

**Bernard Scharfman (BS)  
Narrators**

**Wayne Clarke  
Mike Russert  
New York State Military Museum  
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on March 10, 2004  
Center Moriches, NY**

**I:** This is an interview at the public library, Center Moriches, New York. It is the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 2004. It is approximately 3:30 P.M. The interviewers are Wayne Clarke and Mike Russert. Could you give me your full name, date of birth and place of birth, please?

**BS:** My name is Bernard Scharfman (spells Scharfman). My date of birth is January 8, 1920. I am 84 years old and never thought I would live that long. I don't expect to live much longer.

**I:** I am sure you will. Where were you born?

**BS:** I was born in Brooklyn and raised in Brooklyn, strictly a Brooklyn man until I came out here.

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

**BS:** I was a graduate from the Baron De Hirsch School of Aviation. That was in Manhattan.

**I:** Do you remember where you were and your thoughts about Pearl Harbor when you heard about it?

**BS:** I happened to be one of the unique ones that was in the Army at Camp Upton and my folks were visiting me. I had been there for about two weeks and my folks were visiting me. So that's a tragedy in itself. What happened after they left, I just remembered, they brought in the ones that were at Camp Upton – the permanent Army fellas. Now I hate to admit this. Ninety percent of them were drunk and couldn't stand on their feet even. We had to dress them, give them their guns and ammo, and send them back out. So, they went out and a few people remember when you are as old as me, they were putting in the utilities and were stationed at the telephone company, electric companies and stuff like that there. I started in Camp Upton in probably another two weeks, you know getting training how to march up and down, all that stuff and then they sent me to Fort Bragg, North Carolina for my basic training. My basic training consisted of doing the 155 Howitzers. We took turns on different positions, you know, going in the ammunition and all that.

**I:** So, you were being trained for artillery, then?

**BS:** Most of us were because that was the equipment they had in those days. After that when I graduated and stuff like that, I got sent to Fort Meade, Maryland, with a small group of men. At Fort Meade, Maryland, we got there, I think it was a Saturday night. I

shouldn't be doing this interview. When I stop and think about it, I'm not only coughing because of anxiety, but I get all choked up just remembering the things I went through. We happened to be put into the tent right alongside of headquarters. This is company headquarters. Headquarters company, and that is pretty bad there. My advice to the future volunteers, "Don't go into any tent near headquarters because anything that comes up, KP and everything else, you're going to get it." I went up the next day. That's Sunday morning and... It wasn't a street, you know. Fort Meade, they had beautiful houses for the infantry and stuff like that. But we were in tents and it was the wintertime. When I got up and took a look on the outside, it was littered with alcohol bottles. So, I figured this was my Army I had gone into. Camp Meade was pretty nice. I got to get to Washington, D.C. I got to get to the Congress meetings and stuff like that. I was very much interested in what's going on. So, I kept going in on weekends and whenever I could. We got our basic training there and at Meade we started to go to schools.

One of my first schools I went to was Communication, you know, Morse Code, things of that sort. I was a failure. I couldn't get the code fast enough. So, I was a drop out. But the Signal Corps instructor of my organization, of my battalion, sort of took a liking to me, which is good if you ever get any officers that take a liking to someone like me. Because I was really tough; I spoke back and stuff like that and got into an awful lot of trouble, which you will hear later on.

From Fort Meade, we went to Carolina maneuvers. While I was in the school there, Morse Code, I also took up cryptology, that is the coding and decoding. In cryptology we had a small, little, it looked like a cash register, but it was smaller, a little small thing, and that's how we used to punch in the letters that didn't mean anything when you got it, and you would punch in and when you'd put down the lever, it would give you the word in English that you could understand. That stood with me for all the time that I was in headquarters. I had to tell you this. When we went on the Carolina maneuvers, and on the Carolina maneuvers, we all didn't have guns or anything, we were running around with broomstick handles. I had gotten a weekend pass. While I was gone, and I came back late, they had had what you call a field command practice. And a field command, the higher headquarters sends out these messages in code and stuff like that. Well, my battalion had nobody to decode it. That started me off. So, when I got back and I got back, say, about 9:00 - 10:00 in the morning, and I should have been back before the reveille, 8:00 in the morning, nothing was done. I didn't have any punishment at all. But I kept messing up like that all the time. After that, we went to, let's see where was my next move.

I think we went to Camp Hood. At that time, there was no Camp Hood. There was an open field and stuff, but we went to Camp Hood. Over there, we did some more training at Camp Hood. We had set up a Commando course. I don't think I should go into the, what it consisted of, but it consisted of going up a cliff and stuff like that and then coming down on the other side through the ... They were throwing pieces of made up bombs at you and stuff like that and then you had the machine guns, the standard ones, where you go underneath the wire and they were shooting over you, regular stuff. That's where we got the training from a man who had once fought a Japanese wrestler. I forgot

his name. And he was a fighter and he was one of our trainers there and he taught us the kick. In other words, kick him where it hurts a man the most, and that's what we practiced a lot of besides using the bayonets and all that other stuff. We had to go through a certain amount of time because our timing was off. We didn't do it in the proper time. So, we were there. We also, every once in a while, went out at night, maneuver. Night maneuver consisted of, we'd make up our own Molotov cocktails and stick grenades. I wouldn't know the detail of how they're made and stuff like that there, but that was where they had the replica of tanks made out of stone. We had to sneak up on it at nighttime and throw our Molotovs and stick grenades. I particularly considered that we were well trained, even in the short periods that we went in on the training.

From there we went to Camp Matthews, California, I think it is, Camp Matthews. That's in the panhandle. We had it nice there. It was like a recuperation and rest because it was a regular camp; we slept in beds for a change. Everything was fine there and I got to work at the message center. I was the aide in the message center in this place. But I also fouled up all the time. I had a bad habit of reading all the confidential and secret messages. This, I realized later on, that I was doing wrong. And not only that. Like any enlisted man, I would let the men know, whoever I met, what was going to happen. Advance information. Oh yes, later on I got sworn into Intelligence. I didn't think much of it, because when I was sworn into Intelligence, it was like being sworn into an organization like the Knights of Columbus or something like that. That I'll uphold my duties and stuff like that, with the threat of death. Now I have to go back and tell you something about the 29<sup>th</sup> division. It's something that you're honored with because when they put out their battalion flag that had streamers on it, a streamer for each battle is awarded to an organization. Well, they had streamers on there from the Revolutionary War, the 29<sup>th</sup> division, so that gives you a little pride in it, although I wanted to get out of it. At Camp Matthews everything was swell and stuff like that, but I don't think they wanted us there because by that time we had half-tracks and stuff like that, and in town at the [unclear] we were cutting up their oats there with the tanks. It was nice there.

After that, we went to Mojave Desert. Mojave Desert. I'm probably skipping a lot of running around that we did after that, but Mojave Desert stays in my mind very well. I found out with all the training and stuff like that there, they should have trained the generals a little better because the first maneuver we went on, we went on as if we were a wagon train. We would make the circle with the tanks and stuff like that, and vehicles, a round circle, just like a wagon train. So, I started to realize, we're setting up our own death trap because water fire and stuff like that. This is the way it started out, our training. The Mojave training was more, I think, a better training for our endurance living out on the desert. We lived on a canteen of water a day. That took care of all our washing, mouth washing, shaving, and all that stuff. And it was nice. I think I only got one, yes, I got shipped home once, I got a pass for a couple of weeks out of Mojave. I came back to my home in New York with a nice tan, black, and I could weather the heat, but I couldn't take the cold. It was rough. I was glad to get back to Mojave Desert.

From there, oh yes, we went on a – up the Camp there, Fort [unclear], you remember that camp? Anyways, it was a rest period for us. The camp there was formed around a big lake, and we had eight men to a cabin. It was a sunny cabin; in other words, the sides were wood and the top was canvas like a regular tent. And that was a real rest camp for us. I got to go home once from there. Then, after that, where else did we go? Anyways, we got shipped up to Camp, I forgot what camp, maybe it was Kilmer, one of the camps in New York State, ready to be shipped overseas. They gave us a two week pass before we were shipped overseas. I must tell you because something happens later on that I have to bring in this. I was invited, and few more of us, to a wedding one of my companions had, in Brooklyn. At this wedding, he was one of these fellas there, he looked like a movie actor, nice and tall, everything that I wasn't. And he got himself a beautiful bride. He got married that day and the next day we went overseas. I have to bring this up to you because later on I'm going to talk about it. We went overseas in the English Army Transport. Now an English Army Transport, I didn't think they took much care of their men, so you got to think of, how are they going to take care of us? We had situations of the guys actually starving. One man died going across, seasick. I got to keep swearing all the time, this is the truth, so help us. While we were loading on, I saw fresh fruit, food, meat and stuff like that going on the ship. This is the truth. We got none of it. We got a little mutton. We got the kippers, and I love kippers now, but then I didn't know what they did with it. They didn't make it like I do. Anyways, we couldn't eat it. Most of the food stunk anyways. What we used to do, we used to steal whatever we could. We stole potatoes, we ate more potatoes on that ship. So, I started to figure out, well I've got to do something. I got as a gunner. This ship had on the tail end of it, a sitting gun that you cannot maneuver, a cannon. In other words, it was stable, anchored to the back, and I got on that crew. Now on that crew, we were what the English call chit. You write a chit for food, and for your tea and stuff like that. We loathed chits. That was what we ate, they made up little sandwiches for the tea and things like that. And that was how we stayed alive. It was rough. Only hammocks, that was our bedding. We weren't used to hammocks, so a lot of us slept under the staircases and stuff like that.

Okay, we get to England. We end up in, what town was it? Anyways, that's the town where the Germans used to come over and drop the bombs. They used to know the town by the big building they had there with the bird on it. I forgot the name of the town. This story that I am telling you about where they were dropping the bombs, the longshoreman started to tell us what was happening there. So far, I got to England. In England, we were stationed in the English Army camp. Just us, the Americans. We lived in Quonset huts, with the belly stove in the middle. In a Quonset hut, they had no bathrooms, of course, we went in what they called the ... They had a nice name for it, too. Outdoors with a pot sticking out underneath it there. A honey, they called it the honey something or other. I have to tell you these things because I remember, you know, so you can understand even before combat and stuff like that, what we went through at the beginning, the early birds. In England, I was still attached to the message center, so I go picking up the mail. Picking up the mail, that I had my own jeep there and I picked up my mail. We were attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division, I can always remember picking up the mail. It was like in a castle. All the way back, you know. The wealthy people of England lived very well; I must say. When I got there, the

mail clerk who had our mail in bags, you know, for the battalion. My job was to separate it company-wise. When I picked up my mail, the mail clerk there told me, "Would you like to meet Roosevelt?" I said "Roosevelt, the President?" He said, "No. Kenneth Roosevelt. He is the General of the artillery for the 1<sup>st</sup> Division." I met him. These things you never forget. He was a nice man. He shook my hand. He asked me what outfit I was in and stuff like that. That's what I did most of the time. Then we had, before the invasion, if you people remember, you see it in a lot of Eisenhower cleaning the paratroopers before they went over and stuff like that. Well, we didn't get Eisenhower, we got Montgomery. I don't know why. Oh yeah, before we got Montgomery, we got the Coast Guard, as if we were infantry, showing us what they were going to do with the landing ships. And, things of that sort.

I was in England for about six months. Being that I'm Jewish, when the Jewish holiday came along, we got sent to Bournemouth to do Passover holidays. Passover holidays – they put me up in a hotel that there was a movie made with David Niven, *Separate Tables*. So, we were honored, being in that hotel. But I was surprised. Most of the English soldiers that were there were not English, they were Polish. Polish and a couple of other foreigners that escaped and got into the ... And they were the pilots. I got to know some of them, speaking Jewish. After that, we hung around a while. Oh yeah, we did some firing up North on the cliffs there. It wasn't the Cliffs of Dover, but was something like it. We did the firing on the targets and also stationary targets. So, when I say we were well-trained, we were well trained.

And I'll skip back, even while I was in the States, we went down to the coast where the Gulf of Mexico is, and we did the firing of the 50-caliber machine guns on the windsock that was fired by the fighter plane where the pilot was a woman. They let us know in advance so we shouldn't shoot her. I did an awful lot of training, and... Let's go to D-Day. They transferred us to Stonehenge. Stonehenge was, most people don't know, that alongside of Stonehenge was the English paratrooper camp. Of course, I'm a very friendly soul, so I went over there and got to meet some of them. I used to do a lot of things on my own. I met some of them. Now people don't know what was happening while we were getting ready for the invasion. A couple of miles north of Stonehenge, they had set up what they call a gate right across the country of England. Nobody was supposed to come through. In other words, well, that gate wasn't set too well, because the girls from [unclear] got there. If you know what I mean. If you've been to Stonehenge you know there's like a little forest there and that's where we were in with the girls and everything else. We had a good time waiting for the invasion. We were still there after a couple of days and then the invasion happened. The only way we knew about the invasion was the planes coming over. That was the greatest armada that ever flew, continuously, all night back and forward. I thought by the time we got there, there would be nothing left but it wasn't so. The next day after the invasion we got sent to Weymouth and put on the LSTs. We crossed with LSTs. But what happened was, I found out later in a convention, that A Company left without a couple of [unclear] and had to go back. They didn't come in until about twelve days later. So that was one of the reasons we didn't get recognition as being in the invasion although we were part of the fleet that came for the invasion. We sat up on the LST for two days. While we sat there, the German planes came in, but they couldn't do much with their bombing, they had to

bomb too high. The blimps that they had tied to the LSTs kept them off, wo we didn't get machine gunned or anything like that. While I was sitting there, the ducks, which is a ship that carried all the ammunition and things, was going by. I didn't get to see too much of D-Day, all the stuff that was loaded on the beach because they kept cleaning it away after D-2 and stuff like that. Then when we landed, our tanks had a funnel built on the rear as an exhaust, because when we hit the water, we didn't know how far we were going to go down. So, all of our tanks came through. The engineers had already plowed the way up the cliff. I came in with the 29<sup>th</sup> Division Omaha Beach. So, you can get an idea of how we came up alongside the cliff. It was all the engineers had blocked out the mines. We went in a couple of miles, sat there for a couple of days, then we moved up again. I know we had two movements. By the second movement, I went up to the Colonel and I told him I wanted out of headquarters. I wanted to go into action. The reason I did that was because my motorcyclist went and got his head chopped off on the wire that they ran across the road. The other one – this is all National Guard, I got to keep reminding you about the National Guard – he kept a hand grenade hooked on to his jacket and the pin must have fallen out. So, when I lost these two guys, I could go back and tell you, way back, during the Carolina maneuvers, I went with them to steal watermelons and this is the first time I got shot at with a shotgun by a farmer. So, you see these things react on you. So, they put me in reconnaissance. I'm broke, I got no act all. They put me in reconnaissance – in recon, they put in me in demolition. That's one of the schools I went to when I was at AP Hill Virginia. I went to Fort Belvoir and took some demolition training. In demolition, I didn't do much, you know, there wasn't much... I dealt with the minesweeper and things like that, nothing much. Oh yeah, we stood there; we got hung up by Saint-Lô. Historians will know that Saint-Lô is where the 30th Division lost most of its men. I had gone up one day with the supply truck to bring up the gas and ammunition to one of the tanks. One of the tanks [unclear] repairs was knocked out and enemy fire started to come in, but I had gone in front of the supply truck so when the fire came in, the truck left me. The truck left me. I started to walk back a couple of miles. As I was walking back on the left-hand side, I saw a cow with its feet up in the air. After that I saw medics. I saw medics; I saw all the bodies laying there. I started to throw up. One of the medics gave me a shot and he said, "This will keep you calm for a while." He gave me a shot of morphine. I laid down on the side of the road. About four hours later, I got up and I started to walk back. I walked back and when I got back there, in the [unclear] and this is the hedgerow country. Between the hedgerows, you had the vines growing there, that's how they grew the cherries there, whatever, to make Calvados. Calvados was a very strong, I think it was about 100%, liquor. But in one of those groves, the outfit was watching movies. See I can't forget these things coming in like that there and I sat down and watched a movie. I was hungry and everything else because I had thrown up so much, but I ate my K-rations and the movie was Joan of Arc with, who? That great Swedish actress, Ingrid Bergman. I remember this because, later on, if I get to it, when they took me out of the hospital in a truck, I sat in the front row of one of these shows and I went up and I spoke to Ingrid Bergman, but I have to tell that later. So, we're in combat, later on, we get up to, before Paris, we're up in the hills, I think that the town name is [unclear] overlooking Paris. There, by that time, I was nuttier than ever. So, I get up to one of the guys who still remembers me because he wrote to me. He was on the Commander. A Commander is the vehicle with six rubber tires and the 37-millimeter turret on it. Those were the guys,

most people didn't know it there, they covered our flanks. Most of the guys were nuttier than me. So, I went up there and I saw this guy, he lives in Washington now, the State of Washington. I spoke to him and I said, "How about us taking a trip down there to Paris some night?" That took guts. He said, "No." He said, "When I got the binoculars, I'll show that you that there's two pillboxes right in front of the entrance into Paris." Let me take a break.

So, we're overlooking Paris there. We didn't go out there. He sent me a picture also that I got with his vehicle. I didn't get to go on that vehicle, but I've got to tell you about this overlooking Paris. We stood there for two weeks and then I found out that the only reason we stood there was we had to wait for the French Army to give them the honor of taking Paris – that was some... If the people only knew how many deaths that caused by us staying back like that. But this is what it was, this war, every war ever since has been a political war. I made my statement. Oh yes, so then we took Paris there and we stayed overnight in the park; the Victor Hugo Park. The Victor Hugo Park is a nice place there and I stood near the statue of the hand. It's supposed to be I think [unclear] hand or one of the pianists. That's why I remember his name and I put on a show for them. Because I get all kind of bright ideas. I put on a knife throwing show into a tree. But the only thing is, our knives were so cheap, they were made of cast iron –the issued knife. If I did hit the tree, it would beak. I'll bring up as we go along, I'll bring up the idea of our equipment. We were far inferior to anything the Germans had in all their equipment. At this time, I can say that the Germans, everything they had was better, their machine guns, their artillery, they even had equipment that we didn't have, but they had been in the war two years before we got in, so I can [unclear] it. While we fought in Normandy, I was on the highway between the 30<sup>th</sup> Division on my right-hand side and the English on my left-hand side, and this is the road going up to Luxembourg and stuff like that there and oh, Paris, where the Germans tried to break through. They put the paratroopers up against us and that's all we were fighting – the paratroopers who were so well trained and in the hedgerow country, I've got to go back to that. They put the snipers in there, and one incident they even had flame throwers there, which nobody ever mentions. You would think only the American Army, when you see it in the Pacific, were using flame throwers. As far as I'm concerned, this fighting over there in hedgerow country was the toughest fighting there was. And this is where we had, we were using Shermans, tank destroyers were using Shermans with the top of the turret cut out. We didn't have the hatchets on there and stuff like that, so what we did was, we were putting armor, stripping the German tanks and stuff like that, and putting armor alongside and on top of us. We would put the branches, tree branches across there and we put sandbags even on top. That's how bad it was with shrapnel coming in. Oh yes. And this is where we first used the welded-to-the-tank-like fingers to cut through the openings of the hedgerows. That idea was later on used again when we got up to the Siegfried Line. But that's another story. We go into, right now I'm riding on the ammunition truck. The ammunition truck, I would sit on the detonators. The detonators were in wooden boxes there in sawdust. But that's what I sat on going through Paris and the advantage was this was... It's smaller than the half ton truck, bigger than the Jeep, one of those vehicles and I didn't have the top on it. So, I happened to meet some celebrities. One of the celebrities was Kid Chocolate. Kid Chocolate, I remember in my younger days, fought in Madison Square Garden and stuff

like that. He gave me his picture. I gave him a pack of cigarettes. Cigarettes was the main means of exchange. But I had something happen to me that was like a miracle. I don't know if it was something. We would stop and go and stuff like that in crowds, you know. And one civilian says to me, "Your name Scharfman?" and I said, "Yes". "This little boy, that's his name." And I'm thinking he's trying to put a scam on me. I got these ideas and thoughts in my head later on. Stuff like that. Should I have taken him with me? What should I have done? Was he a relative of mine, or wasn't he? I didn't do anything, but it always stood in my mind. Things of that sort.

All right, we went to Paris there, there wasn't much shooting or anything like that. We get to Paris, the fighting was on the way, you know, stuff like that there. I think that's where we did the... I got five battle stars but I can't picture which is which. It never works. I can say, "This happened in the Bulge. This happened during the [unclear] where we cut off a big piece of the German army." But I do remember where we had to stay a couple of weeks also, so the English Army could go through. The English Army didn't want to go through until we gave them an opening. This is when the Air Force came over and was supposed to lay down a corridor of bombing so the English could go through, in other words, clear a path for them. But what happened was we put out smoke pots. Smoke pots. The wind changed, so they bombed us. Only one general of ours got killed there. That's what I heard. So that's the first time I got bombed. Okay, the English Army, they pulled through, so help me I got English friends, but as soon as they pulled through, I'm sitting in the tank – I don't remember the tank, they stopped for their tea. I'm telling you I almost went over and told them what to do – war stop? They had their tea and they moved on. This is right after I think we formed the 5<sup>th</sup> Armored Spearhead. The 5<sup>th</sup> Armored Spearhead, being that I was in the demolition and, you see on my head [points to cap with many medals pinned on it], one of these things is for the 50-caliber machine gun. So, I must have hit the mark, and they gave me something for the 50-caliber machine gun. Now the 50-caliber machine gun, they went and they put me on what is supposed to be a Commander vehicle without the turret. Instead of the turret they had a 50-caliber in a circle like, in a circle, and that was my job with the 5<sup>th</sup> Armored Division. In front of our truck that had the air tank and stuff like that so they could put the saws on and things like that, and I, with my group, was supposed to give them protection. Well, we pull into Luxembourg, first we got word not to take drink or take anything before we got into Luxembourg, but of course they're thinking that's German and they're going to poison us – so not to take anything. We get into Luxembourg; I'm more towards the center of the Spearhead. First thing that happened, being that it's me, some girls come over and invite us over for a party. I leave the vehicle, go right across Luxembourg where they had the gardens and stuff like that, over by the houses, and by the houses there, up on the first floor, these two girls and their brother was there. So, the only party was, they opened up a bottle of wine and we were drinking wine and things like that. But ten minutes, I'm just getting warmed up, and the horns start going off, we're going to move. I had to run back there, catch it on the fly and we're moving up. We move up and, in those days, as far as I was concerned, they had very few tarred roads. This was probably the only tarred road going out of Luxembourg City. Luxembourg City was a... It was wide enough for single vehicles to go through. Probably today, by this day they must have widened it. They go through and we get the signal to come up front. We come up front. They've got the trees that



they've cut down to block our way. So, they needed the air compressor with the saws so we could cut through and then the tanks would push it aside. I, with my vehicle, could go around through the forest and get in front of it, in case there were any of them sitting down there waiting for us, to give them protection. They didn't even start cutting and a booby trap goes off, but we were lucky, it was black powder and it wasn't too big of a charge. Well, the black powder let the Germans know where we were, how far we got. They get to our [unclear] there and on the 50-caliber, facing away from them because I wanted to see if anybody's coming in or anything, and they cut the trees down. I go ahead with my vehicle out of the [unclear]. I pulled out about 100 yards. Then the tanks started coming after us. As they came out, the first round of a [unclear] Tiger tank on the right-hand side in front of a chateau or cathedral or something like that, that's probably still sitting there, fired its first shot and only shot across my bow and missed. Somebody called in the fire support. All the time that we were spearheading, we had fighter planes above us. In a couple of minutes, the fighter planes came in and dropped their belly tanks. I'm sitting there watching, so help me, most of the war was like a movie to me. I sat there and watched the belly tanks come down in front of it and hit them. They dropped two belly tanks and it went up on fire and stuff like that. Then everything started to come out of the forest. I re-joined; I went the hell back. I have not [unclear] went back, got into line where I was supposed to be. It was Luxembourg; after that we kept hitting all of the opposition and things like that.

After Luxembourg, while we were fighting, we got our new tanks. We were the first ones to get the M-10s with the 90-millimeter. I got pulled out and sent on the M-10s. I was on the M-10s when we got into the Bulge. Before the Bulge, first we were in the Bulge, we were in a holding position over there and were doing [unclear]. The area in the Bulge we were doing night firing, it was back to [unclear]. As a matter of fact, that's where my first trip to Paris was from there. I got a rest period there. I'm not going to talk about Paris, but I already had a date set for me there. When we got back from Paris there, we had one incident that I really shouldn't talk about it. We had a disorderly retreat from the infantry that was there, which as no American would say that Americans should retreat, but this outfit did retreat. I'm not going to mention which division it was, but we had to move our tanks in front of them and threaten to kill them if they didn't go back. That's the truth, gentlemen. After that there, we stood a while longer. They needed us up in Hürtgen Forest. The big combat was going on in Hürtgen Forest. Got up to Hürtgen Forest there, Hürtgen Forest, as anybody who was there would tell you, the Germans would do it, indirect firing over there, hitting the tree tops and the treetops became shrapnel also. It was so close fighting there, that that's the only place I remember where we put out barbed wire with tin cans sitting on it in case of any movement in the night time. We were in Hürtgen Forest for a little while, but the 82<sup>nd</sup> infantry were fighting up in Belgium, not Belgium, the bridge. They were fighting up there. So, we were sent to give them support. By the time we got up there, which is a day and night driving, we got up there, that was the first time I saw a windmill. Once I saw that, we had orders to go back and we took the bridge or something like that. We went back to Hürtgen Forest, did a little fighting up there and then I think the Bulge happened. The Bulge happened and we were put into the Bulge attached to the 82<sup>nd</sup>; that was in the rest area in France where they had the cathedrals and stuff like that; where the army headquarters had been established over there. So, we joined up with

82<sup>nd</sup> in the Bulge. I remember the Bulge very closely because that's where I was with the 82<sup>nd</sup> where they got their shoes, the winter shoes for the snow and stuff like that – shoepack, I think they call it. Some of the guys from my outfit stole the jump boots. I was good enough not to steal it there, because these guys when they went to Paris on their trip [unclear] the guys from the 82<sup>nd</sup> there and the 82<sup>nd</sup> made them take their boots off.

Tape stops. Changes tapes.

**I:** The jump boots, the 82<sup>nd</sup>?

**BS:** Yes, but I have to go back a while. I'm still in the First Army. The First Army as far as I'm concerned was much better than the Third Army that I joined later on. In the First Army, the officers there seemed to have some kind of care for the men and stuff like that. The officers, mostly I'm talking about the higher-ranking officers, colonels and up. So, I'm still in First Army. My tank was different than all the other tanks, the M-10s. We went and put a metal box on top of where the radiator is in the rear. We had it strapped down. This metal box was our – you could call it anything – our souvenirs that we collected. Well, we collected anything that we considered valuable. Like we'd go to a town, [unclear] town, I knew something about it and I found silk stockings, women's silk stockings, that's one of the things when I got to Paris I came back with. But I had to go to these houses of ill repute to sell the silk stockings. Most of them wanted to give me a trade. I was not that good. I couldn't take it all in trade. The reason I'm telling you, if you ever see a tank, an M-10 with a [unclear] box, we were the only ones to have a box like that while we were in the First Army.

Now, I'll go back to the Bulge. People must realize what a tank is. A tank is an icebox in the wintertime and an oven in the summertime. In the summertime you sit in there in your shorts and if you touch metal it got so hot sometimes, you get burnt. That how it heats up. In the wintertime especially during the Bulge, it was freezing. So, there's a picture that they might show – this picture is in a book about the Bulge that was taken of me by a combat photographer, that I never knew it was taken until somebody told me it was in there. And it shows me with, I think it was some of the men from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, me sitting in front of the tank. The top part – there's two pictures on that page – the top part shows the bodies of Malmedy, which I had been in that area so I knew something about that. Anyways, that's me right over there in the front. [Holds up book open to page with photographs. Points to lower right corner of photograph on bottom left.] This is me, little me over here, sitting there and, as usual, I'm doing all the talking. And at this end, standing, is my commander [points to man standing on left side of photograph]. The next day he was not my commander anymore. I was the only one left in that tank. I stood in that tank, well I didn't stand, I got out of that tank, for four days until they sent me relief. And then, when they sent me relief, some of them I didn't want. This is Malmedy [points to photo], the bodies, so when I talk about things that I did, I had it in my heart to do as much as I could. Like I was saying, on the next day that I woke up, we had had a frost that night. I was the only one left. I hadn't been called up. We used to stay on duty four hours when we were sitting in one place, guard duty, sitting in the tank. And during the Bulge, all of us were in the trenches. Either we dug a trench underneath the tank or on the side of it. If you want, I can describe that.

My tank was right alongside a railroad embankment. On the other side, it was all German. All enemy territory. The only time I did go across, as stupid as I was, instead of taking the water, melting the water, there was a running stream there, stuff like that, right alongside and I collected a cup of water. But I realized I better not do it again. The Bulge, for me, was a hardship thing. It was all hardship, you know, with the cold and the food. Oh yes, I must add, there's another thing that I'll swear by. I had 10-in-1 rations. Ten-in-1 rations if you don't know what it is, it's good meals, that we looked forward to eating instead of these K-rations. So, I had about four boxes of that strapped out to the side of the tank. One night, it was stolen by the 82<sup>nd</sup>. God bless them. But this is what war is. People got to realize everybody was out for themselves. If they got away with it, I'm glad of it, so it's all right with me. Then when I got to bed, I got something I didn't like. You know, would you say like, I couldn't depend upon it. For instance, they sent me up one man from the Air Corps. A staff sergeant. I'm a private now commanding a tank and they sent up a staff sergeant and the first thing, we were sitting there cleaning the guns and stuff like that, getting ready for our next battle. And the first thing this man says when he gets out of the jeep, asks for me, by name, and says to me, "Where do I sleep?" At that time, I had one answer for anybody like that. First one comes up in uniform. I hadn't seen you in almost a year now and he says to me, "Where do I sleep?" I said, "Get the hell out of here before I shoot you." So, help me God, I never see him again and he must be thanking me that I saved his life. That'll give you an idea of how I was set, because I knew I'd get no use out of him if he's worried about sleeping instead of staying alive. I got rid of him. Then they sent me up some more guys. Stuff like that I got to work with. The main reason I got along with them – I did the cooking. I scrounged for food. I knew where the Germans hid the food. All the sausages and stuff like that. The wurst and things like that. I'm not going to tell you in case we get into war again. [Laughs.] Every time we'd pull up into position, any tank, any position, I was the first one out of there, looking, scrounging around. I picked up my swords – I got two swords, one of them from the first World War; the second one I saw a jeep coming, driving, with a German officer sitting on the hood. You've probably seen it in the movies and stuff like that. And I said to the guy, "What are you doing?" "Oh, we're bringing them back for our colonel." The swords. I said, "Hell you are, I'm taking it." I walked over and took it. The guys looked up at the 90-millimeter and didn't say a word. It's these things I learned how powerful I was. Not me I was, the tank was. And this is how I made my war. I did things I'm ashamed of but I did it because I had the power. I can't tell you because even now if I said... I think it was Hürtgen Forest, no the Black Forest which comes later. Lieutenant Colonel with the badge and everything. First, I was on the second tank in line to pull out. The Sherman pulls out, he's about 100 yards ahead of me, gets hit, two shots, the tank goes on fire. Everybody jumps out. It's snow. Some of the guys on fire are rolling in the snow. It must have been a minute. The Chaplain comes up with a white flag and then [unclear] comes up, but we got every man out of there. The war stopped. This is the truth. Unexpected like that. The war stopped. They got every man out. This Lieutenant Colonel comes over to me, I was in the second tank, and he said, "Why did you move up?" Anybody would say, "[unclear] if you want us to." I didn't. I said, "Put the scouts out, let me know were that anti-tank gun is." So, help me God, I did it. We didn't move at all. We stood there that night and the next morning, we moved out there. No opposition, nobody got killed. I don't know if I got reported. See, by right, what you see in the movies and stuff like that,

if a man doesn't do what he's told from an officer, he's entitled to get shot. This was my war; I didn't get shot. That's why when I talk to these interviewers, I said, they're not going to believe me, nobody believes me. As a matter of fact, I never even got interviewed after the war as to what I did.

First, we hit the Siegfried Line. It was a rainy day, a damp day, stuff like that, we pulled into a field, before the... The Siegfried Line; a vehicle comes up, a jeep, with a driver that I didn't know, calls my name and says, "Come with me." As usual, I get in there, I thought maybe he was going to take me to the [unclear] or something like that which has happened before. I told you about the other times. He takes me and says, "We're going up to the Siegfried Line to lay out tank positions." I think nothing of it [unclear] we get to a road and the infantry was on both sides of the road going up, and I'm talking about anything else but the war and what I am supposed to with this guy. He was from Louisiana, one of those tobacco chewing...

**I:** A Cajun?

**BS:** Cajun, tobacco chewing Cajun there, and that's all he was doing. And oh yes. So, we get to talking about Florida. He had gone into the swamps in Florida to put in the Saratoga Race Track. That's the conversation. He's telling me how tough it was getting out the palm trees for the Saratoga Race Track, and I'm pitying the guy. We get up, and all of a sudden, the infantry isn't there anymore. So, we put the jeep on the side and we walk up, I don't see another soul. There's a bag like of, pillows, pretty long, like an embankment and if you look over the embankment there's some pillboxes. The pillboxes were set up like you always see, one in front, one in the rear, another one in front, zig-zag. That's the pillboxes. The row ended there. I got to that embankment – there was no more road. I didn't know if anybody was in the pillboxes and stuff like that. So, we get up on top and we were walking around to pick out these positions. Friendly fire comes in. White phosphorus. It happened so I'm wearing the raincoat. And it hits the embankment and sprinkles over us. I don't know if these marks on my face, these little marks are from there or not, but I do remember getting off that embankment fast and throwing away my raincoat. Then I took and washed my face. I even washed my helmet. We get down on the side and we started to make noise knocking in pins. Tent pins we took with us and we were pinning it in with the [unclear]. I didn't have... I used the little gun, the carbine. I was carrying a carbine at the time. I had all kinds of guns in the tank. I had German guns and stuff like that. Anyway, I carried a carbine because I knew I could get fast firing out of there and I could fire at a distance, and it's light. So, we're digging and making noise and the Germans opened up on us. They didn't know what the hell we were doing now. All they heard was noise back there. And they started over this embankment, shooting with a machine gun. And you can see [unclear] trees. The guy with me was a very faithful Catholic. He got down and started to pray. So help me, God. He's praying and I turn around and said, "Pray for me, too." We finished our job that we had to do because there was really nothing to do. All you had to do was pull the tanks up there, put the gun over the embankment and fire away. It never got to that. We never even had to bring down the M-10s. They brought down the Shermans, put the teeth on the Shermans, welded them back on again. Some of them they put the shovel on, they broke through the

embankment and shoveled them alive in the pillboxes. That's the way to fight a war. Buried them alive. And that's how we took the pillboxes.

After the pillboxes, see I get my battles mixed up. I'm going to jump right over to the Remagen Bridge. Before the Remagen Bridge, we took one city. I forgot the word you call it, a friendly city, the Germans were able to walk around and we were able to walk around in the town. They had a word for it – walk around city. I put my tank, I'm still in command now, as a private. I put my tank across the main road over there. The main intersection, it was a beautiful road, I forgot the name of the town, city, it was a big city. And we stopped everybody coming through, searched them and took whatever we could. I had an armful, not a handful, of watches. Oh, we were having a good time there. There was a bank, looked like a cathedral, with the big cathedral doors on it, sitting on the side. I was eyeing it for hours. Then I said, "Oh come on, let's get out of here, let's see what they got in the bank." I'm going to end up in jail for this. I took the tank, I rammed it, took my gun around it to the rear and rammed it with the front and broke the doors down. I get inside, go around looking and I found a lot of Belgian money. Blue money, I forgot what it was, but it was a load of it. Took it, dumped it on the floor and made a bonfire. It wasn't too much later I found out, the money was still good. That's war. Got out of there. I forgot what they call that, when you take a city and ... An open city. That was an open city and the German medics were going around picking up the bodies. Not that we did any fighting, they must have had them in the hospital there and stuff like that because I know I didn't do any shelling there or anything. Then we moved out of there. The next big battle, as far as I was concerned, was the Remagen Bridge. The Remagen Bridge, the day before and stuff like that, and we all pulled into like a wooded area, a lot of grass and stuff like that. And every morning about six or seven o'clock in the morning, daylight, we pulled out. The Bridge must have been already taken. When I got out there, everybody knows the Remagen Bridge, there was a highway alongside of it. We did, as usual, the dumbest thing, we pulled out all the ammunition trucks and stuff like that up ahead of it. The Germans opened fire from the hills. There was mountains or hills on the other side of the Remagen Bridge. They opened up and the first thing they hit is the truck with the ammunition going on all over, fireworks, but we kept moving on. We got on the Bridge; the infantry was going across it. The engineers had already put down planks, big heavy planks and stuff like that, so we could cross it there. We got across the other side. We went down to give them the defense and stuff like on the other side, got off the Bridge. The next day, my friend, I wouldn't mention his name because this makes me very angry when I read about the Remagen Bridge, his name isn't even mentioned. His was the tank that fell through the Bridge. The next day, because he got stuck in the mud and he couldn't get out until the next day and hit the [unclear] – him and the assistant gunner got killed. The radio operator and the driver got out alive. I mention this because later on they gave me the radio operator from that tank and I mention it because my friend came from a block away from me. So, I was very friendly and every time I'd get a break, I'd go over, we'd talk and stuff like that. So, his mother was the only one I went to see after the war, and when I got there, I couldn't talk, I started to cry like a baby and left without saying a word. All right, the Remagen Bridge, they were shooting down at us and he came the next day. The following day, the first time I saw a German jet. I had seen the rockets going over to England and stuff like that, but this is the first time, and I

was on the gun when the jet flew over. They tried to bomb the Bridge because they knew how essential that was. The only Bridge we had over that river. Everything was going across it. I'm standing there on the machine gun and the F-10 and the jet, so I thought I would be able to get a sight out of it. I couldn't get a sight; it was that fast. I couldn't shoot off anything. But that's how I got to see the jet. We stayed there a couple of days and then we moved on. Now that we were in Germany fighting got tougher. In other words, everything we had to take, we had to take mostly with a fight. Very few towns gave up and stuff like that. One town, this is where one of my intelligence comes in. One town, it was the nighttime. I went through it, it was like skeleton, every building got hit, like you rarely do see. This is what I saw. I go through and I get orders for me to go back alone and report into the rat house. Rat house is the Mayor's headquarters and stuff like that. That's the German word for it, I'm pretty sure. I came into the rat house and that's where they gave me the picture of Martin Borman. He was the secretary to Hitler. They lost touch of him and they made up pictures. They figure he was trying to get away. This is way before they got to Hitler. So, I got that. I don't know why they sent me; anybody could have gone picking it up. I went back, I kept that picture with me. Later years, if I get to it, I'll tell you how I went to South America looking for him. I'd still be looking for him, but I'm a broke-down old man now. They still haven't caught him; you heard these stories before?

**I:** Some of them.

**BS:** You heard this, I think? Okay, so I got the picture, we fought, stuff like that there. Oh, one town during the daylight there, snow was still laying out, I remember. I saw a wheelbarrow with a German officer in it. The German officer was cut, he probably was being operated on. A nice clean cut like that, laying in the wheelbarrow. You had to leave him, probably die, but that was a sight, seeing that, probably one of the interviewers probably saw that, because everybody that was in that area saw it going through that town. Oh, I forgot to tell you, Saint-Lô – all the way back to the Bulge – it was my outfit that lost [unclear], three tanks were trapped in Saint-Lô for a couple of weeks and if you want to check that one out, it was in the Stars and Stripes. They had a whole story about it, okay? So, while they [unclear], being that I volunteered out of headquarters, they had gotten the idea that I had the death wish. So, they came to me – I should walk up the highway with a minesweeper. I should walk into [unclear] with the minesweeper and the other guys with the rifles and stuff would walk behind me, so they could take the town. I didn't do it; I chickened out. They took the town without me. But I just wanted to know. Some of those guys from that tank were hiding in the basements, in the cellars there, and stuff like that. A lot of them got out alive. That's one of the incidents that I had to tell you, even though I chickened out. Now, Remagen Bridge, the biggest disaster was for [unclear] in the first few days that we went through. After that, there was lot of wine. I stocked up and stocked up on wine there. They had the [unclear] wine, out there. That's the best wine I ever got in my life. Its better than the local one we get here. Then we moved out of course, like I was saying there, we had small battles and stuff like that. One battle – I remember. It wasn't a battle. At this time what happened was, they split us up; they put three tanks, I think, or three of us to where our division or regiment – in other words they split us up so I would be with a company. I got my orders from the infantry. One day, I'm up on the road or highway or whatever you want to call it, and there's a farm with an open field, and they're going to

cause like a charge, like you see, spread out. All of a sudden there, I got my tank sitting alongside the barn that was up on the road, just the gun shooting out. A shell comes out, I didn't know from where, goes through the barn, bounces off the side of my tank. I'm not used to that. So, we started to fire away, not knowing where to fight, but I knew the infantry wasn't in the woods over there. I started firing away and this was a nice warm day and I'm wearing my combat suit. A combat suit, I don't know if you people know what it is, but it's overalls with the tank jacket against the overalls. Oh, I want you to know, at no time did I wear a tank driver's helmet. My crew always wore a regular infantry helmet. That's because my first commander of the tank got hit by a sniper and we had to get him out of the tank then. At the beginning we had to figure out how to get him out of the tank. Of course, we figured out, to get him out of the escape hatch we had at the bottom – most people don't know there was an escape hatch and what you do is you open it up and put the person or the dead person's head out and you move up and you slowly let him out, then you put the escape hatch back, pull up a while and then he's out in the open. It's easier that way than trying to get him out of the top of the tank. That's why we only wore infantry helmets because, I... Anyway, let's get over with the war.

Then we got orders, oh yeah, I forgot ... [unclear] that was war and stuff like that. I thanked him like a [unclear]. I couldn't understand but all of a sudden I went down and then I realized what it was, with the heat and the smell most people don't realize – the fire, you see a flame come out of the side of the tank when you shoot, that doesn't affect us, but what does affect us is the smell of the gunpowder. Between that and the heat, I keeled over. I didn't realize; what the hell. It's things like that I remember. Then we moved on. Later on, we got into the Black Forest. In the Black Forest there, one of my favorite stops was Herman Goehring's hunting palace. Herman Goehring's hunting palace was made all the way around with a lot of glass; this you can check out probably in the books and stuff like that. Here we have a whole company of men in a place like that. The first thing that amazed me was it was already stripped. He had showcases lined up in the big living room or whatever it was, but they were empty – his trophies he must have taken out. The main amazing thing is that the bathroom; I was never used to an updated bathroom because they had two, one you did your session on, the other one was for the woman, to clean herself out after intercourse. I can use that word, can't I? Of course, in the [unclear] we had to use everything we could possibly have. They used that, too. The next thing I got worried is, and I don't know why they always came to me, is there's a safe down in the basement; besides a wine cellar, there was a safe down there. It was a nice size safe. So, what I did was go down and look at it there and I told them I'd be right back. I still carried some of that dynamite. It wasn't the dynamite; it was that pretty stuff.

**I:** C-4.

**BS:** These guys know better than me. C-4. So, I took the C-4, ran it around the edge of the safe like I was taught, put it in the detonator, attached the cord to it, didn't know how much it's going to blow, but I nearly blew that thing off the hedges and everything.... And so I did was everything. There was diamonds galore. I'm telling you if I kept all of it, I would have been one of the wealthiest men in the country. I took a diamond stick pin with the swastika on it. I took a ring, I took earrings, I took a

necklace with diamonds on it and I figured, whoa, if I ever get that home, I'm made. But then, as we moved on, we had orders to take five towns each day. It was only a couple of towns. But, if there weren't any white flags out and if we got shot at, we were to return the fire and level the town. At this time, my infantry was also volunteers out of a colored outfit. They gave me three of the best soldiers I ever had in my life, and I had been attached to the 82<sup>nd</sup>, the 1<sup>st</sup> division, the 29<sup>th</sup> division, the 30<sup>th</sup> division. These guys were fabulous. We set up a system. I'd go through town to one end, and the other tank would stay up there. The other tank would stay up there until we had two tanks. If we had any opposition, we'd start firing right away. If they didn't fire on us, these guys from the infantry went in. I've never seen anything like it. You would think it was a football game and they were carrying footballs. Instead they were carrying hand grenades. And they went in and we didn't get fired on. They still threw the hand grenades. The way they operated was like as if they were on the track field and stuff like that. House to house and I would see that. There was no combatant stuff like that and then we'd come in, and we'd take a break. If we were hungry and the Germans were there, you know the civilians, but first they gotta ask them, "Mach mir kartoffel?" Kartoffel is pancakes, potato pancakes. See I was [unclear] back in the [unclear]. Oh, I forgot to tell you while we were going out on stuff like that, and if I saw a prisoner coming back, I would jump out of the tank while moving and I told them, "I'll catch up to them." I would grab the German prisoner, with [unclear]." I'm one of the guys that carried a dagger tied to my shoe, my boot. One of the first things I would do is pull out the dagger, grab the German that was probably bigger than me and bring him in towards the dagger. And then I would ask him, "Wie is de [unclear]?" and most of the times, they told me. I don't think they hesitated if there was [unclear] and stuff like that. One other guy... I never got... Well anyways, I also did the torturing, being that I was in intelligence. I had to know what the hell was in front of me. We take five towns there; those were my glory days there. One night we pulled into a town there, I got hold of the woman there, wasn't a woman, nice girl, was a school teacher. We threw a party that night. The colored guys stood guard over the tank. As a matter of fact, with them there, I didn't have to stand guard on the tank anymore. I showed them how to use the gun and everything and to call me. I started sleeping in a bed for a change. We threw a party, what do you think we did, we played spinning the bottle and we had a good time. Relieved the pressure. We should have had more stuff like that.

Ok, the war ended there. The war ended and I got some prisoners out. One guy was from Kobe Island that was working on one of the farms. Everybody, you here about prison camps but you also hear about them working on farms, slave labor. So, this guy got out and he was alongside of my tank and I was talking to him and I said, "You're going to go home right away, you want to take back some stuff and I'll give you some?" He said, "Yes." And I gave him the diamonds. That was how stupid I was. I gave him the diamonds. I got his address and telephone number, that I kept, with the diamonds. Ok, that was that story. To continue on, I got an Indian with a turban on that was also working on the farms, and I started to talk to him and he said he wants to go home and can I help him. I stopped a woman on a bicycle, took the bicycle and gave it to him. He says, "Well, they're liable to shoot me." I was carrying a shotgun that was an antique. It was a double-barreled shotgun with a rifle in the middle of the top of it. See, I knew about guns. And I gave it to him and I wished him a good trip. Now it was... I can



remember my fighting, but the fighting wasn't over. The war was over and we still made night attacks and stuff like that there because they had what they called their underground, was the wolf something or other, and we were afraid they were going to organize and start fighting, so we used to make night raids. Whenever we got worried that a [unclear]. One Sunday, they put me in front of the church. I want you to know I got the brunt of everything. In front of the church because three people were not allowed to gather on the outside. So, I had to stay there in front of the church and break up the people from gathering. That hurt me. I was doing it. But things like that... Another time, German kid comes over to me. I think he was about eight years old. The war's over and I was one of the first ones home, I'll get to that. The war's over and he says, "Jetzt sollten wir gegen die Russen kämpfen." In other words, now we should go fight the Russians. Things like that you don't forget. I looked at him, "Didn't we fight enough?" I got home; I had about sixty-five points, we were still fighting in Japan, but while I was on the high seas there. When I got shipped home, nobody ever interviewed what the hell I did. The captain from my outfit. I want to know, I'm going to say here truly, I fought a war without officers. I saved my officer, Lieutenant's, life because when I came back and I don't know how much time I have to tell you, but we moved into a position there and I knew that the officer was in the town. I found him in town there. When I got in there, I saw him sitting at a table there with the whiskey in front of him, smoking a cigar, having a drink in a nice chair and things like that, all the mail piled up by the wall and the food piled up there. I put my finger on the carbine and I held it on my side and I was thinking, "Should I shoot him now?" I didn't shoot him; I saved his life and he knew it. Because later on... Oh this, during the Ruhr Valley. We moved out on the highway there, we were moving out. His jeep was out in front of me. I kept picking up on him; I scared the hell out of him. He got out, came over and got me out of driving the tank. See, I did everything – I drove, radio operator and stuff like that because of all the training I got. I got back to the States. Everybody got a day off to go home. I didn't. I was CQ, charge of quarters, in New Jersey there, Camp Kilmer. But I was lucky, while I was sleeping, a girl, a WAC woke me up. I grabbed her; we had a fight. That's why I remember all this. Oh yes, and then my father came to visit me while I was still at Camp Kilmer. I was loaded with guns. See, I was a collector and a seller. Anyways, I loaded up whatever I could, the swords, everything into my father's [unclear]. I figured they're going to stop me, but they wouldn't stop my old man. He got all my guns back.

**I:** Now when were you discharged finally?

**BS:** I was discharged in Kilmer, I think it was Kilmer, you want the date? I don't remember the date. But I told you I put in four years, that's enough.

**I:** Thank you very much.