



PFC. James K. Galligan
CO. E, 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry,
3rd Division, 5th Army



A discussion with a WWII Infantryman from Saratoga Springs NY

Anzio, Italy Beachhead, 1944

INTERVIEW OF JAMES K. GALLIGAN

APRIL 18, 2006

All comments in Brackets were added for clarification by LTC Millis subsequent to the interview. Extraneous comments have been removed.

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL MILLIS:

LTC M: Let's see what happens. I don't even know if it will really work.

JKG: Well, as you know, I was in the 3rd Infantry Division.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: And when I joined them, it was in November of '43 as a replacement. And it was after the Volturno River and we were in the mountains, Mount Rotundo as I recall, and there was a Mount Lungo there. Mount Lungo and Mount Rotundo like in the center like was this valley. We called it Purple Heart Valley. And we got taken off the lines to go back outside Naples to train, Anzio. But I was in the 15th Infantry Regiment and we got sent back up to the lines because they thought there was a gap in the lines up there.

LTC M: I think I read this. "E" Company of the 2nd Battalion 15th Infantry?

JKG: Yeah, yeah.

LTC M: Okay.

JKG: That's what I was in.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: And the regiment, the 15th regiment got sent back up to fill in this gap. And the 7th and 30th regiment, they stayed outside Naples.

LTC M: Was that -- that was after the landing on Anzio?

JKG: No. This was before.

LTC M: Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. You're getting to that.

JKG: And as I recall, we were probably back up on the lines for about two weeks, and then we went back to where the rest of the division was and did some amphibious training like outside of Naples. And then of course we went up out of the harbor up to Anzio, and that was January 22nd, 2:00 in the morning when we went to the beach.

LTC M: Oh, so it was actually the middle of the night when you went?

JKG: Yeah, when we got up there.

LTC M: Do you -- did you go from a landing craft? Or from a ship to a landing craft? Or --

JKG: I went in on an LCI.

LTC M: Landing Craft Infantry.

JKG: And -- well, the landing was real simple. There wasn't much opposition at all actually until we got inland.

LTC M: Did -- when -- did they -- did you give -- were you given an operations order from your chain of command that told you what was going to happen in much detail? Or were you kind of in the dark about the details of the landing?

JKG: I don't -- I don't really recall too much detail. I don't recall anything really too much to be honest of it. Of course, you know, that's 50 -

LTC M: Yeah, yeah, it's a long time ago.

JKG: What is it, 60-some-odd years ago now.

LTC M: '44 to, yeah, '61.

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: '62. I'm sorry. I'm not doing too good with my math.

JKG: So -- but anyway, we just went in, and here again I forgot -- with some opposition of course. Not a great deal. And was up to -- well, let me see. And after 22nd -- I think it was about five -- five days we hit the Mussolini Canal. That was an irrigation ditch.

LTC M: Yep.

JKG: That -- and of course the Germans had -- there were these two -- two hills in front of us. Not hills -- it was bigger than hills. Mountains. And it was -- it was Route 6, Highway 6 that went from like Rome to Naples. And

that was the supply line for Monte Cassino, the Gustav Line, the defensive line.

LTC M: Gustav -- something like --

JKG: It was something like that.

LTC M: Yeah. And of course Cassino was sort of on a high mountain, and well, let's say it was sort of the anchor to that -- the line, like --

LTC M: The German defense?

JKG: And Route 6 was the supply line from Rome down to Naples. And our actual say first objective of something was to try to take that highway so to cut off the supplies. Well, needless to say, we never got there because the Germans had sent in reinforcements and got them in there pretty fast. And it was just the third division, a British division and the 504 Paratroopers -- but they didn't jump in. They just went in as infantry. And we was in I'd say close to 15 miles when everything just -- just halted. They got their troops in and artillery, and then --

LTC M: The Germans did?

JKG: Yeah. And they certainly ended up outnumbering us quite a bit. And of course the attack started, and --

LTC M: The German attack?

JKG: Yeah. Trying to -- well, I guess they had -- they claimed they had orders from Hitler to drive the beach-head back into the sea to give Germany a victory, you know, because they were getting - Normandy hadn't started yet.

LTC M: Yeah, it was just --

JKG: But they were having a tough time on the Russian front, and I guess they wanted to have a good victory. But anyway, during that I got hit with artillery. I always think it was an 88 because an 88 would be in a flat trajectory weapon. Could have been on a tank, if I remember, but there was no way come in straight in and there's no -- there's no kind of warning until they're right on top of you. Then you hear that last whistle or something, and then --

LTC M: It's a -- it's a high velocity --

JKG: It -- yeah. It wasn't like an artillery shell that goes up and over your head or something where you can hear it.

LTC M: So you were -- you're about 15 miles inland from Anzio?

JKG: From the beach, yeah. From the beach.

LTC M: I'm sorry. The beach at Anzio.

JKG: What was -- we went in close to a town called Nettuno. Nettuno, Nettuno. N-E-U -- something like that. We were on -- as I recall on the extreme right. And the British was on like more or less like on the left.

LTC M: What was your job and your responsibilities?

JKG: Just an infantry man.

LTC M: A rifleman?

JKG: Yeah. An M1 -- M1. And, you know, went on patrols and on outposts, and -

LTC M: Do you remember any of the folks, the names of the folks like in your chain of command, squad leaders and platoon leaders?

JKG: Well, the captain was named - by the name Breenan.

LTC M: Breman?

JKG: Brennan, B-R-E-N-N-A-N.

LTC M: Okay. With an "N."

JKG: And he was related, he lived down -- I talked to him. He lived down on Long Island because he asked me, he says, you're from Saratoga Springs, and I said yes. And he says, do you know the Brennan family up there. And I said, no, which I didn't. But his cousin was quite a big athlete in Saratoga Springs, and so I mentioned him to him. But I says, but he was older than myself. I said, I don't know him. But there was Captain Brennan. And then our Lieutenant was the name Hitchcock, and he got - he got shot within a

couple of days in Anzio. So we were without a Lieutenant there for a while. And in fact I got wounded before we got a -- whoever replaced him.

LTC M: New platoon leader?

JKG: More or less the sergeants took over, but then we lost -- started losing the sergeants. Of course, as you know, the 3rd was a regular Army.

LTC M: Yes, it was.

JKG: And the sergeants were - were regular Army sergeants. One name was Keller and one was Sharpe. And -- well --

LTC M: The platoon sergeant put the squad leaders and --

JKG: Yeah. I can't -- I seem to just remember Keller. He was our -- no Sharpe was my sergeant, like a platoon sergeant. And Keller, I don't know if he was like the -- what would you -- staff sergeant.

LTC M: So he would have been maybe the squad leader?

JKG: No. He was higher. It seems like he was -- what would -- company sergeant. I can't think of the --

LTC M: The First Sergeant?

JKG: First Sergeant. Maybe he was a first sergeant, Keller. I can't -- but Sharpe was one of the platoon sergeants. And I can't even remember the squad leader's name. Too long ago.

LTC M: Had you trained -- but you did spend some time training with that unit in theater before the assault on Anzio Beach?

JKG: Well, I didn't get any - excuse me -- see, when I went over, I was a replacement and I joined the 3rd right on the front lines. I mean, they were just -- there you're just replacing the casualties, and you know what a replacement is, and --

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: -- so we just fit in and go from there.

LTC M: On the job training?

JKG: Yeah, sort of.

LTC M: That's a tough way of doing it, but --

JKG: But, you know, I just -- at that time, I was in Camp Croft --

LTC M: Can I ask a couple more questions about that part of it first?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: Because I wanted to ask you some stuff about Camp Croft, too. You -- the equipment that you -- oh, I was going to ask about the -- first I was going to ask about the weather. How -- what was the --

JKG: Well, the weather, it was winter-time in Italy. Of course there was no snow, but it was rainy all the time especially down in the mountain area before Anzio you'd sink right into the mud it was so muddy. In Anzio of course there was -- it was rainy there, but that was like all marshes. Like tanks, they couldn't -- they had to stay on what roads there were because you get off to the side and you'd sink in because it was just marshes. As I said, they had that irrigation ditch going through there, Mussolini -- they called it the Mussolini Canal.

LTC M: Yeah. So equipment-wise you of course had your -- your weapon and helmet and so forth. Did you -- did you carry any stuff that was like not issue because it seemed like a good idea at the time? Or --

JKG: No. The only thing you carried was the M1 with the ammunition belts and a couple of hand grenades and -- and I had a knife.

LTC M: Did you carry food on your --

JKG: What?

LTC M: Did you carry food or rations on your person?

JKG: No. They really were set up. I don't -- you didn't have any room for that. I mean, they -- they more or less came up. I don't recall actually even down the mountains carrying in any food.

LTC M: So there was -- they were fairly good about getting you your rations?

JKG: Oh, yeah.

LTC M: And couple of canteens of - of water?

JKG: Yeah. You carried water, yeah, naturally on your belt with the ammunition, you know.

LTC M: Did you have wool uniforms, or wool uniforms and jackets, or --

JKG: Well, yeah, wool pants and jackets. Then we -- as I recall they were really nice. They - I think they were kind of issued to the Armored Forces as I recall. But we got them and we got them down in the mountains. They were like a heavy overall type. Came up, came over your shoulders like overalls. And then you had a nice jacket. And they were -- they were really nice. They were water repellent and they were warm. And then of course we had them going up onto Anzio.

LTC M: Did you just carry the clips of ammunition in the cartridge belt?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: Or did you carry more in bandoleers?

JKG: That's what I was going to say, you could have a bandolier over your shoulder like.

LTC M: And then just a couple of regular fragmentation grenades?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: That's about it. It was, you know, the T.O. [Table of Organization], your company was three platoons, three rifle platoons and then a weapons

platoon. Then there was -- the heavy weapons was with the battalions as I recall. They were like had the .30 caliber machine guns and the 40 or -- 60 millimeter mortars.

LTC M: Little --

JKG: Yeah. The 81 millimeter mortars and say heavier, I'd say 50 caliber, they were with heavy weapons. A company that weren't really attached to the -- to the company. They were more or less in battalions as I recall, the heavy weapons.

LTC M: So did you end up having to sleep just pretty much on the -- sleep on the ground in a --

JKG: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

LTC M: I'm familiar with that.

JKG: Yeah. You know, I never recall ever having a half shell [shelter half] or pitching a tent with a guy.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: I mean, you just dug a fox hole is what you did and stayed in the fox hole.

LTC M: Did you have -- you had some sort of hasty defenses or light shallow shell fox holes when you received that attack from the Germans?

JKG: Well, the fox holes up in Anzio were pretty shallow anyway because of the water table.

LTC M: Okay. So you don't get too deep, huh?

JKG: And so it wasn't going to be down deep, except there was a hill there where I -- I got wounded and you could dig into the side of the hill. And that was on the other side of the canal.

LTC M: On the enemy side of the canal? Or on the friendly side of the canal?

JKG: Well, I'd have to say the enemy's. As I recall, we were the -- in that area -- excuse me -- anyway, we were the first ones across because we went across at night.

LTC M: Uh-huh.

JKG: And we got -- I think we were about the first ones across that -- because I know we really had to wade to it with rifles up in the air.

LTC M: In the cold -- in the cold -- relatively cold weather?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: Yeah. That must have been miserable. So it was what, in the -- was it above freezing most of the time?

JKG: Oh, yeah. It was more or less damp, cold, rainy weather like, you know.

LTC M: Like we've had here the past few days?

JKG: Yeah, similar. Maybe a little colder.

LTC M: High forties, low fifties?

JKG: Well, I don't know the exact temperature, but I know down in the thirties or upper twenties as I recall.

LTC M: But miserable?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: Let me -- let me jump back to Camp Croft for a second. You -- you were -- graduated from the what, the Lake Avenue School [Saratoga Springs NY, High School] in '42?

JKG: Yeah, right.

LTC M: You were the class president?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: And your dad is Ed -- your mom is my great aunt and dad works for the railroad. Where -- did you live out on the West side [of Saratoga Springs], or --

JKG: I lived in so many places. I lived in Waterbury Street [?], Van Dame Street, Church Street, back to Van Dam Street, back to Church Street, up to Church Street, across the street on Church Street. What's that, about seven places?

LTC M: You probably had to join the Army to stop moving.

JKG: Then I -- then I got married and moved to the East side.

LTC M: So when you're graduating from high school and there's a war going on, what were your -- what did you -- what were your expectations about what would happen to you after?

JKG: Well, of course, we all knew we were going in the service. We were 18. And they stopped enlistments. The draft came in of 18-year-olds. The draft went in January 1st of '44 for 18-year-olds. They had the draft prior to that for older. But that's when they started drafting 18-year-olds. And the outside -- excuse me -- outside of the Air Force they didn't let you volunteer. You would go down as a group on the bus from Saratoga down to Albany [NY] and have your physical. And then they had -- as you would get through your physical, you had a Navy recruiter, a Marine recruiter and an Army recruiter. And the Navy had -- as I recall, it was about 70 of us that went down. And the Navy had a quota and the Marines had a quota and then the rest went into the Army. I think it was about somewhere like five for the Navy and five for the Marines, but it could have been more than that. I just don't recall. But anyway, I was the first one through the physical and I was going to go in the Navy. And --

LTC M: That was your hope?

JKG: That was my hope. But when I -- when we're going through the door where the recruiters were, a soldier was standing there, and he says - or whatever, said, where would you like to go. I said, the Navy. He said the recruiter is right over there. So I went over to the Navy recruiter and sat in front of

him and he went through my physical. Of course being 18 there wasn't anything wrong with me.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: So he just kept shaking his head like up and down, good, good, good. And then he got to the very end, and he says, you couldn't see those numbers he had in the book [color blindness test]. And I said, no, I couldn't see them. He said, you didn't see those dots before them like a two or a three. And I said no. Of course it shows on the thing that I couldn't, you know. And he said, well, can you tell the difference on the red light, you know the red from the green. I said, sure, I know that. He said, but you couldn't tell the numbers in there. I said, no, I couldn't. He said, yeah, he says, the physical shows that you're color blind. And he says, the Navy don't take color blind.

LTC M: So you had a --

JKG: And he says, don't even bother going to the Marines because they don't take color blind either. He said, sorry, but you'll have to go in the Army. And that's where I went. So if I wasn't -- if I wasn't color blind I would have been in the Navy.

LTC M: In the Navy.

JKG: But that's the -- who knows. Maybe I was better off in the Army.

LTC M: Well, you don't know.

JKG: You don't know.

LTC M: Okay. So you ended up - you ended up in the Army because of color blindness you didn't even know you had then?

JKG: That's right. I never knew I had it.

LTC M: So this was sometime right after your graduation?

JKG: No. As I say, they stopped enlistments for -- and you had to wait to be drafted and then you went to -- as I say, they had the quotas.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: -- for the Navy and the Marines and the Army took what was left over. And that -- I graduated in June, the end of June of '42 and this was March of '43.

LTC M: Oh, so there was a --

JKG: Yeah. Well, as I say, as I recall, you couldn't enlist there that fall because we're waiting for the drafting of the 18-year-olds. And so I waited then to January 1st when they started taking 18-year-olds. And they went by, you know, your -- how many months age, and that was in March. There was two - - I think there was two, two groups who went out each month. So I like was in the fifth --

LTC M: And then from the time you went to Albany how long until you --

JKG: Well, I went to Camp Upton -- well, I had a week. That's right. I had a week. And from the time you took the physical until you actually went in was a week. And then we went to Camp Upton, and I was only there three days and I got shipped down to Camp Croft for infantry basic [training].

LTC M: In South Carolina?

JKG: Right.

LTC M: And what -- how long was your training in --

JKG: Three months. I'd say I got there in March, and June the training was over. And then I went from there to Camp Rucker, Alabama for six weeks. I was attached to the 35th Division was it. 35th I think. It was the National Guard from Oklahoma or Arkansas. They were stationed there permanently. But we weren't really a part of that division.

LTC M: Do you remember --

JKG: We did train.

LTC M: Do you remember what the insignia looked like for it?

JKG: Well, I don't even remember. We didn't even have one, us, replacements because we were sort of in a holding pattern so to speak. We were sent there waiting for this convoy to assemble up Newport News [VA, Port of Embarkation]. And as I recall, we were there five weeks and did some training. And then the replacements were sent at the end of say five weeks I think it was, were sent up to Newport News. But the division stayed -- the actual division stayed right in Camp Rucker. We were just -- they just put us there, someplace to put us until they were ready to ship us overseas.

LTC M: And get you out of Camp Croft then to move the next --

JKG: Yeah, true. Yeah, right.

LTC M: I mean --

JKG: So we was in -- I forgot what they -- they called that some kind of a camp there in Newport News. Camp Patrick, [Camp Patrick Henry] or -- but all it was was, what do you call it, a staging area. You just are there until you got on the boat. As I recall it was about a 75th convoy.

LTC M: I'll look, you know, when I get back to Virginia I'll look into a little more of what the embarkation port was like and see if I can find out a little bit more about it, the one in Newport News --

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: -- since, you know, I live right there.

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: What did you train in at - Camp Croft was your basic training?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: What did they have you doing there?

JKG: Well, strictly infantry training, you know. You'd learn how to shoot the M1 rifle. I ended up a sharpshooter. Then you shot the machine gun and I was a marksman. And then the BAR Browning Automatic Rifle. I was an expert. And of course you went out on the rifle range and shot at targets. They had the regular target, oh, like you shoot bow and arrows at, you know.

LTC M: The round one?

JKG: Round one. Then you'd go out and shoot at -- they had silhouettes like of a man's shoulder and head out by -- what was it -- 100 or 200 yards away and you shoot at -- shoot at those. Of course, you know, you got a score. I always done pretty well. And I -- and I remember the Sergeant, Johnson, from the Regular Army.

LTC M: The trainer at Camp Croft?

JKG: Trainer at Camp Croft. He said, you ever shoot a gun before. And I said, no, which I hadn't. He says, well, you're better off. You don't have any bad habits. And I think he was right.

LTC M: I think so, too. Did you train in any other heavier machine guns, or -

JKG: No, no. Just -- just the .30 caliber machine gun, the DAR and the M1 rifle.

LTC M: Grenades or anything at Camp Croft?

JKG: Yeah, but they -- they were like dummy grenades. They weren't grenades. They didn't explode. They just -- you know -- the same shape and everything, except the -- what do you call that, the lever would fall out and you pull the pin, and -- but --

LTC M: Pull the pin and it releases a lever.

JKG: Yeah, right. But they weren't explosive. I guess they figured we'd knock each other off or something.

LTC M: The -- now I understand that Camp Croft came from private property just a couple of years prior to that and was built pretty quickly?

JKG: I think you're right as I recall because as far as Army camps go, there was only about - I don't even think there were 30,000 there. And they -- I know they used to -- well, you're in the country club of the South they used to call it. It was rather new, and it was strictly for training. There

wasn't any like a division stationed there permanently. Or at least when I was there. It was just all replacements coming in and out.

LTC M: So you were there in late - late winter, early spring [1943]?

JKG: Yeah, right. It was actually from March to June.

LTC M: So you had a little bit of the weather both cold and damp and probably hot?

JKG: Yeah. Well, Camp Upton on Long Island was really cold that year. But Camp Croft was really nice, the weather, after it got into April, May and June. It was really nice weather there.

LTC M: Did they move you on en masse in troop trains from place to place?

JKG: Yeah, yeah. We went down on a troop train to Camp Rucker and then on a troop train from Rucker up to Newport News.

LTC M: Did you train at Camp Croft with anyone you knew from Saratoga?

JKG: Oh, yeah, because they -- it was mostly people from this area. And Eddie Izzo and Bob Fitzpatrick. But actually when you got in Camp Croft like Eddie Izzo was in the barracks next to me, you know, in a different platoon. Of course alphabetically they went. But there was a lot from, you know, South Glens Falls, Fort Ann, Rock City Falls, this area like. But of course -- and we went to Albany. There was people, guys from Albany, the area. And we stayed together until -- in Camp Croft. And went overseas. There was ?? altogether and we went over on the Liberty ship we went over on. And then as we got in North Africa, we got split up more and more. In fact, when I hit the 3rd [Div.], there was nobody. They had gone into the 45th, 34th, 36th. There were four American divisions and I ended up in the third.

LTC M: The only one of the regular Army?

JKG: Right.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: And of course if you went into the same division, you get into a different company or battalion, and, you know. So I ended up actually going into the division. There was nobody that I had trained with.

LTC M: So the Camp Croft experience, was there -- was the big -- the facility, was it adequate? Did they -- like since they built it so quickly, did it seem like they had enough stuff to feed you, and --

JKG: Oh, yeah, actually as I say, they called it the country club of the South. It probably was compared to maybe some of the other.

LTC M: What was your sense of the training? Was it pretty good, or --

JKG: Well, you know --

LTC M: You didn't have a point of reference I know, but --

JKG: That's right. I mean, I was going to say, I had no way to compare it. We used to do like envelope [envelopment], you know, squad go this and this way. We had a guy that got shot through the head. We used live ammunition, and somehow where you're supposed to be shooting, somebody must have been shooting because -- come through his head. He -- we went over to see him in the hospital, but I -- I think he -- I think he lived as far as I -- as I know. Must have just sort of grazed him or something. He did get shot in the training. That was really the only casualty we had --

LTC M: In training?

JKG: -- in the training. And I guess they call it an envelope.

LTC M: Envelopment?

JKG: Envelopment. That's what it was. Envelope [Envelopment].

LTC M: So you did some -- you did some maneuver training at Croft?

JKG: Oh, yeah, yeah.

LTC M: That's interesting.

JKG: Camp Rucker we didn't do too much. We just went out into the -- into the field, and we stayed like four days out there. We did some training. I just can't quite recall exactly what it was. But we were out in the field for four days and then come back into the barracks and then go back out.

LTC M: The cadre at both Camp Croft and Rucker, were they primarily regular Army, or --

JKG: No. I think -- I think that Camp Rucker was just a National Guard division. We just sort of attached with them and went out with them. And at Camp Croft, I know my Sergeant, Johnson, he was -- he was regular Army. Now, what they did -- I know there was a -- the platoon I was in at Camp Croft training, I think there was two of them that stayed back as cadre at Camp Croft.

LTC M: From your group of students -

JKG: From the group, yeah, yeah. It seems to me that two of them stayed back. And I - here again, it's so long ago. I think they were supposed to be like sort of part of the cadre there or something. Of course the Lieutenants, I don't believe they weren't regular Army lieutenants either. I think they probably had just been commissioned or something like that because I remember one instance where Sergeant Johnson, being regular Army, was showing them something or something -- was schooling them in something in the sense.

LTC M: Did most of them -- did most of the cadre seem to be pretty competent? Or --

JKG: Oh, yeah, yeah. I'd say so, yeah.

LTC M: Did you get -- did you get any leaves periodically throughout this --

JKG: No.

LTC M: -- experience?

JKG: No. The only -- you got -- I think we got ten days when the whole three months was over. Then I think we come home for a week or ten days, and then we went back to Camp Croft. So I -- well, all of us except for a couple went to Camp Rucker, and then we went overseas. I got in the Army in March of '43

in September after Labor Day, as I recall I was on the boat going over to North Africa, Oran.

LTC M: That's pretty quick.

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: So these -- these leaves, though, it's like taking the train back and forth to a South Carolina back up here to Saratoga Springs and then back down again? Did you -- did you come home for your ten days, or --

JKG: Oh, yeah. At the end of the - at the end of the training, yeah, the training period. Yeah, I did -- I did come home to Saratoga. I was here at least a week. And then you got the train back to South Carolina and then practically immediately headed for Camp Rucker and then overseas.

LTC M: And so you -- you went you to -- from Rucker in Alabama up to the point of embarkation in Newport News, Virginia?

JKG: Right.

LTC M: And you stayed there for a little while just waiting for --

JKG: Yeah. There was, I don't know, four days maybe, five days. As I remember they were assembling this convoy. We went over on one of those Kaiser Liberty ships. Though I think there was about -- gee, I don't know. There was a few hundred infantry and the paratroopers. We were altogether like in the hold in the ship. And it took us 21 days to go from Newport News to Oran in the convoy. And there was some Navy, what are they, frigates or something, you know, escorting you.

LTC M: To protect the convoy?

JKG: Yeah. And a small -- it wasn't an aircraft carrier, but it was a small -- small - I don't -- kind of a carrier or something like that.

LTC M: There were escort carriers made from smaller ships just to protect convoys.

JKG: Well, that's probably -- that's probably what it was then.

LTC M: How was life on the ship for those 21 days?

JKG: Miserable. We were all in the same hole. And you had two meals a day, and it was powdered eggs, and -- fresh water was a -- was a real hard thing to come by. You shower, it was all salt water. And you would all -- there were five bunks, and you slept one on top of the other. It was -- I forgot how many. I don't want to say a number because I'm not sure, but there was infantry and paratroopers.

LTC M: Could you go on deck if you --

JKG: Oh, yeah. You could get up - only half the deck. The back half where the Navy had a 3-inch gun I guess. They had sailors that were manning that I think it was a 3-inch gun. You couldn't go back to that half of the ship. You had to stay on the front half. But you could go up on deck.

LTC M: Sounds miserable.

JKG: Yeah, for 21 days it wasn't....

LTC M: And you were still an individual replacement and not assigned to a unit yet?

JKG: I wasn't assigned to a unit until I hit the front lines. There was a replacement center outside Naples that was a -- was a racetrack actually, and -- small racetrack and that was a replacement depot. And when you got off the boat at Naples, that's where you were -- sat and just waited there until you got on the trucks and went up to the front lines. And then that's when you were -- and you got out of the truck, that's where you knew where you were. We were the 3rd Division.

LTC M: So you debarked at -- in Naples?

JKG: From the States I debarked at Oran, North Africa. And then there was a train trip from Oran to -- well, it was I think Matruh [Egypt] ?? it was outside Bizerte [Tunisia] in fact I think maybe we left from Bizerte on a LCI and went to Naples. And then Naples by truck up to the front lines, which were in the mountains up above Naples.

LTC M: Did you -- did you leave the States with your individual equipment, your weapon and your duffel bag and things like that and carry that all the way from the States to the front?

JKG: Yeah, because I remember we carried a gas mask. I'm sure we had the rifle. And we carried like a full field pack as I remember. And of course when we got over there they took the gas masks away from us.

LTC M: Luckily you didn't need it.

JKG: They just -- that was one way of getting them over there. In case there was ever a chemical attack they would have a stockpile of gas masks because each individual that went over carried a gas mask with them. That's what we used to joke about was we carried a gas mask like during training sometime, and then all the times that you got overseas. And then when you got overseas they took it away from you. And I never carried a gas mask after that. They had them stockpiled I assume somewhere behind the lines there's -- whatever.

LTC M: So really when you got off the boat in Naples, you could have just as easily gone to any of the other units?

JKG: Oh, I could have went to the 45th, 34th, the 36th, yeah. I didn't know where I was until I actually got off the -- off the truck. And that was in the 3rd Division.

LTC M: So is it a random method of just grabbing people off the truck?

JKG: I guess whatever that -- I went into Company E, and I suppose they had -- I forgot how many of them -- just myself, or a couple of others. I don't know. But that's -- that's how they did. Could have went in the -- in the 3rd Division sector and ended up in another battalion and another regiment. Could have been the 7th or the 30th.

LTC M: So did you fall in on a squad and platoon of --

JKG: Riflemen.

LTC M: No, veterans, though? I mean, would they have been there for --

JKG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. They had been in action prior to that.

LTC M: How did they accept you or welcome you?

JKG: I had no problems. I had no problems. I guess they were sort of glad to have you. Just another --

LTC M: Some help, some help.

JKG: -- fill in the space. No, I had no -- no problems that way.

LTC M: But did they -- did the other folks you were serving with, did they try to talk to you about sort of help with your OJT I guess for -- that's my words. Not --

JKG: Well, yeah, they did. I don't really recall too much it was so long -- but yeah, they were friendly guys and tell you to -- you know. I mean, actually, as I recall -- gave me too much to tell you, you know what I mean.

LTC M: Well, that's part of -- that's part of the whole thing, though, the way that - during the mobilization how folks were just brought together from all over quickly, and -- you know.

JKG: I don't know how it is today, naturally. It was a lot different circumstances in those days, but -- I don't know.

LTC M: You brought up a couple of things that reminds me how it works today, and I'll tell you how it works now, not always better, in a few minutes, if you want to -- if you want to hear my stories.

JKG: No. I'd be glad to.

LTC M: So you spent -- you spent - you spent -- so you got there in October, and then the 22nd of January was the assault on Anzio Beach. So from those couple of months there through the Christmas period you were with that unit?

JKG: Yeah, in the mountains. Yeah.

LTC M: Was there much enemy contact at that point when you were --

JKG: There was -- you know, there was no -- I mean, how should I -- mostly fire fights or something like that.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: I mean, I can't say that there was any huge battles because, first of all, it was mountains, and second of all, the weather was so bad.

LTC M: Nobody was interested in fighting.

JKG: In a sense, yeah. You went out on patrols a lot and outposts and skirmishes. But there wasn't -- there wasn't any great offense by either side actually.

LTC M: Were you sleeping on the ground for those --

JKG: Oh, yeah. Sleeping in the mud.

LTC M: So now if I can jump I guess forward a little bit again, and it's -- I guess - you said five days from the invasion -- or the assault on the beach. It was five days until you were wounded up by the Mussolini Canal?

JKG: Well, it was more than that, but -- let's see. January -- there's a couple of weeks or so as I recall. There was -- some skirmishes there. I mean, you know, you move on attack. We didn't get very far then because they [the Germans] had brought in a lot of reinforcement. In fact, it was really a stalemate in a sense. I mean, they tried after -- you know, I got wounded of course in action, they -- like I say, they tried to drive the Americans and British back into the sea, but they never succeeded. They did gain a couple of miles I guess, but eventually they lost that. But then it just -- well, I was gone. I was wounded. But just -- they didn't break out of the beach until May.

LTC M: When you were wounded, were you in -- did you have any warning that the attack was coming? Or was it -- was it preparatory fires of a ground attack that --

JKG: I think so, yeah. That's what I got. I got hit -- the shells started coming in and I got wounded. And I got -- in fact, I got carried back by stretcher over the Mussolini Canal. I don't think the attack had actually commenced at the time. It was a, like you say, preparatory --

LTC M: You were wounded in the beginning of the preparatory fire?

JKG: Yeah, yeah.

LTC M: Were you in the -- in a fighting position in a fox hole at the time?
Or --

JKG: Not until the shells started coming in.

LTC M: Then you got in there?

JKG: I think that's the best way to say it. It was right around -- as I recall, right around noon time.

LTC M: Were you in your -- in that fox hole alone?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: Until -- and then the medic got to me. And the shells were coming in then, and I remember I kept telling him to get down. I got hit four places -- but I got hit in four places, and I didn't really know it until I start stinging.

LTC M: Four places from one burst probably?

JKG: Yeah. And then I got one in the hip. That's really the only one I kind of felt at the time because it fractured the hip. And then one in the back of the arm, and I had a little piece in the forehead. You can't even see the scar anymore. But as I got -- the medic come, I said, I got hit in the hip. Then I started saying -- my stomach is starting to -- abdomen was starting to sting. He looked, and there wasn't any -- any scar there or anything. And he kind of turned me over and said, yeah, you got it in the back. And my arm, I got it up in here. It never was any disabling thing. Luckily it never hit a nerve or broke the arm. Just more or less say a flesh wound.

LTC M: Did you have to call for the medic? Or were they just making their rounds? Or --

JKG: No. I think I called that I got hit. Something like that. I had been hit, or something like that.

LTC M: So your front line care was a platoon medic?

JKG: Oh, yeah, yeah. Then, as I recall, I got back in an ambulance. I think there was like a first aid station. They kind of patched you up. But the hospital was right on the beach because everything was so compact. Back when I was in the hospital, the hospital got hit twice by --

LTC M: Indirect fire?

JKG: Yeah. It was -- the Germans certainly weren't trying to hit it --

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: -- but everything -- your artillery was here and the hospital was here. And it was so close that I think there was twice -- I think a shell came in at least once. I don't know if the other time was a plane dropped a bomb trying to -- the bomb released too soon or something. I forgot. But I know it shook that hospital up a couple of times.

LTC M: So you're wounded and the medic comes. Did he get to you pretty quickly?

JKG: Oh, yeah. He was there.

LTC M: And then he gave you first aid. And then is it your -- your squad mates that carried you back? Or --

JKG: Yeah. Yeah, they -- as I say, an attack hadn't actually started yet. And the ambulance wouldn't come across the canal. They wouldn't bring a stretcher over. So two guys went over and got the stretcher and brought me back. And then after that I really don't know.

LTC M: Weren't conscious to really --

JKG: I was conscious, but, I mean, I don't know how soon. Maybe there was an attack or what because I was on the way back.

LTC M: And your next stop was the hospital at the beach?

JKG: I think there was -- I think there was an aid station we stopped at for just --

LTC M: There --

JKG: In fact, I'm not even sure of that.

LTC M: Doctrinally there would have been a battalion aid station. Doesn't mean there was, though.

JKG: Well, maybe that's what it was. You're probably -- that's probably what it was. I think there was some kind of a station there. And then -- I'm pretty sure, but I was only there -- I was wounded pretty bad in the stomach. And in fact when I got back to the hospital on the beach there, I was feeling pretty well. And they said, you got any pain in the stomach, and I says, no. And then as I recall they had like a fluoroscope. They were looking for the shrapnel. And all of a sudden, man, the pain come in my stomach. I never experienced anything like that. I didn't give a dang if I lived or died at that moment. And I can remember hearing him say, there it is, meaning the shrapnel. And they put that ether mask on me, and I just sucked that ether up. And I was -- that was two-and-a-half weeks on the beach at the hospital where I got --

LTC M: Is that a fact? That's quite a while.

JKG: It was, but that was -- well, that's sort of another story. I had the -- where they operated on my -- in the stomach, abdomen, the stitches didn't hold. So I had this nurse that was taking care of me. Her name was Helen Chase --

LTC M: On the beach?

JKG: On the beach. She was more or less assigned to me.

LTC M: An Army nurse?

JKG: Oh, yeah. And she was really good. And I remember they said, well, we got to take him back in the operating room and put wire stitches in. Well, when they put the -- took me back into the operating room, in fact they had to put me under again to put these wire stitches into me to hold the -- hold the incision. That's when the shell came in and it knocked the power out, like the generator. And so they moved me to another tent, and I'm telling you, the casualties that were in there, I mean -- you know, the Germans were really attacking then. And the tent would just light up with casualties. And a priest came by, and I said, I want to get back to where I was. And I said --

the priest come by, and he says, how are you doing soldier or something like that. And I said, I'm pretty well. I says - I said, but can you get me back to whatever tent -- I said, the nurse is Helen Chase. I said, can you get me back there. That's where -- I told him, I said, I was in the operating room when the shell hit or something and I got moved here. I said, I don't belong here. I said, I belong whatever with Helen Chase. So he said, I'll see what I can do, soldier. So, geez, it was only 20 minutes later here come two guys with a stretcher and they say, where's Galligan. And I said, right here. So they said, okay, we're taking you back to so and so. And I got on this -- got me on this stretcher and I got taken back to where Helen Chase was there. And so anyway I was there, I was on the beach then for two-and-a-half weeks. And all of a sudden one day these two guys come in with a stretcher and they says, Galligan here. I said, yeah. They says, goddamn it, we've been looking for you all over this beachhead. Well, what happened was apparently when I got moved from the operating room into this other tent my records went with me.

LTC M: Oh, boy.

JKG: But when I -- when the priest said -- got the stretcher, they just come over and took me and my records stayed there. And so I'm over at this tent and the records are over there. And I'll never forget it, when these guys said -- they said, goddamn it, we've been all over this beach looking for you. So they put me on a stretcher to the British hospital ship and I went back to Naples. I was there about a month. And I got --

LTC M: The level of care on the beach must have been pretty high, though, in that hospital to give you multiple surgeries, and --

JKG: Yeah. Well, I had -- I had the - I had the two surgeries, the original and then to put the wire stitches in my stomach to hold -- to hold the incisions together. Yeah.

LTC M: So when they -- then you went to -- after two-and-a-half weeks to a British hospital ship did they bring you --

JKG: To Naples.

LTC M: Okay. So they brought you on a -- on a wharf then. They didn't bring you out on a landing boat, or --

JKG: You know something, I forgot how the hell I got out there. I mean, it was a British hospital ship, so it couldn't come right up on the beach. I must have went out on -- and now I can't remember. Some kind of a -- some kind of a boat it must have been.

LTC M: Plenty on your mind.

JKG: Because that beach, I'll tell you, I looked down at that beach and it was loaded with stretchers getting evacuated back to Naples.

LTC M: You don't remember the ship's name, do you?

JKG: No. British -- British hospital ship.

LTC M: And then the ship brought you where?

JKG: To Naples. And I was there about a month in the hospital. And then I went from Naples to Oran on a British hospital ship. And then I was in Oran hospital, Army hospital, for about two weeks. And then from Oran I went to Casablanca on the train. And then I was overnight in Casablanca and got on a Navy transport and was in the sick bay. It was about nine or ten days as I recall from Casablanca back to Newport News.

LTC M: During these --

JKG: They didn't fly them back. See I got wounded before they started flying them back.

LTC M: I'll tell you my experiences a little later. Not -- not personal wounds, but how we evacuated. So how uncomfortable were you on these ships and being carted on trains and --

JKG: Well, you see because of my hip being fractured, which they finally found out -- that's another story -- because they were more concerned with my stomach, and they thought the hip was just a flesh wound. They didn't realize until I had all this pain in it. And in Naples they finally took an X-ray and saw the hip was fractured. So they put me in a body cast in those days. The cast was from here all the way down to this leg, and then all the way down to the knee. And they had a bar across so they could turn me and like that. And

I was in that thing for five-and-a-half months. That was the uncomfortable part.

LTC M: That sounds uncomfortable.

JKG: So they put that on in Naples, and I had that all the way to five-and-a-half months to July in the states when they took it off.

LTC M: I'm going to get a little bit more. Do you want some?

JKG: Oh, yes.

LTC M: Okey doke. I had to - the Saratoga Vichy [mineral water] ?? it's sort of a rare treat for me. We don't get that.

JKG: Oh, you don't get Saratoga --

LTC M: Well, you can, but it's hard to find. So you went -- I'm sorry to keep asking, but I keep forgetting the sequence here. You go from the fox hole to the beach to Naples to back to Oran. Then you're on a train to Casablanca and then you're transloaded onto a US ship.

JKG: Naval transport.

LTC M: And where did they give you the cast?

JKG: In Naples.

LTC M: Okay.

JKG: They finally found -- they finally took an X-ray and found the hip was - - because my records just showed like a flesh wound because I remember saying to -- well, the nurse, Helen Chase, I said, I'm having pain in my hip. And she was kind of surprised, and so she said, well, I'll get the doctor. But the doctor didn't come in. It was the anesthetist. And so he says, do you remember me, and I says, well, you must have operated on me. He said, no, I'm the anesthetist. And Helen said, well, he's complaining of pain in his right hip there where he's got the wound. He says, well, that should be nothing. He says, well, that's just a flesh wound. But unfortunately my hip was broken and they didn't take an X-ray or anything. And they - was without -- I didn't have a cast at that time and got on the ships and everything. It was --

continued to bother me more and more. When I got back in Naples I was really in pain. But the records didn't show a fractured hip. And I seem to have a kind of tough time telling the doctors that I got a lot of pain in there, even though when they moved me and changed the sheets, man, I -- So they finally took an X-ray and they found the hip was fractured. But by that time, that's an unfortunate thing for me was that a septic arthritis infection had set in.

LTC M: The hip?

JKG: The hip. That whole hip joint got infected, which I had trouble with all my life with flare-ups. Had 16 of them, high fever and pain. And there's no cure for it. They used to give me antibiotics. Well, I mean, even when I was -- but it would just put it back into a dormant state. And I had 16 of those attacks. But fortunately since August of 1984, which is, what, 22 years ago --

LTC M: Right.

JKG: -- I haven't had one, which I've been very fortunate because they were high fever and painful. But maybe it wore off or something. I don't know. But it hasn't flared up in all that length of time.

LTC M: You can hope.

JKG: It certainly gave me a lot of problems for all those years.

LTC M: And -- so you embarked from Iran -- Oran, and then troop ship back to Newport News again. And then --

JKG: No. I went from Oriana to Casablanca.

LTC M: Oh, that's right. I'm sorry. On the train.

JKG: I was only there overnight. That was a short trip.

LTC M: Then the troop ship?

JKG: Then the troop --

LTC M: To Newport News?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: And another hospital train to Atlantic City?

JKG: Right. Then I was in Atlantic City from April to September. And about the only time, the last time Atlantic City got hit by a hurricane in September, and we were evacuated from the hospital in Atlantic City to Staten Island Hospital, army hospital and I was there for about a month. And then I got transferred down to West Virginia to the Greenbrier Hotel, which was a famous hotel in those days the Army had taken over. And I was there until I got discharged in January of '46.

LTC M: This is an aside, but the government still owns -- or still has that -- part of that facility there.

JKG: Oh, you know what they have?

LTC M: Bunkers --

JKG: Underground with television. In case Washington got hit with an atomic bomb or something they had that all secured down there in the basement underneath it.

LTC M: So you were in the Thomas England General Hospital, it was --

JKG: Right.

LTC M: -- in Atlantic City?

JKG: Right.

LTC M: And I'm going to give you this stuff that I pulled off the Internet if you want to have it, what I read on that. And at the -- or at a point it became the largest hospital in the US for amputations and neurosurgery --

JKG: New England General Hospital?

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: I know there was a lot of it there. I didn't -- it was -- I think it was the old Haddon Hall Hotel. Now it's the resorts, gambling --

LTC M: International.

JKG: -- international resorts.

LTC M: And what kind of care did you receive when you were there? Any more surgeries, or -

JKG: No. I never had any more surgeries because with the -- with the infection in my hip I never could have any surgery on the hip. Even when I became a civilian the orthopedic specialist would never operate and give me say the stainless steel hip because of the infection that was -- that lie dormant in the hip and they were afraid that it would just flare up and break down the whole operation. And to this day I've never had any surgery on the hip.

LTC M: So did they remove your cast in Atlantic City?

JKG: Yeah. That was another story. I got -- they said, don't get up. Just dangle your feet over the side. Well, lying in that cast for five-and-a-half months when I put my feet over the side of the bed, let's say within an hour or less maybe my foot got all blue and cold. I had blood clots --

LTC M: Oh, geez.

JKG: -- from lying in that position, you know. Just like today they get you out of bed the day after surgery. I laid in that cast for five-and-a-half months and I had a lot of blood clots. I still got problems. But anyway.

LTC M: Did they do physical therapy with you there?

JKG: Well, what they did the first was they packed my leg in ice, if you want to believe this. They put -- I laid on a mattress and they put rubber sheets around the leg from -- well, from here down all the way down my leg and just packed it with ice. And I was just like a fish in the fish market, that whole thing. Then they gave me injections into the spine that would -- like your foot would be ice cold. And then when they gave you these injections in the spine, whatever the say fluid or whatever, I don't know, would warm your foot up just like a piece of toast. But then it would go right back after a while. I forgot how long. It would go right back to being cold again. I had three of those. But it left me with -- with a -- I forgot what they call the disease. You have like little valves in your leg, so they tell me, that sort of push the blood back out of your leg --

LTC M: Okay.

JKG: -- to help circulation.

LTC M: Or they keep it from being pushed back?

JKG: Or something. And anyway, those things were destroyed. And my leg is all discolored. I don't know if you can see it.

LTC M: Yeah, it is.

JKG: And it swells up. But....

LTC M: With all the patients and stuff coming through there, did they try to entertain you? Feed you well? Did they --

JKG: At what place?

LTC M: At England General Hospital.

JKG: Oh, yeah. The food -- when you got back there the food was pretty good, yeah. You know, of course when I first got there I was in bed. Then as I got up on crutches, went down to the dining room. And, yeah, the food was good. It was all right.

LTC M: Did they allow you any leaves or visitors at that point?

JKG: Yeah. My mother and father came down for a while. And I remember another patient. I can't even think of his name. He got a three-day pass. And we had the idea, we'd hang out in Atlantic City and then go back to the hospital and sleep. But then the order come out that anyone who was on a three-day pass cannot use the hospital to sleep. They figured you'd go home or something. So now we're saying, well, geez, we can't use the hospital to stay in Atlantic City. Of course -- so I said -- I said to the other soldier, I said, come on, we'll go to New York City. And we did. So we went up to New York City for a few days.

LTC M: On crutches, or --

JKG: I think I was on a cane then as I remember. I think I got off the crutches on the cane. So we went to New York City and stayed at the hotel in Times Square and spent our three-day pass up on Times Square.

LTC M: Was it a good weekend?

JKG: Yeah. It was good.

LTC M: So then the --

JKG: It was better than being in Atlantic City.

LTC M: The hurricane came in --

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: -- the middle of September?

JKG: Yeah. Knocked the hospital right out, the generators. So they --

LTC M: Put you on trains?

JKG: Yeah, right up to Staten Island.

LTC M: Did they -- did you have much personal belongings with you at that point? Or --

JKG: No -- well, I had to have -- have an issue of the uniform, you know. I didn't have much. I don't think any of us did just except you had your issue, OD, and --

LTC M: Did they have you carry your records yourself back then?

JKG: No. I don't think I ever carried my records. I don't ever recall carrying my own records, no.

LTC M: I'm sorry. Medical records?

JKG: Yeah, right.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: No.

LTC M: Is Staten Island your -- now, at that point you're getting closer to home. But then they moved you after about a month to West Virginia?

JKG: Yeah, because I was having so much trouble with the blood clots, the circulation, that they moved me down to -- they call it Ashford General Hospital the Greenbrier Hotel and that was a ?? . So that's why they moved me down there. And I stayed there until I got discharged.

LTC M: Were you discharged right from the Greenbrier?

JKG: The hospital.

LTC M: Yeah. I was going to also ask, did you serve with anyone from locally in Italy that you ran across?

JKG: No. The only time I seen anybody after I left North Africa -- no, after I left the replacement center outside Naples, the only Saratogians I seen was we -- when we got pulled off the line to go to Anzio, they gave -- I remember we -- I don't know if it was a battalion or what before we had to go back to the front again, the 15th, the regiment. We did get a day in Naples. They trucked us down. And I remember walking along the Main Street and I looked into sort of a place like a -- like a soda fountain place and there was two guys, Bob Wagner ?? and Johnny Relyea [?] that I knew in Saratoga Springs and I went in and talked with them for a while. And they were the only two I ever seen.

LTC M: Now how about when you got back in the series of hospitals on the way back, did you stumble across anybody you knew?

JKG: No, no. They were the only two from the time I left that Naples replacement center until I got back into the States. In fact, I was never in a hospital with anybody from Saratoga, or --

LTC M: So from the -- you were discharged right from Ashland then when they -

JKG: Ashford General Hospital.

LTC M: -- when they thought -- or Ashford General. They thought you were I guess healthy enough? Or they could do all they could do?

JKG: That was it. I mean, I still had the bad hip, and -- but the war was over. This was January of '46. And I know my doctor, Colonel Kelly, he was head of the orthopedics. I was in orthopedics then. And he said -- that's just about what he said, Jim, he says, there's not anything more we can do with you. There was -- the head of the medical department down there was a Dr. Elkins, and he was - I think it's called Emory Medical Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

LTC M: Yeah, that's it.

JKG: He was a big doctor down there, and he was going back there. And he was the one who wrote a book and discovered aneurysms.

LTC M: Aneurysms?

JKG: Yeah. He wrote a book on it. He was the first one to discover that as I recall. And he was going back to Emory and he was taking Colonel Kelly with him. He says, I'm going back with Dr. Elkins to --

LTC M: Were they civilians doctors? Had they been inducted in the Army?

JKG: Oh, they were in the Army.

LTC M: They were Army doctors?

JKG: The Army, yeah. I think Kelly, I think he's like you, a lieutenant colonel. I don't think he was a full colonel. Elkins I think was a full colonel. He was the head of the medical. And Kelly was head of the orthopedics. And he was -- he said Elkins is taking me with him down to Emory. I'm going to start - start there. And he says -- and he was good to me, so -- he says, you know, he says, there's nothing more really we can do for you. And he says, so I'm going to recommend you for discharge. So I says, well, if you're going, I'll go too. So I got discharged.

LTC M: So you're back on a train and heading --

JKG: Heading back to Saratoga.

LTC M: And now you're in the care of the VA once they do that?

JKG: Well, I never really got involved with the VA too much. I did go down there, oh, 20 years ago to different clinics, medical clinics and like that. But I just never really got involved. And I had these septic arthritis - - arthritis flare-ups and I went to Saratoga Hospital.

LTC M: So from your separation from the service, did -- I know you later worked as an accountant for the --

JKG: The City [of Saratoga Springs], yeah.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: For 38 years. Desk job that's all I could do.

LTC M: So were you able to come back and almost start there immediately? Or did you do anything in between?

JKG: Two summers, '46 and '47 I worked in the post office just part-time in the summer-time. I never really -- I never had a job, a steady job until I started with the City on January 1st, '48.

LTC M: And then -- and then at what point did you marry Shirley?

JKG: August 29th, 1948.

LTC M: 1948. And 38 years with the City?

JKG: Yeah. Oh, it was a good job for me because it was sitting down. I couldn't do anything else anyway. My hip got fused from the infection, and I just -- just couldn't do anything, you know. I couldn't have been a cop, or - - or anything like that. And I went to -- I went out to Bentley, you know, the School of Accounting out in Boston?

LTC M: Oh, really?

JKG: Yeah, back in May of '46. And I went out with a friend of mine from high school, and we got out there and I got accepted, but he didn't. They said, you ought to go back to business school for six months and then come back. Well, I got accepted, but they told you they didn't have like any dormitories, you know. So you'd have to get yourself an --

LTC M: An apartment somewhere?

JKG: -- apartment outside. He wasn't going to go and I come back. And was -
- I come back from being out there in Boston for a couple of days, and it was
only maybe a week or two my hip went bad and I ended up in the hospital for
three weeks.

LTC M: In Boston?

JKG: No, no, in Saratoga. When I come back to Saratoga.

LTC M: Oh, okay. I'm sorry.

JKG: I was only out there, what, three, four days. And my hip went bad,
infection flared up. I ended up in Saratoga Hospital for three weeks, and I
never -- never went back. I had this problem with this hip flaring up all the
time, and I says, geez, I'm going to be out there in an apartment. And this
thing was flaring up quite often at that time. So I never -- I never did go
back to college. And then I got the job with the City Hall Public Works. So
that was it. LTC M: But it worked for you?

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: It treated you well?

JKG: Plus I worked 30 years at the [Saratoga] Raceway, too. Ten with the
mutuals and twenty with the American Totalisator Co.

LTC M: Oh, really? That took care of your free time.

JKG: Yep.

LTC M: You can have this stuff and I'll give it to you. But like I said, I
know he's coming back. And I said, well, I just thought I'd do an Internet
search and I got -- this is just a World War II time line.

JKG: What did the Internet say about Anzio --

LTC M: Oh, they say a lot. I just didn't -- I just -- this is what I pulled
off. I got a little of it in here. I'll give -- you can have this. And then

I found this -- it was a thesis that somebody wrote for their Masters on Atlantic City during the war and there's a chapter on the England hospital.

JKG: Oh, yeah?

LTC M: And then we got -- I found some history of Camp Croft. It's not very detailed, but it does talk about -- it does talk a little bit about it. And then there's some maps and there's a couple -- and there's some pictures, which I didn't download all of them. But there's a map of it and a cover to a book. And I did a little bit on the lineage of the 15th Infantry. Coincidentally that's -- is that the same crest that you-all had then?

JKG: You know I can't remember the crest, but the thing was -- what was the -- what do they call that. Well, it was called the can-do regiment.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: Can-do.

LTC M: Yep. Interestingly enough I was -- my first assignment was in the 17th Infantry, and then my next infantry assignment was in the 16th Infantry. So they just happened to be on the same pages. A little history --

JKG: You were in the 7th Infantry Third Division?

LTC M: Seventh -- I was in the 17th --

JKG: 7th Division?

LTC M: 7th Division, 17th Infantry.

JKG: Oh, 17th....

LTC M: And then I was in the 16th Infantry of the First Division. And --

JKG: All that T.O. has changed now.

LTC M: I think the 15th Infantry is back with the 3rd Division.

JKG: Oh, yeah?

LTC M: Yep.

JKG: What do they do? They call them brigades now?

LTC M: Yes, they do.

JKG: Do they call them regiments or brigades?

LTC M: It's a fine -- it's a fine distinction and it's -- hey, before I forget to ask one last question; what -- what were -- what are your decorations and awards and campaign ribbons?

JKG: Well, I got the Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge. And I don't know -- these are what I got when I got discharged. Now, don't ask me because I don't know, but somewhere along the line I wrote out to, what is it, St. Louis?

LTC M: St. Louis.

JKG: And -- well, that was mostly for my -- for my grandson, Ryan, because he got all interested in World War II and all that.

LTC M: Uh-huh.

JKG: So I wrote for my medals which is like -- what was it, the Victory Medal or something?

LTC M: Yeah. There's a Campaign Medal and a Victory Medal.

JKG: Campaign and different ones like that. And all of a sudden come back I got the Bronze Star.

LTC M: Well --

JKG: And I'm saying, what the hell did I get the Bronze Star from. But I did and they sent me the medal. But apparently -- you probably -- you got to know a lot more about it than I do. It seems, and I don't know how it could have happened, the Bronze Star used to be for an act of valor or something. But they changed the rules on that as I understand it now. That if they give you a Bronze Star for some kind of say act of valor, it was a Bronze Star with a "V" on it.

LTC M: Yep. A "V" device?

JKG: Okay. Now, a lot of us, in fact my son-in-law, he was in Vietnam. He got wounded in Vietnam on his shoulder. He's got the Bronze Star. So I don't know when this happened, but somehow or other they must have wrote up something and you get the Bronze Star, and I honestly can't tell you. I don't know. But it's on my records that I got the Purple Heart and Combat Infantry Badge. Of course I knew I had those. Then I got this -- but anyway, they sent me this Bronze Star medal. And I understand that -- I don't know what -- what the criteria is for it, or anything. I don't -- I don't know. I was -- sort of a complete surprise to me to be honest about it. But somehow I must have been eligible in some ways. I don't -- I haven't -- I don't know because they never came with any explanation.

LTC M: Somebody in your chain of command must have put you in for it, and it probably was sent off into that labyrinth that is the administrative channels and 40 years later it caught up to you, or whatever.

JKG: Well, as I say, my son-in-law got it for the -- for being in Vietnam, but it doesn't have the "V" on it. You know, so there's a distinction --

LTC M: You can --

JKG: But I can understand the "V." I know -- but it seemed like when I say was wounded in a sense back in those days, you didn't -- it was like a Congressional Medal of Honor, the distinguished -

LTC M: Service Cross.

JKG: -- Service Cross, Silver Star and the Bronze Star.

LTC M: Right.

JKG: And you had to do some kind of act or maybe bring the guy off the -- was wounded, bring him back or something like that, you know. It was - and that's how you got the Bronze Star, something like that. And all of a sudden, I wrote in, I got the Bronze Star medal. I said -- but that was -- reading disabled American Veterans magazines and like that, that said I know -- and then I realized that there was a "V," but it didn't explain like why I was -- let's put it that way, how am I eligible for the Bronze Star unless it was so many days in combat or this or that. I have no -- I have no idea.

LTC M: I can tell you how it works now. It's only a combat award.

JKG: Yes.

LTC M: But in the theater.

JKG: Right.

LTC M: So the theater, there's a lot of difference in the third places ?? in the theater as you well know. There's the rear and the front and everything in between. So it can be awarded anywhere in theater. And you're also right, unless it has a "V" device, it doesn't mean --

JKG: Yeah.

LTC M: -- that there was --

JKG: But originally there wasn't any such thing as a "V." It was just the Bronze Star for some act.

LTC M: Uh-huh.

JKG: But for the Combat Infantry Badge [CIB], you have to qualify for that. Here again, I can't tell you exactly. Fire fights or something of that nature?

LTC M: Yeah, you have to be -

JKG: Something.

LTC M: -- in direct fire engagements with the enemy.

JKG: Yeah, right.

LTC M: I earned a CIB in Iraq. But -- yeah. And then that's essentially it.

JKG: Yeah, right. Something like that, yeah. But I never -- to this day I don't know what the -- why the Bronze Star, what you had to do to get that. I mean, the way I got it and my son-in-law got it, he don't have a "V" on his and he was in the Vietnam War. So whenever they made it that way, I don't know. I always thought like the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantry Badge

was -- that was it. But there's -- I don't know. There's a Mediterranean Theater.

LTC M: Yeah, Mediterranean Theater, which is -- which should be a ribbon colored about like this.

JKG: Yeah, I got -- you know when they all -- my grandson, he's got them all framed and everything.

LTC M: Well, good for him.

JKG: And it hangs on the wall of the door you come in. So I don't actually have them.

LTC M: He's got them?

JKG: He's got them.

LTC M: Well, he's probably enjoying them, though.

JKG: Well, he's taking them to school. They was doing a study of World War II, 5th grade or 6th grade whatever. He's in the 7th now. So he brought them all. He's pretty proud.

LTC M: That's good, though. That's really good. The [WWII] 50th Anniversary Committee made a number of -- the Military History Division at Carlisle [Barracks, PA] made some pamphlets for the 50th Anniversary of a number of key things. One of them was the Anzio thing. And they're -- they're relatively short, 30 pages or so on different events. One is Anzio. And I printed that one that's in here. And then there's another one, another pamphlet on the mobilization of the country during World War II and that's in here. So that's what I was able to print off and look through in a hurry when I knew he was on the way up here. So I probably should have done a little bit more studying than that. But, I mean, if you would like, you're welcome to it.

JKG: Yeah, yeah.

LTC M: I want to grab a couple of photos downstairs and ask you about them. My dad gave me these photos some time ago. And that's -- I found them and that's what got me -- that's what got me -- that's what got me started here.

Here's some of Tracy [Millis]. Here's -- that's how I knew -- that's how I knew you were at Camp Croft.

JKG: Oh, yeah. Yes. I know this wasn't a very good picture of me.

LTC M: That's a small one.

JKG: I can't -- of course I can't make it out now without my glasses.

LTC M: Well, it's hard to make out with your glasses. Then there's a -- there's a picture -- there's a picture of you in the 3rd Infantry Division patch, so I knew -- I knew that was -- and then there's -- there was a picture of this hotel. Said that it was --

JKG: Yeah, England General.

LTC M: Yep. So that got me going in that direction. And another picture of you. Oh, it said what company you were in, that one there.

JKG: Oh, yeah. That was taken in Atlantic City.

LTC M: Yep.

JKG: After I was -- and that's Gonzales. Do you see this guy?

LTC M: Yeah. You know his name?

JKG: Well, I -- when I was wounded, as I say, I got up on my feet. I walked down into the lobby, and this guy is behind the desk there. He was the corporal in my squad, Gonzales.

LTC M: In your squad in Anzio?

JKG: Yeah, in the 3rd Division. In fact -- yeah. He was in the mountains down before, Mount Rotundo, or -- and then we went up in Anzio. He was - he was the squad leader. His name was Gonzales. And I remember we were out on outpost together on Anzio. And, boy, you heard this shell come in, and thump. Right -- it felt like it was from here to the front steps. It might have been. It never went off. And what do we -- what do we say, thank you, oh, you know, the country -- like Poland like they took, you know -- working in the factories, the Polish or whoever. Generally you take them ??

LTC M: So was he wounded also?

JKG: I was wounded before him, and I'll be honest with you, I don't think he was wounded. I don't think he got wounded. But he was -working-- he was assigned to the England General Hospital. But he might have - he might have got some kind of an injury, but he didn't show any disabilities, and I don't recall him ever saying he got wounded. But, that picture, yeah. See they got the hospital photographer that I got to know. His name was Sam Bolasko and I happened to say to him, I said, geez, I met my old squad leader down in the lobby or something. Whatever -- whatever his duties were, I don't know. So he took the picture. There was a story behind it about being together.

LTC M: Well, that makes it interesting.

JKG: Yeah. He was my squad leader. He wasn't the -- he wasn't the Sergeant. He was like the corporal, or --

LTC M: Team leaders. That's what we would call them now anyways, team leader.

JKG: It seems like the squad had a sergeant and a corporal as I recall. And he was sort of -- sort of like the second guy or something.

LTC M: There was actually --

JKG: In fact actually I don't think he had his corporal stripes at the time. He was acting corporal. He probably got them later.

LTC M: That picture shows a family resemblance to my father when he was younger also I think. Yeah. If you look at some of the old photos of him then. You should also have an arrowhead device for your -- for one of your medals meaning an assault -- you assaulted the beach, right?

JKG: Yeah, but I don't -- I don't recall that. It's not on my discharge. In fact, most of the medals aren't on my discharge because, you know, they typed those things up at the end. In fact I believe, I never really looked into it, they had me for two battle stars, Naples -- ?? now the second one should have been Anzio. But it says Rome Arno, A-R-N-O, which was in Italy.

LTC M: Right.

JKG: And see I belong to the Society of the 3rd Infantry Division, and I always thought, well, Anzio must have been Rome Arno because that was - they would get the -- ?? you know.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: I guess the beach end was what, 40 miles from Rome or something like that. So then I got my discharge, and it was like two battle stars, Naples Foggia and Rome Arno. I never paid any attention to it. I didn't know. And then when I joined -- oh, this was maybe 12 years ago I joined the Society of the 3rd Infantry Division. I don't know if they had any meetings or conventions, but I joined. And they did more - they had -- ?? museum World War I, World War II and like that, you know. And all of a sudden as I looked down they had the Naples Foggia. And then it said Anzio Rome Arno. And I'm saying, I think there must have been a separate battle star for Anzio, which is where I got wounded -- well, anyway --

LTC M: Anzio is a battle and a streamer all into itself.

JKG: Itself, yeah.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: But on my discharge it shows Rome Arno. Now, the only thing I can think of is that when we -- we made the invasion on January 22nd. On the other front, the 36th Division attacked at the Rapido River-- as a diversionary measure like. And I -- they were the same dates I think that these two battle stars start. So all I can think of is that the whoever was typing up the things, you know, January 22nd, typed in Rome Arno instead of Anzio. But I didn't know this until, gosh, like ten, twelve years ago. And I says, well, there ain't nothing I can do about it now. I suppose you could send it in and get it corrected, but I --

LTC M: Yeah, you probably could.

JKG: But it's too late now.

LTC M: I think -- there's probably going to be a willingness to support you if you wanted to do that.

JKG: Oh, I'm sure they probably would have. But anyway, you know, at the time when I got discharged, I didn't know it was different.

LTC M: Yeah. Probably just wanted to go home.

JKG: Yeah, right. Said Naples Foggia and Rome Arno. So, okay. It's Rome Arno. I didn't know it for years that it probably was wrong. But whatever. I would have liked to have it say Anzio, but by the time you got that straightened out -- I know it was an awful long time before I got those medals when I wrote in to --

LTC M: Did they actually send you the medals?

JKG: Yeah. Oh, yeah. That's how I knew I had -- somehow was awarded the Bronze Star. I never knew it until they sent me the medal.

LTC M: Yeah.

JKG: So there must have been something on my records or something that made me eligible for that. How I may -- I suppose I was just there or something, you know.

LTC M: Well, there may have been someone in your chain of command or company clerk or something that heard something from -- or an NCO that wrote a note to a company clerk and started to put you in for an award and dropped some paperwork and forgot all about it. And --

JKG: Whatever.

LTC M: -- it went into -- it went into that big machine and no one ever knew what happened to it until it came out all those years later.

JKG: Whatever.

LTC M: I mean, we can only guess.

JKG: Yeah.

----- End -----



PFC. James Galligan (Left), CPL Gonzales, England General Hospital (Haddon Hall Hotel), Atlantic City, New Jersey, now Resorts International



PFC. James K, Galligan, 3rd Infantry Division, Age 19 - 1944



Camp Croft, South Carolina
Basic Training

March – June, 1943

O = J. Galligan (3rd Row, 5th from the left)

X = Paddy Chafesky (Front/1st Row, 3rd from the right)

Chafesky (now deceased) later became famous

Author and playwright. Several plays were produced on Broadway.