

**Warren Keeler
Veteran**

**Wayne Clarke
Michael Russert
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on July 26, 2004
New York State Military Museum
Saratoga Springs, New York**

Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth please.

WK: My name is Warren Keeler. I was born in Westbury, New York on January 25th, 1929.

Q: What was your educational background prior to entering the service?

WK: I finished the 8th grade.

Q: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

WK: I was drafted.

Q: Where did you go for your basic training?

WK: I left here and went to Fort Davens, and I was only there about five days. I went to camp Pickett, Virginia. Had very little infantry basic, but went right into tank training.

Q: Why did you take test? Or do you know why they put you into the armor?

WK: I don't know why.

Q: I forgot you were drafted in November of 1950.

WK: yes

Q: How long were you in camp Pickett?

WK: Almost a year, about 8 or 9 months.

Q: What kind of tanks did you train on?

WK: The Old-World War II, amp 4.

Q: Were they updated at all?

WK: No, they were still old, World War II tanks.

Q: Was that the Sherman tank?

WK: Yes

Q: What was your assignment on a tank in the tank crew?

WK: Well I started out doing a little driving. Then they put me in as a tank gunner. And then I was a tank gunner for quite some time.

Q: Now, when you were in the Turk did they give you any kind of ear protection or anything at all at that time?

WK: No

Q: Alright, after you were at Pickett where did you go?

WK: They shipped us to California out almost in the middle of Mojave Desert. Took desert training, firing and we were there for about 3 months. We were scheduled to go to Korea, at the last minute they changed the orders and sent us back to camp Pickett. We shipped out from there to Germany.

Q: Where about so in Germany?

WK: We landed in Bremerhaven and then we went by train to Munich. And I was station in Munich for the rest of my tour.

Q: What was it like in Munich? Was there still a lot of evidence from the damage from World War II?

WK: Yes

Q: A lot of bombed up building?

WK: A lot of bombed up building, yes. And quite a lot in rural areas, quite a lot of resentment to the soldiers.

Q: How did you experience and what ways did you experience that resentment? Do you have any examples you can tell us that come to mind?

WK: No, not really.

Q: Were they hostile toward you like in restaurants and shops, anything like that?

WK: No, not there. Mostly out in the farm areas, rural areas of the country.

Q: Now, what were your duties in Germany as an armor?

WK: I was a gunnery instructor for quite some time over there, and then I took over as a tank commander. And I guess about three months before I was supposed to rotate back home, I've become [unclear, 5:05] commander.

Q: What unit were you with over there?

WK: Tank [unclear, 5:09] 172nd infantry 43rd division Vermont national guard. We were drafted in to fill in there, they were under man.

Q: While you were in Germany, then you said you patrolled the Russian border.

WK: We were up there a few times, yes. We could hear the Russians, we were that close to them.

Q: Now you still had the Sherman tank there?

WK: Yes

Q: I noticed you said it worked most of the times, do you have problems with it?

WK: We had breakdowns off and on. Not very much, it worked pretty good.

Q: I noticed, you said you were with someone from Saratoga Springs for two years.

WK: Yes, Donald Harington. We were drafted in the same time through here and we stayed together, and got discharged the same time.

Q: Is he still living?

WK: I don't know I've lost contact with him. He moved to California, he worked for a while in the Space program out there. And then the last I heard from him, he was in Florida and I haven't heard from him since.

Q: Now, you mentioned when you came in this building you were inducted out of this armory?

WK: Yes, yes, I was. I had my physical here.

Q: Okay, now what was it like, I notice you mentioned something about being inside the tank when it was very hot outside.

WK: Oh yes, it was hot, you had to wear gloves, you couldn't touch any of the metals. It was so hot.

Interviewer: even on the inside

WK: Even on the inside, yah. It was actual hotter in the inside then it was on the outside.

Q: So, there was no form of cooling or anything.

WK: No nothing

Q: Even if it was freezing cold in the winter time?

WK: Yes, uh when you start firing out there in the desert, the temperature went way up. We had a thermometer in there that went to 130 and it pegged it. I don't know what the temperature was on.

Q: So, you had to constantly drink water?

WK: Oh yes, yes. We had canvas water bags with us all the time, hung all over the tank.

Q: How long were you in Germany?

WK: Just about a year.

Q: Okay, and then you returned to the states?

WK: Yes.

Q: What was your assignment from there?

WK: I landed in New Jersey [unclear, 8:18] and I was only there a few days and got discharged from there.

Q: Did you join a veterans' organization after you left the service?

WK: I joined the VFW in Trenton, New Jersey and was in there for a few years.

Q: Have you been active in the legion or VFW at all?

WK: No, I haven't.

Q: Did you ever make usage of GI Bill, were you eligible for it?

WK: No, I've never made use of it, I don't know whether I was of eligible or not.

Q: You didn't stay in contact with anyone that was in the service with you at all?

WK: No, I haven't, I've lost contact with everybody.

Interviewer: Just the fellow from Saratoga?

WK: Yeah, and I've lost contact with him too.

Q: How do you think your time in the service had any effect in your life?

WK: It was quite an experience, a whole lot different than being on the farm.

Q: I notice you said that this was really, when you went to camp Pickett it was your first time being away from home.

WK: Yes, yes it was.

Q: Do you think you would have ever traveled if it wasn't for your time in service?

WK: I don't know, probably wouldn't have. Of course, in the modern day now, everybody travels. I can't really tell.

Q: Okay, well thank you very much.

WK: Thank you.

[Veterans then shares pictures with interviewers]