

**Everett H. Kerwood
Veteran**

**Wayne Clark
Interviewer**

**Interviewed on May 24th, 2011
At the New York State Military Museum**

WC: Today is the 24th of May 2011. We are at the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center in Saratoga Springs. Sir, for the record, and my name is Wayne Clark, sir for the record would you please state your full name and your date and place of birth please.

EK: Everett Kerwood, I was born in Johnsville, New York. My birthdate is November 18th 1923. I am now 87 years old.

WC: Alright, now did you attend school there?

EK: Yes, I attended grade school then I moved to the Burnt Hills Ballston Lake and graduated from the high school there in 1942.

WC: 1942. At that point did you go into the military or did you go to work or-?

EK: I went to work at G.E.

WC: Oh ok.

EK: In Schenectady.

WC: And what did you do?

EK: Well, I was a messenger there.

WC: Alright, and how long were you there before you went into the military?

EK: Not long, then Pearl Harbor happened and I was drafted into the military.

WC: What was your reaction when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

EK: Well, I was (chuckles)-

WC: Did you know where Pearl Harbor was?

EK: Yes. I knew where it was but I was very well- excited or whatever you call it to hear about it what it happened.

WC: Well when that, let's see, that happened in December 7th 1941 and you didn't go in till 18 January 1943 so you worked another two years before you went, before you got drafted.

EK: Yes.

WC: Did you continue to go on as a messenger?

EK: Yes at G.E.

WC: How did your life change once we went to war before you actually went into the military? Did you experience any kind of rationing or shortages of anything?

EK: No, not that I can remember.

WC: So you were drafted into the army?

EK: Yes.

WC: Where did you go for your basic training?

EK: I went down to Fort Dix in New Jersey, and then I was shipped to Texas.

WC: Now did you do your basic at Fort Dix?

EK: Yes. No, no, no I went to Texas.

WC: You went to Texas okay.

EK: At the camp (unclear 2:48), Roundwood, Texas.

WC: Was it infantry basic training?

EK: No, not that I can remember.

WC: Alright, you went to, we're going to field our artillery battery-

EK: Yes.

WC: Now your artillery training was that your first time really away from home?

EK: Yes. We did all kinds of training there.

WC: Did you-

EK: All kinds of guns and, all could fire all the guns and everything.

WC: Did you fire the World War 1 Springfield or did you have the M1 Garands?

EK: Well we had the M1 Garands, but I think we fired Springfield also and we fired rifles and all kinds of guns.

WC: Were there anybody else in your basic training unit that you knew from back home at all? Or were they all strangers to you?

EK: They were all strangers. I can't remember anyone from back home.

WC: Once you completed your basic training did you go onto an advance school after that?

EK: Well, I wanted to go in the Air Force, so they let me- transferred me to Cedar Rapids Iowa to an Air Cadet Training course.

WC: Oh?

EK: But I was too short to be a pilot and my rating wasn't high enough to be a gunner so they shipped me back to my own unit and I went overseas with my field artillery at the time.

WC: That was the same unit that you did training with?

EK: Yes that was the same unit that I was training with.

WC: And where did you leave from. Was it New York? Or-

EK: I believe- I believe I shipped out of New York over to Scotland.

WC: Was it a single ship or a convoy?

EK: No a single ship. And they issued a truck- a weapons carrier truck and I drove that in Scotland. And, everybody was on their own side and that was some experience driving around there on the wrong side.

WC: Now when did you go overseas? Do you recall approximately?

EK: Well about two years after, two years after-

WC: So you went in January of 43-

EK: Yes-

WC: Were you involved in the Battle of the Bulge at all?

EK: Well at the end.

WC: Ok so you got over in 44?

EK: Yes.

WC: Do you want to tell us about that experience?

EK: Well I have never been on a ship, never been on the ocean and I had problems-

WC: Were you sea sick?

EK: Well- I didn't feel very good. Probably from the sea sickness. When we got over there they got us all together and they ran us to the ship across the channel D-80. I'm glad I only crossed the channel on D-80 and not-

WC: Oh okay so-

EK: And not on the main-

WC: Okay so you went, you actually missed out on the Bulge?

EK: No not on the Bulge. That was at the end. The Bulge was at the end.

WC: Okay.

EK: But we went over the- and then we all got together over there and they started shipping us where we're needed.

WC: Mhm.

EK: We weren't in a special, special army but where ever they needed our guns we had the big Howitzers. 155 Howitzers short (unclear 7:13).

WC: Okay.

EK: And each section I think there was six. Six batter- no four batteries I think I was in the headquarter battery and I drove the radio truck. I drove the radio truck and I had a big radio behind my seat and all the radio operators operated the radios. And, they had a plane, a light plane that flew over and they would radio down and then my radio would contact the guns and the guns would and they would aim the guns where it was needed and they could all see where we fired from the plane. And, so I drove that truck all over France and wherever was needed. Whatever army we were needed we were shipped to.

WC: And that was your primary job to do? To drive the truck?

EK: Yes, the radio truck so they (unclear 8:13).

WC: What were the driving conditions like? Was there a lot of off road driving or was it mostly-

EK: No there were roads but sometimes at night they only had these little tiny lights on the front and you couldn't use any headlights and you had to make sure you went where

you were supposed to but you didn't get lost and go back the way you came. So, you didn't get lost and didn't get mixed up with the enemy.

WC: And, what did you do for rations?

EK: Well they shipped us sea rations and we had a truck, a kitchen truck that provided meals for us.

WC: So did you travel with the whole unit?

EK: Yes. With all the guns and the whole battery.

WC: And, what about the, your personal equipment, your clothing, boots etc? Where they adequate for the weather conditions?

EK: Yes. It was all packed in a duffle bag. Everything. And, they put a left fender, I had a big fender on my truck, a big fender on the weapons carrier. They put a bracket around it and I got two shell (unclear 9:43) and put it together so I had my own tent. And, I would roll that up with a pillow I found and put straps around it and threw it on my left fender in this rack. And, I could always see it and the night time I get that out and put up my tent and lay my bed bag, sleeping bag, in the tent. And, that's the way I slept.

WC: Now, how often did you get showers and fresh clean clothes?

EK: Well I don't know how often, but once in a while. We come to a place where we can take showers and change.

WC: Any direct contact with the Germans?

EK: No.

WC: What about artillery did they have artillery rounds on top of you at all?

EK: Uh, I never had any problems there. I'm glad I wasn't injured or hurt in any way.

WC: What about your unit overall, did they sustain any casualties?

EK: No, no casualties because we were back. You see our guns were so big we were standing quite a ways back from the front.

WC: And whereabouts, what was your route of travel? I know you landed in France D-Day, plus Haiti.

EK: Yes.

WC: And what route of travel did you take from there?

EK: Well I had a map but I can't remember what routes we took. We just headed west towards Germany- or east that'll be east.

WC: Alright, so you spent most of your time in France until you got to Germany?

EK: Yes.

WC: Go any place else in between?

EK: No. Not that I can remember. Belgium, we were in Belgium.

WC: How long were you in Belgium?

EK: I don't know, whenever they needed us. Once a while the officers had to go back to a meeting and they would give me a weapons carrier, not a weapons carrier, it had seats on it. Like a big truck with seats on it and we go back to the headquarters in Belgium, and they put me up in a private quarters with the big generals. Then I drove there, be in their officers' quarters, so their meetings.

WC: Now what rank where you?

EK: I was a PFC first class. That was the highest rank that I maintained.

WC: What kind of weapon did you carry?

EK: Oh, I just carried a Carbine. They had a mount on my truck on my left and the Carbine always set in the mount. I never had to use it. And behind my seat there was a big post, about that big, and I had the- a machine gun. 50 caliber machine gun laying in the truck that I could put on that post, if I ever needed to use it. Heidelberg was one place that we stopped. Toward the end of the war over there when we come to the Battle of the Bulge all the Germans and our groups all got together near where they call the Battle of the Bulge.

And one night I was on duty and that plane came over, and I had the machine gun mounted and I put it on the mount and the aircraft started shooting the plane. So I got up there on the 50 caliber machine gun and I start shooting. And about every third or fourth round was the tracer you could see where it was hitting. I don't know who hit the plane but the plane went down over around the mountain. We got that plane out of there. The Battle of the Bulge.

WC: Now what were your conditions like at the Bulge? It was cold, was your equipment adequate?

EK: Yes. We had heavy coats, all army coats.

WC: I don't imagine your truck had heat in it. Did it?

EK: No. Because it was wide open, canvas- I think it was canvas top.

WC: So once the bulge was over-

EK: Then they shipped us back. After the Bulge we were shipped back and I was- put me on a boat and shipped me back to New York where I was discharged.

WC: Ok. Were you in Europe when the war ended.

EK: I believe it. After the Battle of the Bulge I think the war ended.

WC: Well actually the war in Europe ended in I believe it was May of 45. Were you still over there? In May? Let's see, Roosevelt died in April of 45. Were you over there when you heard about the death of the President?

EK: Uh, I can't remember. I- when I came back I got out before the war ended I think.

WC: Well according to your papers, you were discharged in December of 45 so the war was- even the war in Japan was over at that point.

EK: Yes.

WC: When the war had ended in Europe do you recall? Was there a lot of celebration?

EK: Yes.

WC: And where there any rumors going around that you might end up going to the Pacific with Japan?

EK: No.

WC: No? Ok.

EK: They shipped us back all on a ship back to New York City. On New Year's Eve I was discharged. Instead of staying in New York City I caught the bus and came back home. I didn't even stay down there for New Year's Eve, I remember that.

WC: Now when the war with Japan ended there must have been a lot of celebration because you were still in the military then?

EK: Yes, I don't really remember that.

WC: Alright, now you were discharged as you mentioned on New Year's Eve and you were discharged from whereabouts?

EK: From Camp- Fort Dix New Jersey. (unclear 16:35)

WC: And you headed home.

EK: Yes.

WC: And what was your homecoming like?

EK: It was good. My parents were glad to see me. I was happy to be home.

WC: How long had it been since your parents had seen you?

EK: Well-

WC: Before you went overseas did you have any leave time at all? Or did you go-

EK: No. One time I had a leave and they sent me down to the riviera.

WC: Ok so you had an R and R? What was the riviera like?

EK: Oh it was beautiful there.

WC: Was it?

EK: Oh with a big hotel with meals and everything on the beach and everything. It was really nice there.

WC: Now once you got back home did you take advantage of what was called a 52 20 club? Where you could sign up for unemployment or did you go right back to work?

EK: Well I was going to take a course in air conditioning and refrigeration. And I went over to Hudson Valley to take a course for a while and they paid me, while I was taking the course.

WC: Oh so you were taking advantage of the G.I Bill at that time?

EK: Yes. Yes.

WC: And did you graduate from that course?

EK: I don't believe I did, I can't remember.

WC: Ok, you might have dropped out of it?

EK: Yes and a job came up.

WC: I see.

EK: Where the International Harvester (unclear 18:20) in Menands shipping.

WC: Oh really?

EK: And I went there.

WC: Yeah my dad used to work there too.

EK: Yes.

WC: Now how long did you stick with International Harvester?

EK: Well until they moved out. They moved out to another place down to Baltimore Maryland and I didn't want to go with them so I got a job with MTI mechanical technology incorporative.

WC: Ok so just going back. You worked with them shortly after the war you stayed with International Harvester till I think they moved out of Menands, I think in the late 70s I think.

EK: Well I think I left there in like in the middle 60s and moved to MTI.

WC: And what kind of work did you do for MTI?

EK: Well I started there in the shipping and mailroom department, taking care of the shipping that came in and the shipping to go out and the mail picking up and delivering the mail for all the offices. Then afterwards I got a chance to go into the printing department where I operated an offset printer and xerox machines and reproduction of drawings that all the draftsmen made up. The reproduction-

WC: Did you retire from them?

EK: Yes.

WC: What year did you retire?

EK: 1965. No, wait a minute 1988.

WC: 88?

EK: 1988, I was 65 years old and I said "that's it, I'm giving up."

WC: I don't blame you. Now -

EK: But when I first got out I had a job in mechanics for five years. Then I met my wife and got married and moved to Latham.

WC: Now did you join any veteran's organizations at all?

EK: No I haven't joined any. They have been sending me all kinds of literature they want me to join them.

WC: To be affiliated (unclear 20:44)

EK: Yes.

WC: Did you stay in contact with anybody that you were in the service with?

EK: No I didn't. We had one time a reunion. And I went there and seen all of them.

WC: When was that?

EK: Well I can't remember what year it was. After I was discharged.

WC: Was it after you retired?

EK: No it was before I retired.

WC: Oh I see and whereabouts was the reunion?

EK: I think it was down in New York City.

WC: Oh ok. Now just going back a bit, when you were overseas, did you get to see any U.S.O shows? Did you see any celebrities?

EK: No, I don't remember.

WC: How do you think your time in the service changed or affected your life?

EK: Well it gave me lots of exercise and all that training and everything. All about guns and how to take care of them and how to treat them and be careful of them.

WC: Now have you suffered any health effects? I know some of the veterans that we have interviewed here at the Battle of the Bulge had problems with frostbite and frozen feet that have bothered them in later years. Have you experienced anything like that?

EK: No, thank the lord I never had any problems. I always wore heavy clothes when it was cold.

WC: Alright is there anything else that we may have missed that you would like to touch on? About your experiences?

EK: Not that I can remember or recall.

WC: Any funny experiences or situations?

EK: -

WC: Ok. You got some photographs here. Now this one here that I'm going to focus on first that's in the frame. It says World War II honoree, Everett H. Kerwood. And, do you want to tell us a little bit about that?

EK: Well this is on the computer if you dial in the History channel on the computer, it says the branch "U.S. Army", hometown "Latham, New York", activity during World War II "Served in central Europe, Northern France, (unclear 23:46), Battle of the Bulge, field artillery. And then at our town of Colonie they put all these names and everything

on a board and they set up the board at all the meetings. And here is a picture that I had taken when I was-

WC: You were quite a handsome guy.

EK: Thank you.

WC: And do you recall when and where that picture was taken? Was it during basic training or afterwards?

EK: Yeah I think it was when I was shipped to the air force they shipped me home on leave and that's when the picture was taken.

WC: Very nice. Well, if there isn't anything else you would like to add we will conclude the interview. Thank you so much for the interview and thank you for your service sir.

EK: You're welcome. Thank you.