

**Philip H. Myers
Veteran**

**Wayne Clark
Interviewer**

**July 7, 2011 by
NYS Military Museum
Saratoga Springs, NY**

Philip H. Myers (PM): I was born August 16, 1922, in Jersey City, NJ. I lived at 231 Nunda Avenue, Jersey City, NJ. I attended school in Jersey City, NJ. My father was in WW I, his name is Karl Myers. His patch had 6 stripes with a diamond in the center. I found that when he died. I was like that too-after the war. People wanted to know about the war, I never talked about it. I didn't want to talk about it.

Wayne Clarke (WC): Most WW II Veteran didn't want to talk about it, for many years. I Married my wife after the war. I didn't talk about the war and she didn't want to hear about it.

(WC): Do you recall where you were and what you were doing when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

(PM): I was working. My cousin was my buddy. He lived near Jersey City. When it happened, that's all we could think of and talk about. The next morning a friend ,Clyde Glen, called and said ,Do you want to sign up? Yeah, sure I'll go. This was the end of January 1941.

(WC): Now, how old were you at that point?

(PM): 19, He said, I will pick you up and we will go. We snuck to Manhattan. He wanted to be a Marine, in the Marine Corps. The pants had a red stripe down the side of the leg. We had Trolley Cars then, in Jersey City, NJ. We took that to the Recruiting Station. I was 19, he was 18 years old. They said you don't have 20/20 vision to Clyde, so he was rejected. You have to have 20/20 vision for the Marines. He joined the Navy. I was in the Army, beginning of June. I told them I drive cars & trucks. You are going to be a cook. You get a big C for on your arm. He couldn't even boil water-so he went to the Navy. The Army let me do things with Communications. They sent me to Hoboken for Basic Training, 10 months.

(WC): How did you get into the Air Corps?

(PM): We were 3 weeks at Fort Dix. There were 190 of us. We were in formation and they asked who wanted to go in airplanes. All the 190 of us, no one volunteered. They said, What the hell is the matter with you guys. They kept talking and finally said, We will give you an extra \$50 a month. We were getting \$20 a month for pay. I was 19 of 190 that stepped forward. I was good & healthy. The money was good incentive. They brought us by car and then we took a train in NJ. It took 2-3 days to get there. Smoke came in the train windows. We went to Toccoa, Georgia, for jump school.

(WC): What was it like jumping out of an airplane for the first time? Were you scared with your first jump?

(PM): No

(WC): How many jumps did you make for your training.

(PM): Six-Then you got your jump wings.

(WC): How many guys in the jump school stayed?

(PM): Well there were 4 and 1 stayed.

I did what they told me to do. Toccoa, Georgia was the toughest training in the US
Once you finished jump training, where did you go? Where ever they told us to go. I was one of
the guys, it was Christmas 1943-a lot of guys wanted to go home, I didn't. I wanted to stay so I
did.

(WC): When did you go overseas?

(PM): I trained in the south first. We were the 101st Airborne

(WC): Right from the start?

(PM): Yes. So, I went over with the whole Division.

(WC): Did you get sick going across on the boat?

(PM): No. The ship was the Ile de France-that transported us. We had one guy who had enlisted,
but he never got off the boat. We never knew what happened to him. We came in on 5 of those
boats-back & forth. We got off the boat in Scotland. They took us in small boats. We trained in
England, before D-Day.

(WC): Did you jump once you were in England?

(PM): No, once you did your 6 jumps, you were done.

(WC): Did you train with the British?

(PM): No.

Now, let's get to D-Day. 5th of June, we were ready. Tomorrow is the day, the weather too bad on
the 5th. We jumped at night from a Dakota plane. We crossed the English Channel. There were
green and white & red lights. Two guys in front drove it down to 450'-for us to jump.

(WC): Had you ever jumped at night, before?

(PM): No.

There were either 16 or 18-on each side of a plane. We had 16, on each side. Green light- both
would light. They said hit the green one and we went out fast. Bing-Bing-Bing-that fast. That's
when we all jumped.

(WC): So, you landed in water?

(PM): Yes, I landed in the water-up to my shoulders. I had my pack & my Carbine gun. I had to
get my 60 lb pack off. We also had gas masks, we never used. My gun was strapped on, so I
didn't lose it.

(WC): When you got out of the water-you found your guys and stayed with them?

(PM): Yes. It took me 3 weeks to find my company.

On the road, we encountered lots of fighting. There were lots of broken bones & injuries. They said just keep moving-don't stop.

(WC): When did you get wounded?

(PM): I was in Pierre & I was going up a pole when I got shot with shrapnel. It was from an 88. You were in communications, it meant you strung wires. Mostly I was an Airborne Infantry. We worked in different groups.

(WC): When you were wounded how long were you in the hospital?

(PM): It was near Hedge Rows at Sainte-Mère-Église. After I was injured they put me on a stretcher on the back of a jeep. I went to a field hospital. We had to wait for doctors. I went to Sudbury- a big Hospital, in that city, North of London. They brought us in cars. It took a day or two. They took good care of me and the other guys. I'll never forget it. It was 28 days now-since the injury. Now, I am to go back and find my unit. If you were injured 30 days-they sent you back to the states.

Once I was healed, they gave me a crutch. It made me tough. It took a while to find my unit. I took the Repo Depot-trains to find them. They went from England to Le Havre.

(WC): Did you get to Bastogne?

(PM): It took days.

(WC): Were you there when it was surrounded by Germans?

(PM): No.

It took 3 months to get back to my Unit. We went from Paris to Metz, for Christmas in 1944. Near Verdun, a 2nd Unit came-all dressed up at 2am and they woke us up, from all these places. Our original unit-I met up with in Metz.

Battle of the Bulge, I was getting close. There were two bands of bandoliers. They made us get off the train & walk. After Metz we went to Reims, France. Our whole unit was there. The Germans fought us until we got to Wiesbaden.

(WC): Where were you when the war ended?

(PM): Wiesbaden, Germany. Wiesbaden was beautiful. It never got bombed. We went home after the war. The plan was to send us to Japan. We went to California for about 3 months & war had ended.

(WC): Did you go to Paris?

(PM): No.

(WC): Were you on occupation duty in Germany?

(PM): No.

(WC): In Germany, Did you see Concentration Camps?

(PM): We saw a detention camp-it was a prison.

(WC): You were discharged in California and came home?

(PM): I didn't want to talk about the war. I wanted to put it all behind me. I never told my Mother I was wounded. I got a purple heart. I also had 3 other Medals. I used the GI Bill and studied Art. I went to Arts Student League. I was always interested in Art. I could have gone to regular school, if I chose to. That's where I got my training in Art.

[Phillip showed some portraits he painted. One was of himself-painting his portrait.]

(PM): I painted Speaker of the House-John Mc Cormack. I presented the painting to him. I also did a portrait of former Vice president Hubert H. Humphrey. My teacher was E. Cortland Butterfield, in 1975.

(WC): Phil, how many years have you been painting?

(PM): Since after the war-about 60 years.

I specialized in People. I sold this picture of NY City with a horse & carriage. A big Auction House, Sotheby's sold the painting. Maybe 10 years ago? Myron showed them my work and they wanted me to do some consignment with them. I loved to paint places also. Alice & I traveled to Europe many times.

(WC): What Artist inspired you the most?

(PM): There are many. I could not give just one.

(WC): Did people commission you to do their portraits?

(PM): I went to Washington & Manhattan. That is where I got a lot of people, I painted. Each painting takes a different amount of time. Sometimes, I would put one aside for days or a month. Then start again and finish.

I got married and had two children. I did portraits of my children. I also painted Alice & her daughter. I don't paint now. Alice is a wonderful woman.

I never joined any Veteran's Organizations. I could have done that right away.

I met Myron, in Saratoga Springs, when we moved here. We started having coffee together. Myron asked me to fix a painting of his. So, I did.

(WC): So, you did some Restoration work on paintings?

Yes.

Myron & I started going to Stewart's or coffee and met Dr. Leo Hoge. They were all gentlemen. We don't let anyone in who isn't a gentleman.

(WC): How long have you known Myron?

(PM): We met when we moved to Saratoga Springs, NY.

(WC): How did you come to live in Saratoga Springs, NY?

(PM): When we retired we moved to Salem. We lived up on a big hill with lots of snow! The nearest hospital was 30 miles away. Cambridge was still a hospital then. I just wanted to be back in the city. It would be easier as we aged to get to places.

I had a heart attack and then we moved to Saratoga Springs. We lived at 66 Meadowbrook Road. We loved living in Saratoga Springs, NY.

I met Alice in NY City. In the Landmark Tavern. The Landmark Tavern was an Irish Tavern. Originally opened in 1868. Its on 11th Avenue, NY City. It was 1974 or 1975, when we met. We have been married 35 years, this year.

(WC): Looking back at your days with 101st Airborne, after the War, did you ever run into anyone you served with overseas?

(PM): No, not really.

(WC): You never attended a reunion?

(PM): No.

(WC): Do you belong to the 101st Airborne Division Association?

(PM): No. I never joined.

[Philip showing his Citation.

Citation read:

Headquarters 136th Station Hospital-Office of Commanding Officer 101st Screaming Eagles
Received Purple Heart Citation-For wounds received in action against an enemy of the United States, in France. On date indicated: August 10, 1944.

PVT Philip H. Myers 12161752 Sig C 10 Aug 44

by order Colonel Stout: Clarence E. McKeown, Captain Med Adm C Adjutant[