

INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD E. SIECKMAN

Saturday, August 2, 2008

Atrium Room - Holiday Inn French Quarter, Toledo Ohio.

Transcribed by David Meyer

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MR MEYER: I always mention my father's name and I say, "Hi" this is David Meyer son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379th, 95th Infantry. It is now 3:25 (PM) on Saturday August 2<sup>st</sup>, 2008. And we're in the atrium room of the French Quarter Holiday Inn in Toledo Ohio and I have the great privilege of talking to - Dick could you say your name?

MR. SIECKMAN: Dick SIECKMAN.

MEY: Could you spell your name?

SIE: S I E C K M A N.

MEY: And what company were you with?

SIE: Company "I" three hundred seventy-eighth regiment of the 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

MEY: And before I forget, what was your final rank?

SIE: Final rank? (0:55) uh... I have to chuckle there because I asked to be relieved of my job as supply sergeant when our division was getting .. was on the verge of being deactivated. Because I had had enough of being supply sergeant and all the things entailed including the combat conditions. And so I asked Captain Allsacker (?) and told him that I'd prefer to be a private again and I didn't want to get stuck...in the Army even one day longer than I had to. So he said.. "If you've really thought it over why Okay." So there I was... a private. But then, for separation they sent us to a different camp that had more availability to discharge veterans..or service people. (1:48) And then they noticed my specialty number as ..as a supply sergeant and there was an ordinance officer who was being separated and so they needed somebody to take his job. And a lot of ordinance was being turned in from different units and so then I had his job and then somebody noticed that the paperwork I was signing said, "Richard E. Sieckman, Private" and they said "Holy Mackerel, we got to get some stripes on that guy." So... they started giving me the stripes... but it was all in paperwork so so I think I was discharged as a corporal but then it was going to be sergeant and on up but not warrant officer.

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MEY: (2:36) And what's your birthdate?

SIE: February 11<sup>th</sup>, '21.

MEY: '21. And where were you born?

SIE: Milwaukee Wisconsin.

MEY: Is that where you grew up?

SIE: Yes.

MEY: What were your parent's names?

SIE: Well, Frederick - good German name - Frederick Wilhelm Freidrich  
And my mother's name was Hilda Plowman (?)-- another German name.

MEY: Were they originally from Germany?

SIE: Well my Dad came over when he was 11 and my mother was born in Milwaukee.

MEY: What was it like for you growing up in Milwaukee?

SIE: (3:14 ) Well... it was depression time but fortunately my Dad was able to work two days a week but to support a family of seven why things were not easy so. Things were close and uh but we were better off than many other people in that time period.

MEY: Did you live in an apartment or a house?

SIE: No.. .uh..we.. my Dad had a home that he watched built.. of course during the depression a lot of people lost their homes but he was able to finance - refinance his home through the "H" "O" "L" "C" - Home Owners Loan Corporation - and that lowered his monthly home payment and he was able to keep his home.

But we had five kids and so and playgrounds across the street so I was very active as a kid with sports and local playground stuff.

MEY: (4:29) What were your favorite sports?

SIE: Tennis and baseball primarily.

MEY: Did you play them through high school?

SIE: No..oh no I didn't participate in sports in high school. I wasn't that good or... big (laughs).

MEY: (4:50) What... do ... what were the circumstances going on when you joined the service?

SIE: Well it was 1942 in spring and I knew I'd be drafted shortly and I thought if I'm going to have to go into the service there may be advantages in enlisting. And of course because of my eyes, the navy wouldn't take me and neither would the air force - although they were part of the Army Air Force at that time. So.. so the army told me they could give me a choice of three different types of duty in the army so I put down safe things like air force ground work or quartermaster, ordinance, whatever. And, of course

5:41 When we went into the separation center - no, the reception center at Fort Sheridan, Illinois -- they got word that they need 14,000 men immediately to reactivate the 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. And they got most of the men from the upper Mid-West - Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota

MEY: When is this about again?

SIE: Well, I enlisted in June of '42. About the only thing I got out of enlisting was my serial number starts with a "1" instead of a "3." Draftees are number "3" to start their numbers.

MEY: 6:12 Do you remember your serial number?

SIE: Oh sure - "1""6""0""9""3""1""9""6"

MEY: How often would you say that? Or would you just write it down all the time?

SIE: I don't think I ever wrote it down. I remember my rifle number for years but that's faded out.

MEY: Is it? (6:50) Moving back for a second. You join in 1942 and you're born in '21 so are you almost 21 or..

SIE: ...I was 21 and a little.

MEY: So about a year before... (7:03) Do you remember where you were or what you were doing when you heard about the Pearl Harbor attack?

SIE: I was an apprentice in the printing field as a printing compositor. But uh actually, the day of Pearl Harbor, I know our church group was at a bowling party and we were busy bowling when suddenly the news came over the radio and spread around the building immediately.

MEY: Holy cow.

SIE: So we knew... that things were going to happen.

MEY: (7:37) How did your parents feel about you enlisting?

SIE: Uh... I ... I don't think... ..They were concerned but they knew I would get drafted anyhow and so it was one of those things that we all have things we have to do. And I had two older brothers but they both had deferments because of their type of work so I was the youngest son but...uh... I couldn't qualify for a deferment.

MEY: (8:19) When you said goodbye to your parents when you left to go to the service, was that emotional.

SIE: No, I think it was just pretty matter-of-fact. Yeah.

MEY: Matter of fact.

SIE: My brother took me to the center in Milwaukee and from there we were bussed down to Ft. Sheridan, Illinois.

MEY: And from Ft. Sheridan you got sent to Camp Swift?

SIE: Right.

MEY: And this... this is in July...

SIE: Or June... June.

MEY: So you're one of the first people at Camp Swift.

SIE: Right, Right.

MEY: (8:59) So the cadre's already there waiting for you.

SIE: Yeah... Right.

MEY: And you show up. Do you know what sort of job you're going to do yet. What's it like?

SIE: At Ft. Sheridan I had a clue of what's ahead because first of all they run you through the clothes line. And they ask you your sizes in you're given clothing and then the next morning bright and early you fall out for reveille.

And line up and the Sergeant walks up and down and he stops in front of me and he said "When did you shave last soldier." And I said, "This morning at about 5:15." And he said, "I don't think so... you're on KP for the weekend."

I was hoping to go home for the weekend. (laughs) And I thought, "Oh boy, this is the way this is going to be." (laughs)

MEY: Yes... that is it. Well.. you came from a big family.

My wife used to say... used to ask - used to ask...um... that first night in the barracks with all the strangers - is that weird at all?  
Do you make friends right away - what do you do that first night?

SIE: Well, I don't recall that uh.. much of a situation one way or the other, we were just following orders..

MEY: ... Just following orders? ...

SIE: Right, and uh but uh the other people got... to go home on the weekend and I was stuck on KP. (laughs)

MEY: (10:48) When did they put you with... I'll cut ahead... with Company I 378<sup>th</sup>? When did you get there?

SIE: Well it would have been late June..

MEY: (10:45) So you get assigned to where you end up.. as early as Camp Swift?

SIE: Yes, well we were at the reception center only maybe four days or so and then they ship you out?

MEY: Do they uh uh... so ...how wha... How was basic training for you, those 25 mile hikes?

SIE: (11:30) Well, I was 21 years old at the time so it was not a problem but they were ... those 25 mile hikes were more difficult because that was with full field pack and steel helmet - on top of the liner and a M-1 rifle which weighs nine pounds. And then and then in Texas the heat gets up there so it was a push.

But..uh..Some of the guys had to fall out... some of those guys were in their thirties and shouldn't have been.. put into the infantry anyhow. And so..when it showed up that some of them were not up to up uh..physical requirements then they were transferred to different units.

MEY: (12:20) From Camp Swift, you went to Sam Houston in Texas?

IE: Yeah, uh... we had our basic training at Camp Swift and Camp Polis which was a maneuver area and then we moved to Ft. Sam Houston right out of San Antone (*San Antonio*).

MEY: Other than after that first "you're not going home for the weekend soldier you're having KP" -

(12:50) Were there any other rude awakenings in basic training?

SIE: Well... yeah... it always rankled me a little bit that I enlisted with my supposed choice of type of service in the Army, so I talked to the 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant and I told him about that and he said, "Well, right now we're into basic training and so..uh...we'll talk about it after you're through out of ... basic training."

But after basic training, I approached him again. And.. he said.. well, now you're trained as an infantryman and so..uh.. we we can't uh transfer you out.

And so one weekend on a Saturday I went over to Camp... uh...er.. to Randolph field out of San An-*tone* and talked to an officer there and I said, "Really, I tried to enlist into the air force ground work and then... I'm in the infantry and is there any chance of getting a transfer?"

And he said "Well, you'd have to get a release from your present unit." Well, everything stops right there. You know, because, if you're in the infantry and you're physically fit, that's where you stay unless later on you leave in a litter or a body bag, you see. (laughs) So you're there.

MEY: You are there. Oh they did ... they sold you a bill of goods.

SIE: Well, this need for fourteen thousand men was the factor maybe.

MEY: Oh yes.. Yes it is. So..uhm.. after Sam..Sam Houston.

(14:30) What did you do at Sam Houston?

SIE: Well, more and more of the same. Drill and maneuvers primarily and uh ... and classes... the non-coms would conduct classes and sometimes the officers would too. And so uh... it was maybe kinda repetitious but still ... also the physical training too. So they were getting us prepared and conditioning us to that you were off to do a job.

MEY: Did you go to Camp Polk for the Louisiana maneuvers?

SIE: Right.. from Sam Houston we did the Louisiana maneuvers.

MEY: (15:12) What were the Louisiana maneuvers?

SIE: Well, it was hot. And uh...It wasn't like the jungles in the Pacific perhaps but it was I think mainly conditioning in hot and you were supposed to go a whole day with your one canteen of water.

In the morning, you'd get your breakfast at the mess tent an they let you fill up your canteen. And that was it for the day. But uh some of us thought, "This is not right" so as we were walking if we'd ... in my case I saw an empty whiskey bottle along the road with a cap on so I'd pick that up and after that... in my pack I always had some extra water. (laughs)

And of course we were given iodine pills too, to treat water. Three drops of iodine in a canteen and wait an hour and it's drinkable. So we knew about that... and later it was Halozone tablets... Maybe it was Halozone there too. But it was a conditioning... period.

Then, of course, maneuvers and all that sort of thing.

16:40 And one maneuver I was on the enemy detail and I was given firecrackers - a bunch - with a few others and we were supposed to hold a higher hill and use the firecrackers. Explode them in our steel helmet. And.. and .. that would be enemy fire to the troops coming our way.

Well, I lit the match and it flipped out of my fingers and it was in the dry grass and from there it picked up and there was a wind and everybody was running around taking their raincoats out of their backpacks and trying to snuff out that fire. So I ended that maneuver but I was never...

MEY: ... reprimanded ?...

SIE: Yeah..I don't know if they ever found out who struck that match.

MEY: That is a wonderful story.

17:38 After Louisiana did you go to Coxcomb .... in the Desert.

SIE: Yeah. Sure.. Desert Training Center. Desert maneuvers.

MEY: What sort of things would you do when you were there?

SIE: Well more... more maneuvers and that sort of thing and more conditioning and more lectures and of course.. uh... One of the things that happened in maneuvers was that our supply Sergeant was padding requisitions and that .. that wasn't detected immediately. But when we got to Indiantown Gap why then he was... uh.. busted to a Private and so was his assistant. And that made room for me because.. because then they got this supply Sergeant from some other unit and I was chosen as his assistant. And uh.. primarily it was that but you have a (sounds like "ties") as a T-5 rating - a corporal rating - and you were called an "Armor Artificer."

MEY: "Artificer?" How do you spell that?

SIE: A R T I F I C E R. And you're supposed to be able to fix the weapons if at all possible and know something about all our weaponry. But many it was supply and what we needed..

MEY: But you also were supposed to be a sort of handyman with weapons?

SIE: Uh..yeah... right... right.

MEY: Did you have training to do that?

SIE: I don't recall any. (laughs)  
Because you see that happened at Indiantown Gap right before we were shipping out to Europe. So if they had classes somewhere in the division regarding training guys with that specialty, I never had one.  
So... I... I learned on the job lets say.

MEY: You learned on the job. Ah...

SIE: Of course we had mortars and machine guns and rifles

20:00 MEY: One thing at Indiantown Gap... You were there from the beginning of the 95<sup>th</sup> to the deactivation and I know at Indiantown Gap the ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) guys come in.

SIE: Yeah.

MEY: How -- and I've heard different things from different people - how were they ... you know these .. these young college guys come in - and what did you think of them when they first came in? Or how did they act?

SIE: To me... it was no problem at all.. they were wonderful guys and to me I didn't have any hard feelings that they were taking college courses... This is one of the grapes... They had had a break and uh... they had the qualifications.

Of course, we had a lot of good men in our unit that uh. Became doctors and pharmacists and good.. professional people but uh.. These guys went into the service at a time when ASTP was available to them. And so - they...they were fortunate and I didn't have any resentment to them.

MEY: Did you see..

SIE: I know some guys did.

MEY: Some guys did?

SIE: "Smart asses" they'd call them.

MEY: Oh.. they did? Paul Madden said one person called him a "whiz kid."

SIE: Yeah.. I remember... during that time

MEY: I remember.. I worked as a college boy and I worked on a road crew for Butler County (*note: South-western Ohio*) and they would just go "College boy" they wouldn't even call me my name they'd just say, "College Boy, come here." So I imagine it was a little something like that. (21:43)

SIE: Well you interviewed Hal Smith and he told you about his experience because he was ASTP and uh (21:54) in basic training Lieutenant Walsh told him that he was missing a shot, a tetanus shot, and he said, "You and I are going to go over to the med center and you're going to get your shot" and so they started walking over an Lieut. Walsh said, "Hey - you walk two paces behind me - I'm an officer and you're an enlisted man." And Hal Smith said at that time - I assume internally - "This guy has a couple years of college and he's got bars and he thinks he's so damned good." He said, "Maybe I should go to college and do that." So he used the G.I. bill like I did.

MEY: (22:48) So.. (at) Indiantown Gap did you go on the West Virginia maneuvers?

SIE: Right.

MEY: Were you a supply sergeant then?

SIE: No, I was the assistant to him.

MEY: You were the assistant to it, but I mean on the maneuvers did you go.. were you assistant then?

SIE: Yeah.. right, yeah. See, I got my promotion at Indiantown Gap and then we went to West Virginia maneuvers and then we went back to Indiantown Gap and then Boston and then..

MEY: Now.. w.. so.. eh eh ..this position on the West Virginia maneuvers is .. did you do what everyone else does or are you an "arbiter?"

SIE: Well the main thing is to have everything that the company needs as far as supplies... as far as rations and food. Radio batteries and whatever... whatever is needed. So.. so.. usually supply is at the tail end of the company unit.. There are three platoons and so uh.. Supply would follow and we had two jeeps to the company - an infantry company only has two jeeps. Trucks belongs to the uh.. motor vehicle .. division attached to the regiment.

MEY: (24:09) So from Indiantown Gap you go to I gu...(Camp) Miles Standish... to ship out?

SIE: `Yeah..

MEY: What boat do you (use to) go across?

SIE: Well most of us I guess were on the SS Mariposa. And that was a cruise ship before the war. And then it was refitted for troops. And so uh ..It did a big job and we came back on the ... Mariposa too after the end of the war.

MEY: How was the trip over for you?

SIE: (24:45) Well it was interesting and rough. It took us a little longer - I think it should have been made in six days but it took us because the captain would zig-zag because of possible U-boats were known to be in that general area.

MEY: The zig-zagging. Did that bother people with sea-sickness?

SIE: Uh... no.. no..But when the water was rough, then you didn't want to eat.

Because the job is to hold it down and then to get down to the mess area ... you had to go down a stairway from a couple levels up and the food smell would be coming up that stairway and it didn't smell good and it was enough to make you... a little uneasy in the stomach before you even got to where the food was. (laugh)

MEY: oooohhh oohhh.. That's bad.  
Did you sleep on the desk or in your cabin? Some people said..

SIE: Yeah. We had bunk beds. Yeah, yeah. But it was fitted as a troop ship, you know.. it wasn't...

But on the way back the SS Mariposa... our battalion got an additional assignment. We had to be MPs aboard ship to make sure everything was going okay and nobody's ..acting crazy so forth so we were still on duty and so..

Two on duty and four off two on duty and four off  
So we didn't get a good night's sleep even though the war was over and we were coming back.

MEY: 26:35 What... uh... when you land in Europe, where did you come in to?

SIE: Uh... let's see, Liverpool I believe. On the west coast. Yeah, I'm sure of it.

MEY: Then, Paul (Madden) was saying that you went to Barton Stacey, Camp Barton Stacey?

SIE: Sounds good but I don't have a recollection of that name.

MEY: Did you mingle with the British at all?

SIE: Not really. Not really. We weren't there very long... it's hard to guess how long it was.

But if we did have a chance to go to town why we were usually with our own guys. And .. and when you got in town why everything was dark and when you walked the streets if you heard a noisy door, why that was probably a tavern, so you'd check that out.

MEY: That's great.. that's great.

Then you went to uh... were you near Winchester do you remember?

SIE: Could be. I just don't recall. I remember the name of the town for years and years but now it's escaping me. Maybe I'll remember it tomorrow.

MEY: Well, you can always tap me on the shoulder tomorrow.

MEY: (28:03) After England... what happens next?

SIE: Well then we went to D-Day beach - Omaha Beach - but it was not on D-Day, it was about two months after D-Day.

And.. and see we probably would have been attached to General Patton's army sooner but he was held up in England as a ploy against the Germans so the Germans would think that Patton and his division was going to come in at Calais for the invasion.

Instead why..uh..the planning was for Normandy and so... when Patton went over later, and then we got assigned to his 3<sup>rd</sup> Division

MEY: ..Third Army?

SIE: So when we landed in Normandy, why we were on hold because they didn't have the transportation to catch up with the front.

(29:06) And so we were in the **apple orchards in France** for..it could have been three weeks or longer. And then when they had the transportation figured out - they had to restore the bridges and get some trains running (29:25) Then we got on the **40 and 8 box cars (40 men or 8 horses)** just a plain floor.

And we were on that train for maybe like... three days before they maneuvered us to get to an area west of Metz.

MEY: 29:41 How..uh.. how wide were those 40 and 8s. Looking right here say (*gestures to atrium area*).

SIE: Oh boy. I'm thinking maybe... 12 feet.

MEY: Maybe 12 feet wide and...and...

SIE: And.. uh.. well ... huh... I don't know... maybe about 30 feet (long).

MEY: 30 feet.

SIE: That's my guess.

MEY: Not a lot of room for 40 men.

SIE: Well no you wouldn't get .. they said forty men or eight horses. That was probably capacity but I don't.. we weren't I don't know if we actually packed forty in. But then the train would stop periodically and you could relieve yourself or stretch your legs a little bit and back on board. And away we go.

MEY: And away you... And you do that for three days?

SIE: I think so.

MEY: And does that take you up to the front?

SIE: Well, west of Metz. (30:39) That was where we relieved the 5<sup>th</sup> Division. The 5<sup>th</sup> Division had tried to capture Metz at the Moselle river and was unsuccessful because of all of the forts..And then..uh.. we probably were about 12 or so miles west of Metz.

And then approached Metz. And were engaged.

MEY: 31:09 When's the first time you..uh..uh...you heard combat or you heard shells or (something) in the air?

SIE: Well, that would be west of Metz. Our first casualty was my old.. platoon sergeant Frank Armstrong. And..uh.. he was our first casualty on October 27<sup>th</sup>. And uh.. and ... but in those days the casualties were mainly on patrols where a certain number of men would be on reconnaissance patrols not...not combat patrols ... but to feel out where the enemy troops were. And that's when you would hear some firing and we had one patrol that got in big trouble. At night. It was a night patrol. And they got shot up. And.. uh.. they..uh..but... I think they had all casualties I don't think anyone was killed on that patrol they were lucky that way. But.. uh... that was our first indoctrination to casualties. Plus Frank Armstrong. He was a couple of days earlier and how it happened to him I don't know.

MEY: 32:39 Now at this time what sort of work are you doing you are at... you are... coming up to the front. And is assistant supply sergeant was your job different when you come up to combat than it was back in the States?

SIE: Oh, yeah. We had a ... when we were in the apple orchards we had a supply tent, a perametal (?) tent that was about 12 by 12 and that was a lot of rainy period. And so when we got ready to move out, we took down the tent... to get it folded in the mud and the rain, we left it behind

because.. (laughs) we'd never use it anyhow under combat conditions, to put up a perametal supply tent (laughs)... Terrible. So many you had your two trailers behind the jeeps and that was pretty much it.

Of course the trailers were used for ammunition and everything else.. take the officers to meetings and that sort of thing.

MEY: The trailers? How big a trailer? Is it like a horse-sized trailer?

SIE: Oh, no. These were uh... just uh... today it's the type of trailer you'd rent to carry a refrigerator in so maybe it's about... oh I'm thinking maybe its about... about 5 feet by 10 feet and maybe walls about two feet high and then a canvas tarp over the top.

MEY: And that's what you carry the supplies in.

SIE: Right.

MEY: 34:28 Uhhh.. so you have that... and are you and now you.. you're always behind.. are you always behind them a little. Are you in the rear?

SIE: ..Oh...Yeah... right.

MEY: Because they would come back to you for supplies.

SIE: Or we would go to them because in combat .. why well, I'll get to that part of it maybe a little later in the interview... but we'd be right with them frequently especially in Ensdorf on the Siegfried line.

MEY: Okay... they say that before... ... 35:09 Can you recall a time that you felt was like a close call

SIE: Well, yeah yeah... let's jump. In that... well we took Metz France. In about 14 days. And they had a lot of forts there surrounding Metz. And we had to maneuver around to get to them. But it was successful. 35:40 Anyhow, from there we left Metz and then walked about 25 miles to the Saar river which was the dividing line between France and Germany and during that during that .. during that 25 miles we captured the towns of Opschurweiler (?) Neufferweiler, Barris and Lisdorf so then we're sitting on the Saar river edge at Lisdorf and there of course we had to do the river crossing to attack Ensdorf. And uh. So that was December 4th and so..and so the diversion was to have the Germans think that the attack was going to come at.. at Fraulautern further north where there was a bridge and uh..and so.. he had to use assault boats and we were able to get some of our troops across the river without them noticing. 36:45

And as soon as one of their guards who was not a sharp guard apparently because he should have detected that earlier - and he started firing and all hell started breaking loose and some of our men in assault boats were under fire and then there was artillery and all the rest of it. That first day we lost 14 men - I mean casualties some killed some wounded.

37:16 And then we were in town and from there every field of fire—I mean every road was covered by a field of fire by the Germans because they knew we were in town and they were ready.

And so the only advancing we could do was through the mouseholing technique which you may have heard from other guys. Where the engineers blow a hole in one house and the other side of the house and keep up working up the block.

But the Germans knew what we were doing so they would keep throwing in mortar and artillery. But very little direct firing unless somebody was on the street.

MEY: 38:03 And..and where were you during this were you..

SIE: ..Well I was... west of the Saar river getting supplies to ... uh send across - to take across the river and there our supply sergeant and his carrying party would come down to the river again and cross an open field an agriculture field and...and - at night -- because that was the only safe time to go. And then we would meet there and the ration-carrying party would put the load on their back - their pack boards - and walk back to Ensdorf.

And so then when our supply Sergeant was killed in Ensdorf ...

MEY: ... your...your boss was killed?

SIE: ... then I got his job and then I was leading the ration parties. Every night. And then I had a new assistant on the other side of the river who would... get things organized to take across.

MEY: What was your supply sergeant's name. (39:00)

SIE: uh.. Bob Gitz... from Ohio?

MEY: From Ohio..

SIE: I never found out later ... well he was killed but if I had been able to track down his family I certainly would have done it. I'm not sure what city.

MEY: Well, let's go back to uh.. I guess Metz. (39:21) Was Metz the first time you entered combat or were you in Maizeries les Metz or any.. Woippe.. or any of those..

SIE: No... it was Metz. Some of our division were engaged in uh.. Thionville area and the area north but uh..uh.. our particular regiment or battalion uh.. wasn't up there... to my knowledge, I don't recall we were up there maybe I'm wrong though.

MEY: So..were you uh... So you entered Metz.. (40:05) is there anything about fighting in Metz that you want to talk about?

SIE: Well, of course, as you know we were trying to take that bridge.. and it's part of the whole story too..

MEY: Well, tell me about that..

SIE: 40:15 because...uh... on November 18<sup>th</sup> we were getting ready to take the bridge across the Moselle river.. we were being shelled pretty heavily and our Captain Hargrave... was wounded with an artillery shell and uh.. and so Lieut. Crawford took over and then what he... was ordered to do the next morning was to take that bridge and uhh.. and he had noticed that some of the large trees across the river in the town of Metz had been wired but the wires had been cut but the wires had been cut and so he .. he was hoping that if the bridge was wired that there would have been cut ... that those wires would have been cut by the local Metz.. civilians. Well, it turned out that... when we had some of our troops on the bridge then the Germans blew the bridge so we lost fifteen men on that bridge.

MEY: (41:21) Vince Kaufman was on the bridge.

SIE: Right...

MEY: Yeah.. Ed Kaufman's brother and them.. uhmm.. now .. what.. Bill Lacy.. we talked about getting talked about getting thrown in the water... was that on the bridge?

SIE: Well, Bill Lacy was the Saar River.

MEY: Was the what?

SIE: The Saar River...

MEY: ...The Saar River...

SIE: ... at Ensdorf.

MEY: ...The Saar River...

SIE: ... at Ensdorf.

MEY: (41:49) When this is going on are you... were you...did you see the bridge attack or are you...

SIE: No.. I was back a ways.

MEY: So..you see people you give them supplies and then you hear the news.. good or bad..

SIE: Right.

MEY: So it keeps coming back to you.

SIE: Right.

MEY: What's that like you're not up there but you keep hearing.

SIE: Well.. I imagine.. it feels.. relieved that I'm here and not up front. Because my job is to make sure the company has what they need and uh.. so I.. my job is not to engage the enemy unless necessary. So.. uh. I was tried as a rifleman for two years and so (coughs) I was ready and then they put me in supplies so...(42:40)

MEY: Someone told me something about.. Patton and socks..

About he wanted to make none of his men got frostbite and he would give socks - does that ring a bell?

SIE: Well in Metz, it.. it was pretty wet there. So these wet feet and cold water led to a lot of uh.. oh what do they call it.. trench-foot, right.

And so, uh.. it was always good to have some extra socks. And of course we only had the clothes on our back we didn't have our duffle-bags anywhere near they were in the rear area. And so, uh.. we went.. we should carry some extra socks and I heard that some of the guys would dry their socks by putting them around their neck. (laugh) But...

MEY: (43:43) So , I'll skip around. What did you think about your CO.. did you admire your commanding officers?

SIE: Oh, yeah. Captain Hargrave was a very good man and he was .. a chemical engineer at Texas A & M. Of course he was in the reserve during that period too so he had to go into service when he got his degree and he And he ..he ran a good company. Guys never heard him swear. He was a religious type of guy. And he was a good man and he trained a good company so...we had good feelings toward him.

MEY: Oh good. Good.. and uhm...uhm. (44:42) So from Ensdorf. Where do you go after Ensdorf?

SIE: Well.. uh... lemme just complete that Ensdorf period because we were in Ensdorf for 14 days and we didn't get very far into town because they had many, many pillboxes and bunkers and so we could hardly make much project except through mouse-holing.

And.. and so.. uh... at the same time.. (45:14) then the Battle of the Bulge started and then General Patton ordered uh.. our unit to withdrawal from Ensdorf and we had to give up all the equipment we had stockpiled there - -- ammunitions and old materials - and then as we left Ensdorf at night we blew that up so that the Germans wouldn't have it.

From there we got on to trucks and then we're then trucked up to the Battle of the Bulge.

(45:48) But I gotta say one other thing about Ensdorf. Because when we left Ensdorf we had 47 uh fighting men and uh..cooks .. were on the other side of the river.. West of the the Saar river.

The company's strength was 193.

MEY: Holy cow.

SIE: And so we did have a ... get a... we had very few replacements from Metz.. where we lost like 37 casualties and to the Saar river there was another 34 casualties and then taking Ensdorf - fighting in Ensdorf -- there were another 39 casualties and I've got the morning reports to verify these numbers.  
46.39

And so... so that is why we were so much under-strength. So when we got up to the Bulge then we were in a rear area until they could give us replacements.

Finally then... and we got up there, I think it was December 22nd and then and then on Dec. 29th of '44, we got one hundred and ten replacements in one day and Alsacher was real thrilled, he said, "This is like getting a big Christmas present" (laughter) and he was two men over strength. But he said, "I'm not going to send a couple guys back because in a few days, we'll need those and more."

MEY: 47:19 Now when new guys show up as a supply sergeant is that a strain on supplies or ...

SIE: You bring up a cute one because...  
(47:34) So we're up in the Bulge area and we get the 110 men but before we get... no...it was at the time we got the men.. and so... he... he .. It would have been the day before..  
he had all the guys names --- in a helmet and he said, "Four of you guys can go to Paris for 3 or 4 days." And so, they're going to draw names and when my name came up and called out he said, "But you're not going to go." He says, he says, "We're getting one hundred and ten replacements and we're going to make sure that they have everything they need."

MEY: Ohh... (laughing)

SIE: So it's a matter of..detail work and double checking and anticipating everything you need and could go wrong because .. uh.. we have to do a job.

MEY: (48:33) So the 110 men come and you're in the Bulge so do you go in at all or did they send you back. By the time you enter the Bulge is it almost... it's still going on...

SIE: Oh yeah, it's going on but other units were more engaged. And actually our particular battalion.. uh... didn't do much up there. That's my reckoning, maybe other guys will tell it differently. But but then... but then the Patton ordered us back to the Saar River to take Fraulautern along the Saar and we were in Ensdorf a little south of Fraulautern.

49:17 Okay, so then we ... but the bridge at Fraulautern was captured without being blown up because uh there are several different versions but the one I heard is that the air force did some bombing at Fraulautern and knocked out their electrical systems and the person who was supposed to detonate the explosives under the bridge wasn't able to do it. So that

bridge was captured intact which was a very unusual circumstance. But in other books or writings or people—they tell the story a little different. I believe the electrical system was the problem.

MEY: (50:00) Joe Jefferson who's here - I think some people call him Jerry ... Jefferson - is from Oklahoma City- an American... a Native American - when I talked to him in Metz. Sort of shy. But when I talked to him in Metz he talked about he was on the bridge when they uh.. surrounded the.. uh... I guess there was a German truck or jeep on it and ... he talked about... One of the people - in... one of the Germans on the bridge started to make a phone call - trying to do something - and somebody (an American GI) saw him and pulled him out on the bridge  
And this person who'd seen him had just had (received) notice that his own brother had been killed the week before, so he had a lot of anger and he bayoneted the man (i.e. the German who tried to make the phone call). The man started screaming and he cut his throat. And uh... not that it's here nor there but even back then Joe said, "Yeah, it was one of those thing you saw that was part of war." That never sat well but that's what happened.

So it's interesting that you talk ...

Anyway... (51:27) so now you are in Fraulautern are you protecting that whole line or do you go into the Ruhr pocket.

SIE: 51:30 - Let me back up just a moment again because..uh.. when we were up at the Battle of the Bulge. We had a lot of close combat up at Enseldorf and Capt Allsacker said "we need more fire power for our company." So he had the officers turn in their pistols because you can't fight much with a pistol.

And he said, "Now you take these pistols and go back to our rear outfit like artillery or tanks, and you swap these for grease guns or sub-machine guns."

And so.. so I went back with the jeep and located a unit and there was no problem, they were glad to give up their grease guns because to get in and out of tanks with a grease gun is not easy. They'd rather have a pistol on their hip and.. And so I got.. I got six grease guns.

And then coming back towards our company - now these were trails... they weren't roads or anything - and there was a "Y" and I don't know should I go this way or that way" thinking "oh, boy--- I'm going to go left."

And I'm on that road for a little while and I think "I'm wrong" and I went back to the "Y" and took the other one and then I found our company.

MEY: Oh...noo... noo..lucky.

SIE: Oh yeah...lucky, lucky, lucky.  
I could have been a P.O.W. or dead.

MEY: Yes. (52:55) Yes Oh sure. My father had some of the same experience, being so cold

SIE: A lot of guys say. With real war. It's a matter of being lucky. If you're in the wrong place at the wrong time you're hit with shrapnel or get killed by direct fire. Because .. you just got to be lucky. The guy next to you he could get killed and here you are.

But at Ensdorf, why at night, we'd evacuate our walking wounded and once in a while the guy on the litter - Bob..uh Getz was one guy, our supply sergeant, he was evacuated on a litter and uh and so .. I forgot my point there.

But anyhow.. One night I was carrying the end of a litter and mortar shells were coming in and there was one that didn't sound like it was that close and it hit nearby and the guy in the litter got hit again and the walking wounded in back of me got hit.

And here I am - not touched. And so that's what I mean by close calls.  
(54:13)

MEY: Those are close calls.

Did you carry any...some people had talismans or lucky charms.. or

SIE: No...no I never thought about that.

But...But you said a lot of prayers. There's a saying there's no atheist in a fox hole. So.. eh... I remember that prayer about "Yeh, though I walk through the valley of shadow of death" (laughs)

MEY: You would say that?

SIE: Oh, yeah.

MEY: Oh...sure. (54:40)

After Ensdorf do you go into the Ruhr pocket. Or what do you do or do you cross the Rhine or ?

SIE: Well... there... well back to Fraulautern.

MEY: And then we went north to fight and and we did capture the cities of Hamm and Dortmund. It's in the Ruhr pocket. So we were engaged up there but again we were fighting a lot of young Germans who were highly motivated but in some cases they should have given up, they should have surrendered. But they were programmed to fight, fight, fight.

MEY: You mean like teenagers and.. ?

SIE: Right. Yeah... They had the young people and they had a lot of old men fighting there too. And .uh.. and even in Ensdorf why they... they didn't have...as many really top-notch soldiers. They were in other areas..apparently. Because they thought they had that sector... guarded very thoroughly. They had a lot of ... lets say ...2nd rate Germans. But they had what they needed there, they had artillery, mortar shells, machine guns. But these young Germans... they..they ... kept on fighting when they should have surrendered. But that was in the Ruhr Pocket more so than Ensdorf.

MEY: Okay... so in the Ruhr Pocket you run into the.. like the..

Somebody talked about "wolf packs" or something - meaning like young.. members... Someone had told me at the first reunion I went to - Baton Rouge - they said.. uh.. their Lieutenant had come upon some young soldiers and took their guns away from them and said "Now go home" because they were very young. And they went around the block and one of the young soldiers came up and killed their Lieutenant. And then this person was telling me he says.. "and then, we got a message from headquarters, three

weeks later that says, 'How come everyone else is sending back prisoners but your company doesn't send back prisoners (56:55)

And then he said "We started sending back prisoners." Which is one aspect of war that you don't hear about that much.

MEY: 57:10 What would happen when you came upon prisoners?

SIE: Well it depends on the situation, too. And uh.. in our particular case, I'd know of one case and this was told to me.. where one of our sergeants was ordered to because we.. we couldn't have any prisoners, so they ordered one of our sergeants to take these three Germans back of the barn and shoot them. And uh... the guy involved... why... I.. I... I sort of lost track of him ... but I heard that later.. I don't know how much later.. that he did commit suicide and I was always wondering if there may be some...some carry-through there... I don't know.

MEY: (58:03) You know Company I... you guys always seemed... from ... from.. I don't know..Richard... Richard Hunton.. Dick Hunton... was one of you?

SIE: Yeah.

MEY: All you guys seemed to stay very close. Was that common or do you think there was a special bond?

SIE: Well.. do you mean after the way.

MEY: After the war.

SIE: Well I didn't know we were having reunions for 25 years.

MEY: You didn't?

SIE: (58:40) I did check legion magazines and they posted different division having reunions but every unit could only have one notice a year. And I kept looking at the wrong issues and gave up finally. And then suddenly I checked again and there was a 95th reunion scheduled in Chicago. And I thought "Boy, am I going to be there." And so. And they had a contact phone number in that listing too. So ... and the contact was Oscar Sour from I company. And so I called him.And I knew him very well after being with him for two and a half years. And I asked "How many guys really come to the reunions." And he named off a bunch of us. Boy. I'm going to be there And from there on end I've been to about every reunion. And then of course I learned that they didn't have a newsletter and so I said it's high time we have a newsletter. So I get out newsletters every year once or twice a year. And I put a lot of good stuff in it and they appreciate what I'm doing.

MEY: (59:48) Sure.. Yeah your newsletters are great I get... Ceo sent me one and Dick... I did a phone interview with Dick Hinton before he died about two months before. And he sent me the CD of the company...

Now.. when you were in the Ruhr pocket...some parts of the 95th talked about coming across camps of displaced persons and one person said they

came across a...a...concentration camp mostly Czech soldiers. Were you part of that? Did you see any...

SIE: Only walking on the roads..Because we.. we would be moving at times by truck and so we'd be on the roads and that's were the DPs (Displaced Persons) were pretty much walking too. Because they were direct lines and they wouldn't want to walk across farm fields and forested areas but they were trying to get out of that Eastern area because the Russians would be there.(1:01:00)

I don't know if you've interviewed F. L. Johnson... because he got in touch as a pen pal with a gal from Hamm germany and she was.. and they ... they got to know each other by penpal and so he went over there to know her better and they got married and she was one of those that walked.. I don't know how many miles - maybe she was Polish - even, you know... coming from Poland. so if you have a chance to talk to F.L.

MEY: Is that Forrest?

SIE: Yeah.. Forrest "L".

MEY: I talked to him a long time ago. In Hampton.  
It's worth talking to him again.

SIE: Yeah.. his wife's name was Louise. And they had two daughters.

MEY: Is she still alive...

SIE: Well, there was a divorce there.

MEY: Oh, there's a divorice...

SIE: But the daughter ... brings F.L. to some of the reunions. Her name is "Heica"

MEY: (1:02:10)... Now you're in the Ruhr (pocket)... Do you remember where you were when you heard about Roosevelt dying?

SIE: Oh yeah.. We were in the Ruhr pocket. It was either Hamm or Dortmund. And I couldn't believe it. Because it was so... oh no... I'm talking about VE Day.. when I learned about VE Day

MEY: Okay.. then we'll talk about that.

SIE: All of us were so happy. And we were up near Bremen where the submarines... the German Sub Pens were. To help take Bremen. But the British were there already and had things pretty well at hand. So.. So we stayed there for a while and the guys were mainly playing baseball in the farm fields and the pastures.

And of course for supply, we didn't get in on that although I would have loved to but there is so much detail work with supply that... is sort of tied down...

MEY: You are tied down.

SIE: ... So you have a responsibility and that's why... after VJ day I didn't want to be supply sergeant anymore

MEY: (1:03:10) With supply, did people... do people boss you around. One person talked about - who was here last year not here this year - Mr. Johannes.. He talked about how he was always nice to supply sergeants because some people would come in and supply sergeants could just say, "Oh, we're outa that." (laughing)

SIE: I don't recall having problems with the guys. . Some times... there would be a shortage. Especially wool mittens. Because they were important to have during the winter and they were easy to lose so it was always good to have mittens on hand but even they would run out. And this one time Sergeant... uh..uh.. oh... can't think of his name right now - machine gun sergeant -- he was in the supply room for something or over and then my assistant notices that that..uh.. this sergeant was helping himself to a pair of gloves and he told me about it later. And I said, "Well, just forget about it." Because... because... here was a guy who was ... doing a big job you know and for a measly pair of gloves... even though they are in a short supply you just don't - rock the boat.

MEY: (1:05:02) There you go... there you go... Did you have any medals or special commendations?

SIE: Yeah.. uh.. I have the bronze star for valor. There's two ways you know. You can have it for meritorious service or you can have it for valor. can have it for valor.

And the valor is for a more unusual... uh experience or whatever you did.. and Captain Alscahcher wrote up my recommendation for the bronze star for valor for... uh.. doing the ration carrying parties at Ensdorf down to the Saar River. (1:05:41)

MEY: That's... that's... I remember Billy Olive used to talk--that's where he was wounded - Ensdorf. I remember the river I remember going past it in 2004 and this guide was saying "This is En.." - because all they wanted to do was get the tour over so they could get back home. And he says, "This is Ensdorf," and we made him pull off the road. And I remember looking at some ... I think... at an expanse of green going down to the side of the river and I don't whether there was a slope, now it's built up around it. But there still is something.. and Billy thought that might have been the place where... where he was shot... that... so How much... 'cause... 'cause he talked about helping bring some things down and I think it was his third trip back and forth when he got shot. 1:06:51 Did you feel like you were lucky?

SIE: Oh, boy... you got to believe. (laughs)

MEY: You did?

SIE: Yeah.. uh.. well, when the Germans were throwing mortar shells and artillery and then strafing the area and in fact one of the guys thought that some of the machine guns were set up at a higher level with tracer rounds periodically in the belt and that would give people who were down below like us assurance that they - "they're not aiming right (at us)" but then once in a while a low strafing would come across without tracers so.. so.. maybe it was a ploy to have the shots that have tracers aim high and then you're not going to be as careful because you're going to think, "We're going to be safe there, they don't know we're at a lower elevation."

MEY: 1:07:58 Are you a member of any veteran's organizations at home?

SIE: I was with the legion for a short while. But then I... I didn't continue because I didn't agree with their thinking about.. um.. second amendment rights..

MEY: Which is uh..

SIE: uh.. Right to bear arms.

MEY: I know they have a...

SIE: I didn't like the way they... their pressure on the politicians to get elected or get... to spoil the chances for other..other possibilities too. So.. I just didn't like the.. And I never got real active with the Legion either. I was a member but I attended very few meetings. (1:08:47) ... It may have been different if I had joined a VFW. But in my locale there why the legion was the club.

MEY: Where do you live now?

SIE: North of Milwaukee, Wisconsin about 35 miles.

MEY: So still ... sort of in the area where you grew up.

SIE: Yeah..right.

MEY: 1:09:00 Who do you... Who do you? When you think back, who do you think was most important to you in the war? .... It can be a person, it can be a couple people.

SIE: 1:09:20 Well, I gave a lot of credit to Eisenhower because he had a hard job trying to convince the British to run their war properly and he had to handle Montgomery and Montgomery wouldn't go on the attack until he had all his ducks in a row and... and everything backed up properly. And Montgomery is supposed to the first Allied troops across the river and then we beat him to it, the 3rd Army did and uh, of course, we spoiled Montgomery's day. (laughs) 1:10:05. But of course... he was our Commander and Chief there. And I think most of us would name - Ike. (1:10:15)

MEY: Anyone closer to you ... I mean when you look at your day to day life. Who were the most important people to you.

SIE: Well.. you mean within our company?

MEY: Yes. Within our company.

SIE: Oh..oh....okay. We had a high regard for Captain Hardgrave.  
1:10:41 And our cadre platoon sergeant was very good - Sgt. Hillman -- and uh.. he was at Pearl Harbor. And.. he was just a good - people person. He was firm but he was not a strong disciplinarian like one of the other platoon sergeants (whom) I would have hated to be in his platoon - he was that terrible and rough.

But I had Sgt. Hillman and I don't know what happened, we moved out of Camp Swift and the Cadre stayed there.

But as far as Lieutenants. Of course - he thought Lieut. Crawford was excellent and Lieut. Harrigan was great too. And they both retired as Lieut. Colonels - stayed in the army. (1:11:38) And Harrigan was kind of an outspoken guy and he and Col. Kelly didn't hit it off. And that's why I think Harrigan never got to be a commanding officer - he could have been named to take over "I" company after Crawford was gone ..uh.. but uh... he was acting C.O. - but then he was wounded twice in fact

But Harrigan was an excellent guy and he led a lot of attacks against the pillboxes in Ens Dorf. So he was a gutsy guy.

(1:16)Makes me think about one of our reunions because I got this - this big huge captured Nazi flag you know ten feet by six feet with the names of our guys with the names of our guys and their hometowns in the white areas - the swastika - and we have a reunion in Chicago and I'm take the flag down - it's on the wall of our hospitality home ... and a little round -

Division there in the room. And so when Harrigan came in everyone greeted him and somebody said, "Oh.. Bill you've got to take a look at our flag, here" and from a distances he said "Oh..somebody bought that at Halstead street for maybe five bucks." I said, "Yeah, and then I ran around the country and got a hundred and fifty four names of our guys to sign it."  
(laugh) 1:16:56

MEY: Where did you.. how did you get... the flag? Where did you pick it up?

SIE: Where there was an army camp German army camp east of either Hamm or Dortmund and .. and this camp was in our sector and so and as we were going through.. and the Germans were withdrawing and so we were going through their camp and this one building I thought - "Well, I'll take a look in it" and I saw it was a supply building and saw there were shelves there and I saw there was something red and folded on the shelf.. and so.. I lifted up a corner and I could see it was a flag - it was the camp flag and so I put it in my camp and kept going. And I thought later that it could have been boobie trapped because the Germans did a lot of boobie trapping including pictures of Hitler on the wall. Because the G.I.s would want to bring home souvenirs. And of course if that flag had been boobie trapped it would have been history and me too but uh so that's luck again.

MEY: Speaking of boobie traps I talked with someone from Company A last night saying that sometimes people he knew would put K ration cans. They take a pin from a hand grenade - put it down - put a K-ration can on top of it so if someone picked it up - they would get blown up. Do you remember hearing about that?

SIE: I haven't heard that but .. it must have been a "C" ration because that's a canned ration. "K" is an oversized cracker-jack box.

MEY: "K" is an over-size cracker jack box. "C" ration - how big is "C" ration.

SIE: Oh.. a can about like this.

MEY: A can about like what 4 inches in diameter?

SIE: No.. less than that... about 3 1/2 .

MEY: 3 ½ and about how tall?

SIE: I'd say about maybe 4 inches.

And the other ration is a "D" ration and that is a fortified chocolate bar.

MEY: Like a power bar...

SIE: Right... right.

MEY: Like one of those things they sell now for two-fifty a piece

SIE: (laughs).. but as far as pulling a pin.. I couldn't imagine that that would be okay because we had one guy who had ... who before we got engaged in Metz.. One night we were in the old Maginot wall fort. And one of our guys first night he's on guard duty and he's out there and he thinks he hears a German and he pulls the pin on a grenade and what do you do with it... you got to hang on to it hang on to it. You can't put the pin back in because.. the holes are not line up again. Once you let the handle go then .. there's a movement of that part and it closes or partially closes that hole... so what do you do with a live grenade. And there's no German out there.

And you don't want to throw it out there to.. alert...

I don't know what the guy did.

MEY: Ah... that's a horrible dilemma.

SIE: But I heard too that some guys would sit on the edge of a foxhole and they really wanted out of the army so they'd be cleaning their rifle and accidently they would shoot their toe. And that was a self-inflicted wound and they were in trouble when they got back to the hospital.

MEY: Ahh.yes.. Somebody was just telling me about that.

About a year ago Do you... about a year ago Ken Burns was showing a sneak preview in Los Angeles of a little section of his series on the war... and I

talked to his producer quickly afterward... everyone was crowded and asked him questions and I asked his producer "What's your favorite question?" and she said "My favorite question is - tell me a story you've never told anyone before" (Mr. Sieckman laughs) - and I said, "Well, that's a lot of nerve." I said, "I'm talking to people.." I said, "People come up to you and they want to be on television" I said, "I'm talking.."

And I asked that question and I'll ask it in a second.. and to me.. anything.. one person talked about getting caught in a storm out at sea and just... being scared... another person talked about uhm... going into a house and finding an accordion and he always wanted to play the accordion (1:21:56)

And he started playing the accordion and another person walked ...talked - anything.. talked about flowers... anything. So I'm going to ask you the question in just a second and if anything flashes in your mind, just .. uh.. whatever comes up ... if you feel like it just mention it. Okay..

SIE: I'm having a problem with that one.

MEY: Okay... well just without thinking whatever comes up tell me a story that you've never told anyone before.

SIE: Hm... uh... that's tough... I don't think I really be able... at this moment... maybe an hour from now I'll come up with something.

MEY: (1:22:52) Are there any other things you want to talk about?

SIE: Well, I think we've covered the waterfront very well.

MEY: We've covered a lot. When you when you discharged did you go back to camp Lucky Stri...how did you leave Europe.

SIE: Well, we came back on the Mariposa back to Boston and then we had a 30 day leave because we were going to be shipped out to fight Japan and attack Japan in March of 1946, so the division regrouped at Camp Shelby Mississippi.

And of course we had to get what is called "P.O.M." qualified.

MEY: What's that?

SIE: (1:23:30) All the equipment you need all the clothing the..uh.. ammunition... well not the ammunition but all the weapons you need. And then.. because you have to be fully equipped before you ship out. And so.. but during that time (1:24:00) Truman gave the order to drop the bomb and we were so happy.

MEY: Were you?

SIE: Oh, man. You wouldn't believe it. We knew that we'd be home pretty soon then. (1:24:00) And luckily we were in the U.S. already. The people in Germany were held over there and were in occupation forces for a while. And not that that was all bad, they could go skiing and everything like that. And fr... maybe fraternize. We never got in on that easy stuff, you know.

MEY: (1:24:28) When were you finally discharged?

SIE: Uh... Like around October 10th or so of '45.

MEY: 1:24:40 Here's a question from the new 95th - the 95th IT they asked me from last year. What advice would you give them - today's soldier?

SIE: Be lucky.

And that comes from experience. Because some are and some aren't. But uh.. they're all trained they all can do a tremendous job. And unfortunately some people are going to get hit and others are not.

MEY: 1:25:20 When you look back do you think .. was there anything .. any thoughts or anything helped you to be luckier?

SIE: (pause) No... I can't think of any reasons why I should .. should be luckier than somebody else. I'm just an average person, I don't deserve special treatment. Although... with help from the Almighty up there might help (1:25:44:8) but uh... it's something that uh...I don't know it's a matter of luck.

MEY: (1:28:58) Would you recommend service to young people now.?

SIE: It depends on what unit. I'd would say if I had a son or daughter, I would say go for the Navy.

MEY:? Go for the Navy? Rather than the infantry?

SIE: Oh boy... (laughing)

MEY: (1:26:19) And one little last question. Next to last. Some people.. you know in schools in California sometimes they take only one day to teach World War II because the "No child left behind" policy is interpreted to focus on practical things and they say you know history isn't practical So I started asking this question.

Why do you think it's important to remember what happened?

SIE: 1:26:50 - Well. I think it gives a sense of appreciation on what a person should really treasure as far as ... other people giving their lives or limbs to make them... to make it .. to make them a good... make them a better country. If World War II had been lost, why we might be speaking Japanese or German. Today. But uh... uh...

Uh... appreciation ... is important that... and, of course, a lot of kids today I think aren't very appreciative of their own families. The way they ...talk and regard other peer groups and individuals.. They don't have a flexibility and appreciation for other people.

Course there are many that do. There to two sides here.

MEY: 1:27:52 - There are two sides. Any words of wisdom anything else you'd like to leave your..

SIE: No.. I ... don't think so. I want to express my appreciation for what you are all doing.. because we know that your .. your tapes will be used in many different ways perhaps. And also the fact that the fellows can express themselves and their feelings I think gives them a good feeling

MEY:... \*1:28:15 - 1:28:30 gone

1:28:26

Well, it's a privilege.. it's a privilege to listen.. and even saying that I tear up I don't know why.

Well let me close as I tear up.

1:28:40 This is David Meyer son of Earl D. Meyer , company H, 379<sup>th</sup>, 95<sup>th</sup> infantry - it is now 4:50 almost 4:50 PM August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008 and I'm in ... we're in Toledo Ohio and I've had the great privilege of talking with Dick would you say your name again..

SIE: 1:29:02 - Dick Sieckman.

MEY: And what company were you with?

SIE: Company I, 378<sup>th</sup>

MEY: And what was your job there?

SIE: My best job... my most important job was supply sergeant.

MEY: And thank you for the privilege talking with you

SIE: Well it was my privilege.

MEY: And I'll say for the record.. uh Dick has been responsible for some of my best interviews .. he'll say, "Oh..did you talk to him and talk to him."

SIE: Well, I couldn't contribute as much dramatic stuff as you hear from other people.

MEY: Thanks a lot.

SIE: Thanks a ton. (end of tape)1:29:43