty heavy too.

A. Yeah.

Q. So -- and just -- with things like the flags, did you just carry them around or did you --

A. Well, when I was able to I carried it with me, until I was able to get back to my duffel bag. And then I, you know, put it in.

Periodically you would be in a position where you might get to your duffel bag, you know. But, you know, that might be two or three weeks. But it wasn't all that big that I couldn't manage it.

I mean, you could do anything you want to do.

Q. Sure you could.

So you're in Sainte-Ruffine, and you're there for a few days. What, are you waiting for orders? What are you doing?

A. Right. We were just -- when we came out of the forts, I guess we might have been in a battalion reserve or maybe a regimental reserve. We just kind of stayed there a day or two.

And from that we moved up to relieve a unit that was containing Fort Plappeville, which was kind of north of Sainte-Ruffine several miles. I think we -- in fact, we trucked. We went by truck part most of the way and then we got out and walked.

And we relieved a unit there. And we wound up spending -- I think Thanksgiving Day we had our Thanksgiving meal brought up to us up there.

Q. Do you remember the Thanksgiving meal?

A. Well, I remember getting turkey. They'd bring it up -- I forget what the cooks call those cans, kind of insulated containers. Thermite cans or something like that they called them. And theoretically it would keep the heat in them, you know. And it would, until they opened it and then it cooled off.

But we had turkey and dressing. And, of course, it was real good because a lot of us were still hungry

from a few days before.

Q. Sure. So you're outside --

This one question I had. A battalion and a regiment, how does that work? Is a battalion artillery? I mean, I get confused about --

A. All right. During the time of World War II they had gone to what they call a triangular division. And an infantry division, their basic unit was a regiment. And there was three regiments, infantry regiments.

Then within each regiment there were three battalions of the infantry.

Q. Okay.

A. And each battalion of the infantry, each battalion had four companies in it; three rifle companies and one heavy weapons company. The rifle companies, of course, were grenades, M-1s, they had six-millimeter mortars, and .30-caliber light machine guns.

Then heavy weapons company had 81-millimeter mortars and 30-caliber heavy machine guns.

Q. Okay.

A. So the D Company, the H Company, and the M Company were heavy weapons companies within a regiment. Three heavy weapon companies. Then you had nine rifle companies; ABC, DEF, IJ -- not IJ -- IKL. For some reason, they had a reason they skipped the J. There was

no Company J. I guess they felt it might look more like an I, but I'm not sure.

But -- so that was your three infantry regiments were basically your divisions. But they had a division artillery section that was a division artillery headquarters. And then they had three battalions of 105 howitzers.

Q. Okay.

A. And then they had one battalion, the 155-millimeter howitzers, which was a larger gun.

And so theoretically one of those artillery battalions would support one regiment. But the division artillery headquarters, they might say, "All right, we've only got two regiments on line, so, you know, two battalions will support or three battalions will support these two infantry regiments."

Q. Okay.

A. And then the 155s, which could fire further, larger shells, then they would be there.

Q. My father was 379th Company H.

A. H, all right. He was a heavy weapons company. So he would have been 81-millimeter mortars or 30-caliber heavy machine guns.

Q. Now, what relation would that be, Company H, to you, Company A? Would you guys have been in the same

battalion?

A. No. H would have been in the 2nd Battalion. Companies E, F, G, and H were the 2nd Battalion. A, B, C, D, 1st Battalion.

Q. Okay.

A. And then the 3rd Battalion was I, K, L, M.

Q. So you had three rifle and one heavy weapons in each battalion?

A. Right, in each battalion.

Q. And then beyond that, the regiment would also have artillery battalions supporting?

A. That's correct.

Q. You've just cleared up something.

A. And then you would also have what they call core artillery. There would be battalions, I would say separate battalions of artillery. And they may be -- but they generally were 155 or bigger. 155 howitzers or 155 Long Tom we called them, with the long barrels. Eight-inch howitzers. 240-millimeter howitzers, which is the big one.

And then had it been in artillery later, in '50, '51, '52, I found out that the eight-inch howitzer is probably the most accurate artillery weapon in the U.S. Army at that time.

Q. And how far could that shoot?

A. Ah, you got me there. But it could -- several miles.

Q. Several miles. It was accurate over several miles?

A. Yeah. And they always told me that if an observer didn't hit his target within three rounds he wasn't any good. They'd give him one over and one under, and the third one should be within a dime's length of the target.

But they were a very accurate weapon, eight-inch howitzer. They came self-propelled, mounted on the tank chassis or the tank tow, which was towed by like a Caterpillar.

Q. The self-propelled method?

A. Self-propelled would be on a tank chassis and the gun, you know, moved.

I mean, it was mounted on the tank chassis. So it had the treads, you know.

Q. Oh, okay, sure. So you'd ride it?

A. That's right.

Q. Okay.

A. And then if it was towed, then you'd have to -- the tractor would tow it into position and then the crew would unhook it and then split the trails and set it up.

Q. Okay. So now we're -- let's see. We're back to --

A. Okay, then you've got your infantry regiments. You've got your artillery battalions. And in the division we'd have a medical battalion. Generally it was Companies A, B, C, and D. And then A Company went to one regiment, B Company would service one, and then D might be -- I'm not sure. D might have been the ones that carried, that had the ambulances and carried you.

But our medics I know for the 379th came from Company -- the medics that were with the units, you know, the platoon -- came from Company C of the 320th Medical Battalion.

You had a medical battalion. You had an engineer battalion. And I'm not sure whether the signal -- it was a signal battalion or signal company that was a regiment. And then you had a company of MPs. And then you had a core master company. And I think that was about it.

Then the anti-aircraft unit that would be attached. It had never did train with the division or a part of the division, but it would be attached.

And I think the same -- any aircraft battalion was attached to the 95th from the time we got on line until the war was over. They just moved with us.

Q. You said it would be an attacked?

A. Attached.

Q. An attached division?

A. Attached division. Or unit, attached unit. Because you would have -- periodically you'd have one or maybe two tank battalions or tank destroyer battalions that might be attached to a division. And then within that tank battalion or TD battalion the companies would be assigned maybe to a regiment. And then maybe two tanks to one company for one time.

Q. Okay.

A. Or two TDs or something like that. Or maybe one TD would, you know, work with a company.

Q. And they'd have their own commander?

A. Right. He would coordinate and do what he was supposed to do to support what the regimental commander wanted to do or the battalion commander wanted the company to do, you know.

Q. Now, by the time you get to Sainte-Ruffine did you still have the same immediate commanding officers that you had before, the same lieutenants or whatever, or --

A. No. The lieutenant that we went into combat with was wounded the second day we were cut off at Jussy Sud.

Q. Okay.

A. And when he was wounded, then the platoon sergeant took command of the platoon.

And then when we got into Sainte-Ruffine, they sent the 2nd Platoon leader to the 3rd Platoon as a platoon leader.

And then when we went up to Plappeville, he was killed there. So he was only with us -- well, he'd been with the company since Indiantown Gap. But with the 3rd Platoon, he was just with us three or four days.

And then the platoon command fell back to the platoon guide. And then later on we got a replacement. And then -- let's see. Lieutenant Montanart (phonetic), he was with us until I went to the hospital.

But in the meantime, in Fraulautern, after we'd crossed the Saar River, the platoon sergeant, who had been platoon sergeant from the States, he was killed. So the platoon guide was promoted to platoon sergeant.

Q. So whoever is in charge keeps changing on you all the time?

A. That's right. I had -- I lost two lieutenants and one platoon sergeant while I was runner.

Q. Wow.

A. I'm sorry about that.

In fact, I was talking to the platoon sergeant when he was killed. We were face to face, just like if we

were standing up, when he was killed. I don't remember what we were saying.

Q. That was -- I remember your saying or writing something about a piece of shrapnel coming in.

A. Yes, yes. That was probably -- that was on December the 6th, after we were in -- like I say, after we crossed the Saar River, part of our platoon, maybe one or two squads, and then a machine gun squad, it was attached to us from our machine gun section. They had set up a machine gun on a kitchen table that was in a window, or just inside a window. And that was in a one room, in a window and it had a table with a machine gun on it.

And then it was a room adjoining. Kind of four rooms, maybe a one-story house, but it was about six feet off the ground. And I'm sure it had a basement, although I never went in no basement.

But the platoon sergeant and I were facing one another talking when a German tank fired an 88. And it went right through the end of the end of this room. And I think one man was killed outright there. And two men later died of wounds that were in this room.

And then that's when Sergeant Knutsen, when he was killed. He just kind of -- the shell went off. Of course everybody dropped to the floor, but he just kind of eased down like, you know, a person that's fainting, kind

of slumps, you know. And he was killed instantly.

Q. I'm sorry.

A. I think it was Lieutenant Lyle, Lieutenant Baxter, and Sergeant Knutsen, who had all come and gone overseas with the company.

Q. And had you know them from the time of Indiantown?

A. From the time I was in the company, right.

Q. So that's -- that's after you -- after you're across the Saar?

A. Right.

Q. From Plappeville, where did you go from Plappeville?

A. When we were -- a unit relieved us at Plappeville and then we loaded on trucks. And that's when I think we maybe had gone around the south side of -- during the night, you know, were in the south side of the city of Metz and wound up east of Metz.

Q. Okay.

A. And at that time the 379th was in division reserve. So we would just kind of follow along as the 377th and 378th, you know, went towards Germany.

And some days you may walk all day or part of the day, you know. And then sometimes they might leapfrog with trucks. They'd take part of you on a truck and go

up, you know, several miles and drop them off and then come back and get the others that had been walking, you know, and just kind of leapfrog them like that, you know, depending how far you were going. And we made several moves like that.

I'd say roughly that was from the 28th or 29th of November until the night of the 2nd of December. And that's when we -- Companies A and B moved up into some German barracks on the west side of the Saar River, in the town of Saarland, which is now Saarlouis.

Q. Yeah.

A. And then the next morning early, before daylight, then we crossed in little boats, like you remember seeing in that *A Bridge Too Far*, when they were crossing the Boss (phonetic) River, I believe that was.

Q. How many people were in a boat?

A. Eight or 10. Maybe four or five on either side paddling and then one engineer to bring it back, of course.

Q. Now, are you hearing shells all the time? Or what are you hearing during this time?

A. Hearing what now?

Q. Shells. Are you hearing artillery?

A. Well, that morning, it was kind of a surprise to the Germans, which was great for us. We

didn't get any shelling. The bridge was secured before they could blow it up.

But later in that day, then the shelling started. And I had read somewhere where that up -- it was probably the heaviest German shelling, at least for the 95th Division, up until that time. The story implied it was one of the heaviest concentrations, because they were trying to blow the bridge.

I think later on the engineers found maybe 400 or 500-pound aerial bombs that had been put into holes in the bridge, like a sewer drain or something like that. And they were wired for explosion. The force of it -- our men got up in time to cut the wires and just surprise the Germans.

So the bridge was up to cross the Saar. But later on the bridge, the engineers built an additional back-up bridge, you know, downstream, maybe 100 to 200 yards.

Q. Now, was that bridge still there when you visited in '99?

A. The bridge was there, but it had been rebuilt and widened. So unless you were, you know, down on the banks and could see the old bullet holes or chipped bark from artillery bursts, you know, you really wouldn't know it looking at the top of it.

But the bridge itself is still there, as far as I know, today.

Q. Okay.

A. Now, the Saar River at that time made a big loop. And Saarlautern was in this area and then across the river there. And then in this area was a built-up community called Fraulautern. And at that time Saarlouis Roden was in this area.

Q. Just near Fraulautern?

A. Fraulautern was just a suburb, you know. It was just a built-up residential area more than anything else.

But since World War II, they cut this neck off of the river. So the river right now flows like this. And this is kind of like an old ___ lake. And the bridge where we crossed, say, is down. But we didn't cross the bridge. We had crossed -- paddled across up here and come into the bridge from the north.

Q. Okay.

A. Got something to eat.

Q. So where the bridge is right now, that's just --

A. It's kind of across a lake.

Q. Yeah. I remember crossing the bridge and I remember --

A. Now, there's an island somewhere up in here that I didn't realize that island was there until '99. Because once we were across the bridge, whenever we were in this area and say we were going back in division reserve, we would come back across the bridge and then, you know, in a few blocks, then we'd get on trucks and truck back to annex to the north. This was the rebuilt, rebuilt one.

Q. Just a second. Okay. I'm going to --

A. Are getting too many --

Q. No, no. What I'm going to do is I'm going to take a second to -- one CD is full, so what I have to do is just what they call finalize it. That means that when I'm done --

A. Okay, while you're on this, see, I was talking about the pillboxes?

Q. Yeah.

A. See these little things?

Q. Yeah, the little --

A. Those were pillboxes.

Q. Holy cow.

A. We crossed the river down here. This was a bridge. This was a baby buggy factory and a road going up. And there was one road went up here. This is a railroad station. And they rebuilt the railroad station.

They said in 1999 they had the original plans.

Q. Yeah.

A. So when they rebuilt it, they rebuilt it just like it had been before World War II.

Q. And where's the bridge?

A. The bridge was right here.

Q. Because I remember crossing a bridge --

A. See this bough in the river like that?

Q. Yeah.

A. That's the way it was then.

Well, later on they cut from here over to here. So the river actually comes like this right now. And then this is where it's like an ___ lake.

You understand what an ___ lake is?

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. Like the Mississippi is wide like this. The flood comes along and cuts the channel across straight and then it leaves this part out here as a lake.

Q. What -- I remember crossing a bridge and there was -- when I was there in 2004.

A. Well, there was a bridge -- the original bridge, we talked the bridge -- wee bridge is here.

Q. Yes.

A. Then there's another bridge, say, up in here, where they cut the new river across.

Q. Okay.

A. So there's a bridge up there. And this road continues on straight up to the train station.

Q. Is the train station in sort of a town square?

A. Yeah, the train to ___.

Q. Okay. Here comes Mrs. Madden, being very patient.

A. (Discussion relating to lunch.)

Q. You want to go up to the room to eat and we'll talk later?

A. Okay, I'm going to do that, since she already cooked it.

Q. Exactly. Very patient. Let me unhook you.

A. Yeah, I don't want to walk off with any equipment.

Q. You wouldn't get too far.

Well, this is great. So I know where we are.

A. Want to keep my map, keep adding to it?

Q. I'd love your map. Because my father, his story was with Company H. He was sent by his -- he was wounded outside of Metz. And after he got back, they said, "You can go home."

He said, "No, I want to go back with my friends."

So they sent him and they just -- his sergeant

said, "They're fighting in Saarlautern. Come up to -- come up to the fork in the road and go," I guess go to the left. Or go to a fork in the road.

And he on the way there, he saw a friend of his, his name was Bolo Davis. And Bolo Davis had been shot and he was frozen. And that must have rattled him, and so he got to the fork in the road and went the wrong way and he went to Fraulautern, which was still in German territory, but was so cold.

A. Well, see, he could have been -- this is the way it was in, say, '44. And this is the way -- I took a picture of the map, you know, in '99.

Q. Okay.

A. And this goes -- this shows -- see where they cut? See, the river used to come down like this right here. And they cut across here.

Q. Yes.

A. So you've got the original bridge right here across this lake. Then you've got the bridge across the du Saar River.

Q. Yes.

A. And this goes right up to the railroad station.

Q. I remember walking across this bridge and then coming across this bridge too.

A. Now, the houses where our people were killed were in this area. And, see, that's all row houses now. This is where we went in '99 trying to find the house.

Q. Is this Fraulautern down here?

A. Yeah.

And then my house, my Christmas house was right here. And the mill was right in there. See, this stream used to come down and be the water for the mill.

Q. Your lunch is getting cold. But this is --

So for my father, the fork in the road that he might have gone --

A. He could have been at this fork right here. Because, see, this road went straight.

I think what happened, there was a road -- there may not have been a road across this open field right here at that time, but there was a road that went up here to the railroad station. And this, I think, was like maybe a streetcar line or something that connected, you know, Fraulautern with Fraulautern Roden. And like I say, this little area right in here was Fraulautern.

Q. So if he could have come up here and gotten just around here and gotten confused and cut over to Fraulautern --

A. That's right.

Q. If he had gone straight he would have been

in Saarlautern?

A. If he would have taken this fork right here he would have gone to the railroad station. If he had taken this road he would have gone up in an area which I never was.

This blue line is kind of where we went in '44.

Q. Okay. So if he went --

(**END OF CD 1**.)

(**START OF CD 2**.)

MR. O'SHEA: Okay. So...

MR. MADDEN: Now, you can read -- maybe you can read this writing here that he -- on all his pictures he wrote something. Of course, it's just a photograph in color, because he did it in color. And then this is just a black-and-white enlargement.

Q. Of course. This is Fort Bois de la Dame?

A. Right.

Q. The fort A Company was to take, impossible to do. It's four-story, three-story, just like a huge concrete block.

A. Yeah.

Q. With windows and slits in it. All they had were bazookas. And it's in a sort of excavated area with perpendicular -- looks like perpendicular walls to the ditch, with trees over them, around them. All you can see

over the trees is probably the top floor of the huge -- it's one, two, three, four, five, six. That's six windows.

A. Well, this is just -- this here is as he remembered it.

Q. You say it was about -- was it as wide as this room do you think, all of the room?

A. It was at least wide this way.

Q. At least 100 -- over 100 feet wide. Holy cow.

A. Actually, where you're seeing these trees around here?

Q. Yeah.

A. There was a road that was cut that went, you know, down. And that's where this German Volkswagen went down and went in somewhere on the end of the fort.

I don't have it with me, but I've got a picture of this thing I made in '99. Because I was in the woods right up here alongside that road.

Q. Is the building still there looking like that in '99?

A. Yeah. Yeah. Of course, you know, it's grown up and has graffiti all over it.

Q. Ah.

A. And I think the French, they use that area

maybe for training or something.

Q. Okay. That would be a good area to use, it seems at least.

So now we're looking at the --

A. But this is where we were talking, I think. You were trying to figure out -- I'll see about sending you a copy of this map.

Q. That would be great.

A. And if you can remember that the bridge -- I won't have to write on it.

Q. Okay.

A. So you can do what you want to do.

Q. Sure.

A. But this is a bridge. This map is as it was in '44.

Q. Okay.

A. And this was the bridge right here. And in technicolor.

These were German barracks for troops. And we went into those barracks late on December the 2nd. And the engineers during the night brought up the little boats we were going to cross in. Then we picked them up early, you know, hours before daylight and crossed the river about in here and came around to the north or northwest corner, into the bridge.

And then it might have been L Company came, they were on this side of the river. And they came up to secure the other end of the bridge. And then later on, then we went up in this area up in here.

Q. Now, was the bridge already secure when you came up to it?

A. No, no. That was probably B Company that may have got to the bridge first.

Q. Okay.

A. And they -- actually the battalion commander was leading that group that got up and killed the guards or captured the guards that were supposed to blow the bridge, but they just caught them off guard.

Q. One of the people here was on the bridge when -- as they took it, after they took it. And there was a German in a Jeep who started to make a phone call. He didn't freeze. He started making a phone call. And they took him out.

And then there was a man from the 95th, a man from this company, that had just found out that his brother had been killed someplace. And he bayonetted the German and gutted him. And the man here said he can still hear him, still hear the sounds sometimes.

But he was there when they took the bridge, Mr. Jefferson. You can see, he's there with his wife.

He's Native American. He was there talking to Joe.

A. All right. He was in B Company.

Q. He was in B Company.

A. I think B.

Q. I think so.

A. You see B, I think, I think B and C Company were the two companies that crossed first. And then A Company was a reserve and followed behind them.

Q. Okay. Okay.

A. As I remember, you just verified what I remembered; that B Company was the one that came up and secured this -- the end of the bridge that we were on the side of.

Q. Okay. So when you came along the side of the bridge, the bridge wasn't secured yet?

A. I never really did see the bridge until maybe a week later. Because we had come around this way and that -- let's see.

This row of buildings right here on the right --

Q. Right above the bridge.

A. -- would be in that picture where the tank was.

The tank would come down this road here.

Q. Yeah.

A. And it stayed, going towards the bridge,

stayed in front of these buildings. TD was parked at the side of this building, with the barrel facing the street that the tank was coming down.

Q. Sure. So you stayed there. Son of a gun.

And then -- so you were a block or two blocks away from the bridge, but you didn't even see a fort?

A. Until we crossed it. When we, you know -- I guess we were up in this area up in here around the 16th of December. And so it was almost two weeks later when we went across the bridge. And that's the first time I'd seen it.

Q. Okay. So you went through. You sort of made a little trip around here.

A. See, this was Fraulautern. And we had gone into Fraulautern and then we had gone back and forth on these railroad tracks right here several times.

Q. Oh, I gotcha.

A. And then we crossed and were up in this area up here. And then we went back. And then when we came back, I think we may have been around the bridge area, these guards. And then in December we were up in this area right in here.

Q. Okay. Saarlautern Roden?

A. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Thanks for showing me. That sort of

makes --

A. Which is just Roden now. They dropped the -- actually, they changed the Saarlautern to Saarlouis.

Q. Saarlouis.

A. And sometimes they'll say Saarlouis Roden, meaning this area up in here.

Q. Yes.

A. That was the end of January.

Q. End of January.

So Christmas, do you remember the Christmas there in that house?

A. Yeah. Yeah.

Q. Was there -- somebody said one time that the Germans sometimes would try -- that Christmas -- the action would sort of calm down then on Christmas. Was that true?

A. Well, yeah, I think so. We didn't -- one of the -- the house we were in and the house next door, somebody had found a phonograph, you know, crank phonograph. And we found a record of *Silent Night*. Of course, it was in German.

And I remember, I think it was the company commander, somebody in his headquarters had found it. And so he played it over the sound part of the phone, where we could hear it, like say Christmas Eve.

But I think we had one or two squads in the house, the picture I showed you. And we were probably in that house maybe a week, six or eight days, something like that.

But it was -- I don't remember whether it was like the 22nd or 23rd of December, and then we stayed in that same house. Because at that time, see, the bullets was going on real good. And all we were doing was just in kind of in a holding.

Q. Okay.

A. And you might, you know, clear a block or a half a block of houses during the day and then you might pull back that night and let the Germans come back in. Or you might stay, you know, and then clear another block the next day or half a block or one house. But it was just kind of a static operation. We weren't fighting all the time.

Q. Okay. Okay. And you're just waiting for your next command of where to go next?

A. Right.

Q. Where did you go next?

A. Well, the division was relieved by the 26th Division, who had been on the left flank, I think, of the 3rd Army at that time. And then we pulled back and loaded on trucks and went into these German barracks and

then went up through Luxembourg city and Arlon, Bastogne, through Houffalize, and I think we stopped at -- I believe our company was in a little community we called Ceffalu, C-e-f-f-a-l-u, something like that, in the Belgian mountains, north of Houffalize.

Q. Okay. Now --

A. So this was after they had already closed off the German pocket and, you know, were getting ready to push on Nice.

Q. Okay. Just at the end of the Bulge?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Okay.

A. And then I went to the hospital the next day. That's when I had -- with the frozen feet. But the division then moved on up farther into Belgium. And our company was in the vicinity of Belgium, Fort ___, which was ___ point the Germans parachuted onto in 1940, when they invaded Belgium and on into France. And we were in that area, or the company was in that area.

And then the division itself was attached to the British 2nd Army for about two weeks and took a position in line in Holland, when the British were shuffling their divisions back and forth.

And then after that two weeks, then they moved back into Belgium. And then in March, I guess, is when

they crossed back into Germany.

Q. And Krafelden --

A. Yeah, that was near March.

Q. But your feet got frozen?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you know that it was happening?

A. Well, not really. I think on that trip, the platoon leader had a Jeep to ride in. And I was just going to ride in the truck with the rest of the platoon. But he wanted me in the Jeep with him, so I was sitting in the back. And it just was kind of breezy back there, you know.

Q. Holy cow.

A. They didn't run with the tops up.

And I think that's probably when it developed, because then we stopped and that night I could hardly sleep. You know, my feet were just hurting. So I just run over to sick call the next day, and they said it was frozen feet.

Q. Holy cow.

A. But as opposed to trench foot. Trench foot was when you had your feet wet and frozen. Or they were frozen and got wet.

Q. Yeah.

A. You could get -- we had guys that I found

out later had got trench foot and maybe lost several toes or, you know.

And then I saw some -- when I was in the hospital with frozen feet, when they'd let us walk around, there was a ward there with some German wounded POWs. And most of them had trench foot. And their feet were just all black and actually literally rotting away.

Q. Holy cow.

A. And Patton, of course, he didn't -- if you got trench foot, that was your fault. If you had frozen feet, that wasn't necessarily your fault. But Patton had kind of a standing order that fresh socks came up every day with the rations.

Q. Did they?

A. So you were able to get fresh socks when you got your rations.

Say you missed a day of rations, I always had at least three pair of socks. I'd be wearing one pair. I'd have two dry pair in my pockets. And then when I'd swap, if they were damp, you know, I would stick them inside my shirt so that they would dry out from my body heat and put on the dry ones. And then I would rotate socks that way.

And that helped, you know. Keeping dry socks, that helped.

Q. That's smart. Did everybody do that or did

you make it up yourself?

A. At that time we just had the combat boots with the leather tops laced, you know, leather tops, you know. And I'm not sure, I think it was the latter part of January, we finally got shoe packs, which was a boot that had -- it was leather, but it ran -- say this part was rubber all the way around, so that, you know, theoretically you had to get in water above to get water into you.

Q. Sure.

A. Then again, I had -- I had my mother send me a pair of wool boot socks. And I would wear those over my GI socks.

So I was trying to keep my feet warm, but they still froze.

Q. So how long were you in the hospital?

A. Really, they -- they really didn't have any treatment for you. They put you in a bed.

And I don't know whether anybody has ___+ to you and told you about when you made up your bed, you had the blanket all the way. One blanket, you know, covering the bed part.

Q. Nuh-uh.

A. The other blanket was folded and placed over the pillow so that you didn't see any sheets. Then on

Saturday morning inspection, if they had a white collar inspection, then when you made your bed and had this blanket over the bed, then you turned back the blanket where the sheet would be over the top.

Q. Sure.

A. And tuck the sheet in into the blanket.

Q. Okay.

A. And then you had your bare pillow up there with a pillowcase on.

Q. Sure.

A. And then all the extra blanket would fold and sit at the bottom. That was a white collar inspection.

Well, in the hospital with frozen feet, they would have white collar at the top and white collar at the bottom, so your feet would stick out.

Q. Oh.

A. And the theory was, I think, that they just thawed out at room temperature.

And I believe it had been 20 days, maybe 21 days, and then, you know, I guess they figured your feet were thawed out. So then you started back, you know, through the Repple Depple system of going back to your company, if you were lucky to get to your company.

A lot of guys got in Repple Depple, instead of

getting back to their unit, they were assigned to another unit.

Q. You call it Repple Depple?

A. Repple Depple. It was Replacement Depot.

Q. Oh, Repple Depple. Replacement Depot.

So when you went in, did you just tell them you wanted to go back to your company? Did you have any power?

A. I don't know whether you said that or that was -- the theory was that you would go back to your company.

But like I say, a lot of guys didn't. I mean, for some reason or another, they got transferred to another unit, where they had to, you know, start learning people all over again.

I remember one of our sergeants was in the hospital and he found out we were moving and so he just left the hospital and technically was AWOL. He kind of hitched back to the division and then finally cut back to the company, you know. He didn't cause them any trouble, but he was technically AWOL from the hospital. But he just wanted to be sure that he got back --

Q. Sure.

A. -- in Company A.

Q. So when you got back, were all your friends

still around?

A. Well, at that time, when I got out of the hospital, that hospital was in Bordellen, in an old another German barrack area. So then I was -- of course, the unit -- the hospital was in the 3rd Army area, but the unit was already up in the 9th Army area.

So I worked my way through this system. You'd be in one Repple Depple and then they'd move you by train or truck to another one, you know, getting you closer.

Then I was somewhere in Belgium and I knew something was wrong with me. So I went on sick call and then they labeled me, tagged me with jaundice and so I went back to the hospital. And then so I spent --

At first they got me to an evacuation hospital, which was actually in Holland. That little tip of Holland that comes down between Belgium and Germany.

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. And I was scheduled to be flown to England to the hospital, but the weather, it was raining that day. And this was, say, the end of February, or close to the end of February, so the planes couldn't fly.

So then they put us in an Army ambulance, and that night I wound up in a general field hospital, tent hospital in Liege, Belgium.

And the doctor, of course, didn't see me until

the next morning. And when he made his ward rounds, he made me -- I'd been a walking patient until then, but he made me a bed patient. And in about three days they made up a hospital train that went to Paris.

Q. Was there some story about fried chicken or something?

A. Oh, yeah. Well, when I got into the 16th General Hospital that night after, you know, starting out in the morning with sick call, I hadn't eaten anything during the day. And so the ward warden just said, "Have you had anything to eat?"

And I said, "No, not today."

And he said, "Well, come over to the mess tent and go on over and get something to eat."

Well, they had some fried chicken left over and some biscuits. So I put a couple biscuits in my pocket and ate some fried chicken, which I shouldn't have done.

And I went back. And when the doctor came by the next morning, he was saying, "Well, what did you eat last night?"

When I told him, he kind of chewed out the ward boy for letting me go eat something I wasn't supposed to eat.

He put me on a liquid diet and some kind of mixture they would mix it with. He said they mix it with

different juices; grape juice, orange juice, pineapple juice. And then he said, "You've got to drink," they were plasma bottles. And they put this stuff in there and then put the juice in there.

And he said, "Whichever juice you like, just -- you can have that one. But," he said, "if you don't drink four of these bottles a day, then I'll start having to give it to you intravenously."

Well, I had no trouble, you know, drinking it.

So after about three days, they had the hospital train. And he made me a bed patient, which made me a ___ patient when I moved.

And so we went to Paris. And I think it was the 194th General Hospital, which was then -- it was just about a block from the ___.

Q. Um-hmm.

A. And it had been, I think, a boys' like maybe high school, you know. About four floors and then it was built on a whole block around with an open area and inside, where we were. Our wards like were in a classroom, ___+ classroom. And then the outside facing the street there was a hall all around.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. So I was there. And then I could rest from this liquid diet, the soft diet. And then they kept doing

blood checks periodically to see whatever count they were doing --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- was doing what they wanted it to do.

Q. How long did it take you for them to say you were okay?

A. I was probably there in that hospital until April or at least the end of March. Probably the end of April. I spent, well, all of March probably and the first part of April.

And then when they discharged me, then I went back to another Repple Depple and then worked my way back up.

Q. So were you in the hospital when you heard that Roosevelt had died?

A. Yes. Yes, I was in the hospital.

Q. How did it feel? Did you have any idea he was sick or what?

A. Well, of course, I guess, we had heard his health wasn't too good or something. But it -- most everybody kind of, you know -- I don't want to say they were in the dumps, but he had been president 12 years already, you know. And most of them weren't used to anybody else. And it felt like --

Of course, by that time, you could see that the

war in Europe was winding down. I mean, they'd already crossed the Rhine. So it was just, you know, kind of bad that he wasn't there to see the finish of what he had started.

Q. So after you leave there, leave the hospital, there aren't that many weeks left to the war in Europe, are there?

A. No. I finally got back to my company about -- I figure about the 3rd of May. And then the war was over. I mean, Germany had surrendered on, I think it was, May the 8th.

But by that time, the 95th had its last combat around the 20th of April. End of the war, they were on the north side of the rear pocket.

And when they finished combat, then they went into military government then. In other words, they were policing, they had a certain area. And then the division had the area. And then they broke it down, each regiment had this area, you know.

Q. Okay, sure.

A. Several towns, you know, to have troops in and be sure the citizens obeyed the curfew.

Q. Did you have to feed them? Did you worry about food or --

A. That, I don't know.

Of course, the displaced persons, those camps, the labor camps, you know, you had to see that they got food, really to keep them -- we were, in effect, kind of guarding them to keep them in so they wouldn't get out and get after the Germans, you know.

So that's what the 95th was doing when I got back. And like I say, about five days, maybe later, was when Germany surrendered.

I remember when I got to the company, the company was in the little town of Hofelhof, which was northwest of Paderborn, between Paderborn and Bielefeld.

And then several days after that we moved back to an area around Hamm, Germany. We called it Boken Hubble (phonetic), but looking at a map nowadays I see little community of Boken and a community of Hubble.

Q. Okay.

A. We were probably ran one and moved to the other, because when we first were there we were like in a house. Our platoon was in this one house.

And then when we moved, we went to a schoolhouse in Kraklahoke (phonetic). I think the whole company was in the schoolhouse, maybe a two-story schoolhouse.

Q. Did you ever stay with families, with German families?

A. No. They were generally -- if the families

were there -- of course, in Saarlautern, in that area, they had all evacuated. I didn't see any Germans, you know, when we were in December, January in that area.

But, of course, when the war wound down and you moved faster --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- they were seeing German civilians, you know, every day. They might be in the cellars while the fighting was going on. But then, you know, after it passed them, then they would come out.

Q. Before I forget, I read that there was a time where -- one more close call where like a shell exploded and you were covered when a ceiling fell in or something.

A. Oh, this was back in -- this was probably in January of '44. And we were up in this area of Saarlautern.

Q. Okay.

A. And we was staying in the basement. And the basement had kind of two levels. It had one that was lowest and then it was about a three-foot step-off and then another section of the basement. And we would keep our equipment. Of course, then they made the ceiling a lot lower. And we generally had our equipment packed and some stuff up in that area. And then we would sleep in

the taller area.

And so I went up and sat down in a chair in the ___ room to drink, tilt my head back and drink out of my canteen, and that's when this mortar shell came down through the roof. And there was already holes in the roof, you know. And it came down through those holes.

And it didn't really go off until it hit the first floor level, which was concrete. And it knocked, oh, about a six foot whole section of concrete that just dropped. Of course, it didn't drop maybe a foot, 16 inches through a, you know, ___.

And it put me into the basement. I didn't have my helmet on. It just -- you know, I had a little scratch up there from the concrete, really.

I think the medic said he'd write me up for a Purple Heart because he could see blood, you know. And I said, you know, "Forget it."

Of course, if I had said yes and gotten a Purple Heart, that would have been a cluster, which would have been five more points towards discharge. Because you got -- you had five points for each medal. Or hopefully a cluster, you know, it would be five points.

Q. When did they start the whole points system?

A. Well, I guess they probably had it started -- (TAPE SKIP) -- when you had two children,

because that was, say, 15 points. I think wife was five points. Each child was five points. You'd been in service since '41 or '42, that was a point for each month.

I don't remember now whether you got an extra point per month when you -- like if you got two points if you were overseas this month and one point if you were in the States. I'm not sure about that, but it was at least one point a month for service. And then five points for each dependent. Five points for each medal. And I believe that was the criteria.

But the ones that had over 85 points were transferred out of the company before we even left Germany.

Q. Really?

A. And we left Germany on June the 12th by train going back to, I believe it was, Old Gold, a camp we went near La Harve to board the ship.

Q. Were all the camps named after cigarettes?

A. Yeah. There was Old Gold and Lucky Strike. And that's the only two I remember by name. I don't know whether there was a Chesterfield. I think it was just Old Gold and Lucky Strike.

But they were tent camps right around La Harve. So you went there until, you know, they had ships to take you back.

Q. How many tents?

A. How many tents?

Q. How many tents in the tent camp?

A. I don't know.

Now, these were, what -- these were the longer. You know, you had kind of a square, squat tent that maybe eight people would sleep in on a cot.

Q. Yeah.

A. And then you had a longer one. And I think these were the long ones. Those long ones were used maybe for field hospitals, stuff like that.

And I think that was the type tent that were set up. You didn't use your own little pup tent. I mean, they had the bigger tents for you.

Q. And so you shipped out of La Harve?

A. Right.

And, see, they picked -- there were four divisions that were to leave Germany and go to the Pacific. But they were to come through the States and have a 30-day leave and then reassemble and go to the Pacific. And I forget the exact numbers. I think there was the 43rd or 86th, 1 and maybe the 97th or 95th and the whole ___. And the 95th was the third in order. And so they went back in that order.

And we left La Harve the latter part of June.

Because I think we landed in Boston maybe the 4th of July or the 1st of July. I forget the exact date. Either the 1st or the 4th of July.

And then they broke us into different sections of the country. Troop train would take you. Like my group, we went down to Camp Sheridan and we got our 30-day furloughs there.

Q. Okay.

A. And then at the end of 30 days you reported back. But then the 95th was going to reassemble at Sheridan. So when I went back from furlough, I went back to the 95th, whereas if that group had gone to Camp Sheridan, Illinois, Fort Sheridan would get their 30-day leave. Then when they came off 30-leave back to Sheridan, then they worked up the trip train and they came down to the ___.

Q. Oh.

A. You know, to Sheridan.

And, of course, while we were on that 30-day leave, the first bomb was dropped. And then, you know, a few days later they had the second bomb. And most of us were already back by Shelby at that time.

And then they said, "Well, we'll send the 95th on for occupation."

But first, as they did that simultaneously, the

men who had been in the division, say, from 1942 at Camp Swift, they had -- I think they'd got the points maybe to like 65. So they had more than 65 points. So that group of men were transferred up to Camp Chaffee in Arkansas. And I think it was the 44th Division that they went to. And most of them got discharged there.

Q. Okay.

A. And a few other men that might have come in as replacements and had a lot of points, you know.

And then we got replacement men. I remember, I've counted up, and we had 56 men that were assigned to Company A new to Camp Sheridan. And they were in the company anywhere from two weeks to four weeks. And then they transferred somewhere else because they just deactivated the division.

At first we were going on for occupation. And then there was a big complaint about that. And so they finally just said to deactivate it.

But the first division that left France, they went to the Pacific. The second division that left France went to the Pacific. And we were the third one. But, of course, they needed one out of combat. In fact, I think they may have been still in or out when Japan surrendered, you know. And their division was just activated in the Philippines.

Q. When the bomb dropped, were you just -- were there parties? Or what was that like? What do you remember?

A. I don't really remember much about it other than we were just hoping, you know, that they had gone and surrendered and not, you know, keep after it. I think the second bomb made their mind up on.

Q. Okay.

A. Of course, then we were elated that it was over and assumed that we wouldn't have to go. And that's when the furor started, when they said, "You're going to go because we supported you." But they changed their minds on that.

Q. Do you have any pictures, any special pictures?

A. Well, these are just in Saarlautern.

I might point this picture out. This was taken in January. And I know this was in January.

Now, I didn't know -- I carried an M-1 and this is what we called a grease gun. It was a .45 caliber. I don't think it cost but about $15 to make. And you fired a .45 caliber, it had no range to it at all, but if it hit you, it knocked you down.

And this was -- you can see the handle of my P-38. The medic was trying to pose me. Of course, I had

my M-1. And he said, "Let's get something else." So he borrowed a grease gun from somebody and had me hold that.

But you'll notice, I don't know whether you can, the collar on my jacket is buttoned at the top button. And this is our gas mask.

Well, like I say, this is in January, while the bullets are still going on. So at least in our area, and our___ was probably Army-wide, they reissued our gas masks because everybody had thrown them away or discarded them early on.

So they gathered them up and they reissued the gas masks, so they had us wear them. Anytime we were outside we had to wear the gas mask and have the top button on our jacket buttoned. And that was just saying, "I'm an American," you know, as opposed to a German dressed in an American uniform.

And, of course, the gas mask was the best thing because they figured none of the Germans had ever captured a gas mask because they never got close to them. They were always discarded before you got up on line.

Q. Did you ever come across any Germans dressed in American uniforms?

A. Not me. But there were some up in the Bulge.

Q. I heard that. I heard that. That's

interesting.

That's a great picture. So you had a mustache then.

A. Yeah. I had that because these pictures are, you know, Saarlautern. This -- like I say, this picture with the blue is where I remember having gone in '44. And this in pink on this map, on the new area, Saarlouis, is where I went in '99.

And this is a map I kind of made up from some information I had just using a composite. There is a map that Joe Donoskowitz (phonetic) had made based on some stories in his book, you know, that other people had written.

Q. Sure.

A. And then he sent me, it was a large map but it was a German map. And it had the housing or buildings that were all numbered.

And I think what these letters mean, they were used to call in artillery or mortar fire. They could say, "Put some fire on Building so-and-so in Block V." Or "Put some fire on Building Number so-and-so in Block O."

And so this was a map we were using when we were there. But the copy he sent me showed these letters were marked out and other letters. So I think that was when the 26th Division relieved us, they used the same map but

changed --

Q. Sure.

A. -- just as a security measure.

Q. Sure.

A. And these little pink things are pillboxes that I had transferred off of another map, you know, location. And these yellow things indicate where our company was or at least the 3rd platoon was at certain times.

Like, for instance, the night was from -- the morning, say, of the 7th to the night of the 9th, we were in this area right in here. And then we went back across the railroad tracks, which are here. And then we crossed up in here. And then we went back across the railroad tracks.

And then we crossed and we were up in here. And this was where we were relieved by the 5th Division, when they were going -- which we came back and relieved them when they went to the Bulge. Although when we came back, we didn't really come into this area.

But later in December, when -- well, let me see. When were the dates? 22 to January 1?

Q. Yeah.

A. We were in this area, and that's a picture of the house that I showed you where I was Christmas day.

Q. That's right.

A. This is the mill --

Q. That's the mill.

A. -- where there's some stories in Joe's book.

Q. Sure.

A. You have a copy of Joe's book?

Q. Yeah.

A. Well, when you read about the grist mill, that's where it was.

Q. And Fraulautern is where? Over here?

A. Well, let's see.

Really, back down in here.

Q. Back down in here, sure.

A. This was what they call Roden, R-o-d-e-n. And they still call it Roden.

Q. Okay.

A. And we went up this bridge, and up in there is where I got my P-38 that I had. That's a story that's in Joe's book.

And this is the bridge that we went under. And that's what's left of the mill. And this is a house I was in. And we came out the back and ran into this stream bed and went under the bridge here across the road.

And this was a field that was across the road from this house.

Q. Across here?

A. Right. From the front of this house. This is looking from the front of the house. And I just did that because that field was there in '44, was still there in '99.

Q. Interesting.

Did it feel eerie to look back there, or would you remember things that you didn't remember from before or --

A. I don't recall that I did. I was just -- you know, I was just remembering the things that had happened.

Q. Okay.

A. This is, I guess, either a German newspaper or German magazine, I think, about them finding a tank in the Saar River. I think this was down in Ensborough, where the 378th did some fighting. Maybe I've gotten that thing in here.

Now, this is out of --

Q. Joe's?

A. -- Joe's book.

These were two squad leaders in our 2nd Platoon. And that was their account of when they tried to reoccupy the mill. And then this is my story about getting my P-38.

Q. Well, can you read some of that or tell me a little about that?

A. Want me to read it?

Q. Sure, you can read it. And then you can take --

A. Well, let's see. It was in the December 1944.

"The 3rd Platoon of Company A was occupying several houses in the northern portion of Saarlautern Roden. There was a large field across the road from the house that the platoon headquarters and at least one squad were in.

"One day two Germans were seen casually walking across the field towards some houses on our right front. Their apparent unconcern caused a momentary delay in any kind of response to the occasion. However, within a few minutes our men had fired their rifles, and then a machine gun on our right flank opened up. And both Germans dropped out of sight behind a wooden fence and then hidden from our view. And we didn't know if they had been hit or not.

"I observed that only one of the Germans was carrying a rifle. Therefore, I assumed that

the other might have a pistol, a prize souvenir. I asked the platoon leader about going out after dark and checking just to see if they had been killed or wounded, and he said to check with the company commander.

"I did so, saying if they were still there we might get some information that might be of value to the Regimental S-2. The captain gave his okay provided that I did not go alone.

I talked to my good buddy Stan 'Curly' Kozlowski and he agreed to go with me.

There was a creek along the side of the house which crossed under the bridge and out across the field into our front. Fortunately, there was only a little water in it at the time.

"After dark Stan and I slipped through the house, from the house and got into the stream and going under the bridge we proceeded up the stream, reaching the wooden fence after about 100 yards.

"I whispered to Stan that I thought I would go down the far side of the fence and he could go down the near side. If the Germans had been wounded or had been drawn by others after dark, he would not be seen and could get away.

"After going a short distance I came to the two bodies. The first had a rifle, so I immediately moved to the second. Sure enough, there was a pistol, a P-38. As I was removing the holster from the German's belts, a man came through a hole in the fence, he saw the pistol and said a few choice words about my motive in going down the far side of the fence."

"I reminded him that he already had several pistols and this was my first.

"We searched the bodies for any maps, for other information, which we later turned over to the company commander. Not any great information, but I had my P-38."

Q. Now, when you came upon this -- when you came upon them, did you take dog tags? Did you take anything for identification?

A. I didn't. I didn't.

Oh, you mean from them, their dog tags?

Q. Yeah.

A. I didn't. If they had dog tags -- I really don't remember the Germans having dog tags like we did. I think they had what they called a soldat book, which was probably about the shape of a passport or maybe a little

bit smaller. But it had their history and then every unit they'd ever been in and everything.

And I don't know of any personally, but I've read of a number of, you know, GIs, they collected those. If they shot somebody or captured somebody, they took their soldat book off them. Personally, I never did.

Well, in this case, I did, you know, whatever information they had in their pockets, what we felt might be information, we just took back, turned it in. But I never collected any, like I understand some of them did.

Q. What -- let's see.

A. This right here, several years ago one of our -- Gavan, who wrote the story back over here from his side, somehow he got in contact with the German lieutenant who had been in the mill when --

What had happened, C Company had an outpost. C Company and the 377th I think it was had an outpost in the mill. And we, or Company A, was to relieve them, you know. Well, something happened and we didn't get there at the time. So their men left the mill empty, ___+ patrols got there, the Germans had come back in.

Q. No!

A. And they were up on the upper levels throwing grenades down through, you know, the open part of the mill.

Q. Sure.

A. And this German lieutenant, somewhere Gavan got in touch with him and this is his account from the German, from his side.

Q. That's interesting.

A. And Gavan sent me a copy of it. And I put it -- like I say, this is all my Saarlautern stuff.

And this is another account from that same German lieutenant about some of his experiences, you know, and going through Saarlautern and when he left Saarlautern and then kind of a diary. And then he was captured near Berlin by the Russians and spent I don't remember whether it was three or five years he was in Russia, you know. And he kept this little diary, and it tells about, you know, trying to keep it hid from the Russians.

So I put this in there to go with Gavan's story and Adam's story.

Q. I've got two more questions. Yeah. Well, more if you want to.

One, you had said you wanted to revise what you wanted to tell your grandchildren.

A. Oh, I just would like them to do the best that they can in anything that they, you know, try to do. Just do your best and go forward from there. And don't worry about, you know, whether you could have done more.

You don't know at that time.

But at that time you're doing it, do the best you can. If it's taking a test in school, do your best and then don't battle the issue.

Q. Okay.

What did you do for relaxation? Did you have any type -- I mean, did you -- what, did you play cards? What sorts of things did you do?

A. Well, I read a lot. You had a lot of pocket paperback books, you know. And they would fit real good in a fatigue jacket pocket.

In fact, one of the guys sent me a picture that was taken in Indiantown Gap when we were there. And we were on a break between classes or whatever and I was sitting on the ground leaning against the pillar of a barracks foundation and I was reading a pocketbook.

Then you mentioned playing cards. And what I thought about was it seemed like when we were moving, the card games would change. For instance, when we were on the ship going overseas, we might have been -- the big deal was maybe -- we were probably playing poker, you know.

And then when we were in England, then we got to playing pinocle, which of course I didn't know what pinocle was. But, you know, there was always somebody

that knows the game.

Hearts, we would play hearts. And, you know, that would be over a period of time. And then you would get tired of hearts, and then that's when you would, say, pick up pinocle.

Q. You mentioned a game at one time called saul, s-a-u-l?

A. Solitary.

Q. Oh, solitary.

A. Yeah. Well, I guess "sol" is just a southern abbreviation for solitary.

Q. Solitary, that's what it was.

A. Well, you know, on a computer, you can get the solitary games.

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. Well, they have a form they call Klondike, where you only get one play through. Or then another form you keep playing your cards until you don't have any moves left, you know, which is solitary.

So if I said sol, that's just what I grew up calling solitary.

Q. That's interesting. You said it in that one thing that your son printed. And I thought, "Sol, what's sol?" Solitary.

A. Oh, and then you know -- well, maybe it was

in England when we started playing cribbage, you know.

Q. Yeah.

A. Somebody taught me to play cribbage. So we'd have -- whenever we were off something, we'd play cribbage.

Q. And do you still play any of those now? Do you play cribbage at all?

A. No, not really. We spent a lot of time playing hearts.

Well, I can remember after I was working, at noon a group of the men would get together and they'd play moon, which is a game with dominoes. It's similar to bridge, you know. You'd have partners. You'd bid. And then if you think you can take all -- because if you have seven dominoes, that's going to be seven plays, you know. And if you think you can take all seven tricks, then you shoot the moon.

Q. Oh, sure.

A. And then if you go set, then you're down 21, you know. And if you shoot the moon, then you've won the game, unless you're in the hole. Then you've got to shoot it twice, one to get out of the hole and one to win the game.

Q. That sounds good.

Now, was there any food -- was there any food

that you ended up not being able to eat afterwards? When you came home, somebody said he never ate Spam again or he never ate -- and someone else --

A. I like Spam. I mean, it never did bother me.

But I know what you're saying, because, you know, I know guys who was in the squad that said, "I'll never eat a piece of Spam in my life." But I liked it. And, you know, occasionally I'll have it even now.

But I always enjoyed my food. If it was cooked, you know, and edible, I could handle it.

Now, I never did drink coffee. And, in fact, even until today -- now, tonight, at the dinner, I'll probably have a cup of coffee after the meal. But that's the only time I drink coffee.

So when the guys -- you know, like, for instance, you'd be riding the 40 and eight train and it would stop. Well, you may stop for an hour. You may stop for three minutes, you know.

Well, the guys that was the coffee drinkers, they would jump out the door, you know, and gather them up some little sticks along the railroad, they'd make them a little fire and get their canteens out and start cooking coffee.

Well, the train would start moving, so they had

to get back on. Well, it might, you know, go on for several miles, but then, again, it might go 50 feet and stop. So then they would jump out and find the closest fire, you know, and finish making their coffee.

But there is people like that today, they say they can't go in the morning until they've had their cup of coffee. But not drinking coffee, I didn't.

So, therefore, the coffee, the little things of Nescafe that came in the C-rations and in the K-rations, I would swap that off to them for maybe, you know, some of the candy that they'd gotten. And since I didn't smoke, I'd swap off my cigarettes, you know, to the smokers. And --

Q. Would you go --

A. I wouldn't say I was an oddball. But as far as food was concerned, there wasn't a whole lot --

Q. No, but --

A. -- that got me where I would never eat it again.

Q. When you got back, how did people treat you? How was it coming back?

A. Oh, well, mainly it was because of the way the war was started and the way the United States was. I mean, you know, being bombed by the Japanese. But there was more patriotism then. Ten million people in service.

When we came home, I mean, you know, it was great. And then I saw part of it change in Korea, and then a total change in Vietnam. You know, they had -- it seemed like, I don't know whether it was the media, but they would do everything to promote the unrest among the population for the military, you know.

Q. Oh.

A. And I always kind of resented that. Because we were welcomed home. And it may be because there was more of us. It may be because of the way the war was started. But they had different reactions, you know, to the Vietnam War as opposed to World War II. But we were well treated.

I can remember the only thing that it took me a while to get used to were unusual noises. I could be walking in downtown Freeport and say -- you don't have backfires now, but in those days, you know what I'm talking about? An automobile would backfire?

And I remember dropping down on the sidewalk in front of the Crescent Store, you know, when there was a backfire. But it was just -- and this was probably -- well, let's see, say in November or December, it was over six months since I'd heard any artillery fire or rifle shots or anything like that. But I still had that reflex. But it was just one time.

And then I guess I remembered, "Well, I don't have to worry about those things anymore." But a sudden explosion...

Q. Sure.

Did you -- let's see. What do you say -- what would you say to people about going into the military service now?

A. I think, personally, I think it's an honorable thing. I think, you know, it's ____ if you go in with the right mind, which I don't think anybody would go into unless they felt like, you know, that was the thing for them to do.

Q. Yeah. Yeah.

When you look --

A. I volunteered for induction. I mean, you know, you couldn't volunteer for anything in those days except volunteer to be called for induction. And I went down to the draft board, I registered in June. I was in summer school of my first year in college.

And say July, towards the end of the semester, another fellow, a friend of mine and I went down to the draft board and volunteered for induction. And we figured it would be at least two weeks, you know, before they'd call us and we'd finish summer school by then.

Q. Where were you on Pearl Harbor? Do you

remember when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

A. Yeah. I had an aunt in Earlington, lived in a little town about 30, 40 miles from Shreveport. And she was having a birthday party for her mother and my father's mother, my grandmother.

I think my grandmother's birthday was actually the 12th, but Sunday was the 7th. And Sunday was the only day the family could get together because everybody worked six days, you know.

Q. Ah.

A. And so I had two uncles and two aunts. One of my uncles had three boys -- no, had two boys and a girl. The other uncle had a boy and a girl. And then the dad, I had one brother.

So all of us were at my aunt's house for a birthday party for the grandmother. And then I think the kids, we were out in the yard throwing a football around or something and somebody happened to be listening to a radio when they heard about it. And that's where I was December the 7th.

Q. How old were you?

A. Well, let's see. That was -- hell, that was '41. So I was -- I was 16, I guess. I finished high school in '42. Yeah, '41, '42 I finished high school. We only had 11 grades in Louisiana. We had seven years in

grammar school and four years in high school.

Q. Really?

A. It was 1949 before they got 12 grades.

So I finished high school actually at 16. And I was 17 the next month. So that put -- that gave me a year of college before I was 18 and registered for the draft.

I was afraid -- after Pearl Harbor, I was afraid the war was going to be over before I was old enough to get in.

Q. Did you?

A. But, I mean, that was just me, I guess.

Q. Sure.

Now, you mentioned a lot of times that you were in close calls. Different people feel different things about them. Do you remember, were you afraid then or was there a time when you were afraid?

A. Well, the definition of afraid -- now, everybody says you're afraid.

But I have seen situations where everybody was in the same situation and, say, one guy kind of -- he held back or, you know, said, "I'm sick," or, you know, "My knee hurts," or something. And he kind of dropped out. And the rest went on.

So I kind of -- to me, instead of being afraid -- now, I think he was afraid. But the rest of them went on.

So they were afraid too, you know. So I kind of tend to say I was apprehensive as opposed to being afraid. And, you know, sure I was afraid.

Q. Sure.

A. But, like I say, the majority of the people went on and did what they should do or what they could do, whereas every once in a while some guy or maybe two or three guys, they weren't malingerers but they would -- they would drop out of the group, you know.

Q. But --

A. So I figured everybody says they're afraid, but think I like to use the word apprehensive. You're concerned about what's going to happen, but not to the extent that you won't do what you're trained to do or should do.

Q. Sure. Sure.

A. I may be wrong.

Q. No, no. There is such a thing. I've talked to someone who one of his commanding officers froze. They were on a bridge and there was a dive bombing going on. And they may have been on a Bailey bridge or something, but it was something that wasn't wide.

And the person just abandoned their vehicle and ran to the end of the bridge and everyone else was stuck on the bridge and couldn't do anything because their

commanding officer just lost that -- up to that time he had been all right, but you could see it building. And then there was something that made him snap.

A. Well, then too, I think, if you were a commanding officer, he was older. Now, he may not have been six months older than anybody else, but the higher in rank you go the older you're going to be.

And, to me, war is a young man's game. I mean, that's why you have 18-, 19-year-olds. And that's when they zeroed out the ASTP code ___+. And that was the source of maybe 200,000 18-, 19-, at the most 20-year-olds that they could get. And most of them had had as training basic, before they went to school.

And when we went into France -- well, back up.

When I went in the company, my squad leader was older. I knew he was old, but I didn't know how old he was until about 15 years ago. And I found out then from a friend of mine in Milwaukee, got a copy of his discharge that he sent to me, the man had been in born in 1901.

Q. Holy cow.

A. He was 41 years old when he was drafted. He was only three years younger than my father.

And they tell me that at one time -- I don't know if this was at Fort Tim, Houston, or in the desert -- but the older men were told they could be discharged or at

least transferred out of the infantry, you know.

Q. Yeah, sure.

A. But the company commander apparently liked this fellow and said, "If you stay, I'll make you a sergeant," you know.

So he stayed. He wasn't married. And so he stayed.

So when we went into France, say, from across from England and he was going up that hill, the picture you see of the troops going up the hill with the straw bunkers on either side, when I walked -- got up to where he was, he was sitting on a piece of rock. He was got tired, you know, carrying the pack and the distance we were walking and going up a hill.

And so he stayed with the -- I think he stayed with the company kitchen. And then until, oh, say, in April, then they moved him back to one of the platoons as a platoon guide, where he had been in the 3rd Platoon he went to the --

Q. So --

A. But because of his age, when they had this 85-point thing, when we were still in Germany before we started back, he was transferred to another unit, you know, to come back with them. Because as it turned out all those guys that was transferred out on points, we

actually got back to the States before they did.

Q. No kidding?

A. If they had stayed with the company, they would have come on back with the company. And then they could have used their 85 points.

But the Army didn't play it that way. They said, "Okay, anybody that's got more than 85 points, you're going to go to the 5th Army Division," you're going to the 29th Division, you're going somewhere else.

Q. Ah.

A. So the 95th only had under 85 points.

But that's why I say, war is a young man's game. And, you know, the younger you are, the better.

Q. How long have you been coming to reunions now?

A. My wife and I came to the first reunion in 1976. And I told her at that time --

Now, we had made reservations for the 74th reunion -- the 1974 reunion, which was held in San Antonio, Texas, because it was close. But something came up with my work and we had to cancel.

But in '76 we went. But I told her, I said, "Now, if we get there and there's nobody from my company, I don't really particularly care about staying, you know."

But when we got to Dayton, it wound up we had 17

men there from our company that year. And I remember when we were leaving, I was loading up the car to leave the hotel there was a fellow sitting there on the street with his bag waiting for a cab to take him to the airport. And of course they had the blue tags for the first timers then.

And he saw I was a first timer, and he said to me, "Was any of your company here?"

I said, "Yes, we had 17."

He said, "I've been to every reunion since the first one, and there's never been anybody else from my company."

Well, I wouldn't have done that, you know. I would go to see the guys. I've come to know some other people that I can visit with. But we've never had less than ten men from the company, until this year.

And there's only four of us here, but they didn't want to come this year. They said, "I've been here," they've been to Chicago, so they don't want to -- they're really from small towns, so they don't like to fight the traffic, you know. But they're still driving. I mean, they're not flying, like a lot of the guys are.

Q. (TAPE SKIPS?)

A. You know, you count family, wives.

Q. So next year they're talking about --

somebody had mentioned maybe near San Antonio or something.

A. Well, they're talking about Oklahoma City.

Q. Oklahoma City, yeah. It was Company I.

A. We've had two reunions in Oklahoma City. The advantage to me in going to -- it's closer to home for me. But, really, the advantage for the association is that those members of the Reserve 95th in that area will give them a lot of support.

Q. That's right.

A. Where these older men don't have to tote things around or something like that. There will be a lot of built-in support in Oklahoma City. Because that's the headquarters for the 95th Reserve group.

Q. That's right. And that's probably smart.

A. And I think that would be good in that respect.

And I know they won't stay in Chicago because they're getting old. Well, everybody is getting old.

Q. But if all they had to do was fly and everything would be done for them, it would make it easier. Because it is -- it is --

A. Well, like that candle stand they use at the Met Center. I can see ___+ you know, carrying it. It's stuff like that that they -- in fact, I thought about the

system yesterday and talked to some of the executive committee to see what they thought about it. And I think they listened. They are so used to doing things that's it's hard for them to see, you know, "We need to get somebody to do this or this needs to get done a little bit easier this way than what we've been doing."

It has been so long that it's hard for them to --

Q. To let it go.

A. -- to kind of change.

Q. Sure. Sure. Because letting it go, changing it means something more.

Here is Mrs. Madden.

Okay. Well, we're done.