**Ted Kalicki**
**Veteran**

**Prof. Paul Schulte American History 20th Century Class**
**Interviewer**

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**Genesee Community College**
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**Q:** This afternoon ladies and gentlemen we have with us Mr. Ted Kalicki. Ted was born in Buffalo but raised here in Batavia. He just told me earlier he had the misfortune of living between Tom Rosica's house and Tom Rosica's uncle's house over on Swan Street. I'm trying to figure out how you got someone with a Polish name living between two Italians. When Ted was in high school, World War Two broke out. He was too young to enlist in the American army, decided to skip off to Canada - quite unlike what happened in Vietnam, people skipped off to Canada, but Ted went for a different reason - Ted joined the Canadian army. Fought in World War Two as a paratrooper and was involved as a paratrooper in the Normandy invasion. One of the videos we had done a couple of years ago about Pearl Harbor, probably the other major event of World War Two was the Normandy invasion and we are extremely fortunate to have Ted come in and can't do better than an eyewitness account of what happened over there. So let me turn it over to Ted and I asked him to do about half hour, forty-five minutes and then open it up to questions from the group. Ted…
**TK:** Thank you. [applause] Thank you very much. It's a real honor for me to be here to speak about D-Day. It's not for me but I like to get the word out for the thousands of young men, the flower of our youth in those days, whomever lived through the first seconds or first minutes or hours of that day. Many of them, such as the Airborne troops, their planes were blown out the air, some were shot in their aircraft, others were dropped over swampy areas and drowned, never even got into combat. That happened all over. In the morning, at daylight when they stormed the beaches, the landing craft came in, I don't know if you know

what landing craft are, they had the big ramp full of soldiers, with all their gear on and of course these people guiding these craft in have got to get in and out to get more troops. So as quick as they can drop them off that's what they do, and some of them when they drop the ramps, those poor G.I.s, Canadians, British, whatever they were, ran out, into water six or seven feet deep, never saw the light of day again. With all their gear, they just couldn't get out. So there were many many, that participated in D-day, but never even got started, and those are the ones that we like to remember.

I ran away from home, before the second World War, if you wanted to be a member of the armed forces, you had to be at least 21 years of age. That was the age of consent back then. Or you could be between 18 to 21, if you had your parent's consent. It's a long story of how I got there but the basic thing was I had an agreement with my father, that when I graduated from high school, he would sign my papers, so I could become a Marine, which he agreed to do. That was back in '38. Low and behold, when Pearl Harbor was attacked, my father completely changed his mind. He said there was no way he was going to sign my papers, and I knew I wouldn't be drafted, because they weren't drafting 18-year-olds. I had two brothers older than me, so I knew they would be drafted before I was. My father was crippled, my mother wasn't well, so there was a very slim chance I would even get into the service, and I had based my whole life on becoming a Marine, so I was just shattered. So, I knew that there were people that had left the U.S. and gone to Canada, to join the Canadian forces. So I thought that would be my next option. I took my January exams, before I did, I talked this over with a very good friend of mine, by the name of Henry [unclear 04:19]. Henry and I grew up together, we used to walk out here to Horseshoe Lake every day to go fishing he and I. He became a Bombardier, he was in the Pacific theater, he got shot down on the very last bombing raid to Japan. I saw him after I enlisted in the Canadian army, only saw him once, I met him in Batavia when I was home on a leave, just before I went overseas, and that was the last time I saw him. It was a very good friendship. But that happened to many many people. Anyway, I decided that I was going to go to Canada and enlist and I

told Henry this. I made him promise not to say anything to anybody unless something serious happened. So, he agreed. On a Friday night, I used to stick pins in Mancuso's [bowling alley], I don't know if you kids know what sticking pins is. Before they had these automatic machines, when people bowled, we used to have to pick the pins up, throw them in the rack, set the rack. I used to take care of two alleys. We went down to Mancuso's that night, got our pay for working during the week, bunch of us went to [unclear 05:25] Diner, had something to eat, went to a movie, and some of the guys said "Ted, you going to Canada?" I said well sure ya know, they weren't sure but they thought I might because apparently they heard me talking. But I didn't tell any of them except Henry. So, Saturday morning I got up, told my mother and dad I was going downtown, went down the railroad station, which used to be down here on Jackson Street, where the Salvation Army building is now, that was the New York Central Station. You kids are too young to know but we had a lot of trains going through this town back in those days, they were coming and going just like you wouldn't believe it. So, you could catch a train down there just about any time of the day or night. I caught a train to Niagara Falls. I had twelve dollars in my pocket, which was quite a bit of money back then believe it or not. You could buy a meal for sixty-five cents. I got to Niagara Falls, walked across the bridge, and I started to look for a recruiting station. The recruiter there was quite an imbiber because I followed him from hotel to hotel to hotel, I was running behind him, and he was stopping at each place for a beer I guess. But I finally caught up with him, it was late afternoon and I told him what I wanted to do. Well we had quite a time, I lied about my age told him I was twenty-one, of course I was always a big kid. So, he finally believed me, even though 18 was the legal age there but he finally believed me that I was twenty-one. He signed me up, he said "When was the last time you ate?" I said well I had breakfast this morning. So, he said "Come on I'll buy you dinner," took me to a hotel and bought me dinner. Then he put me on a train to Hamilton, Ontario. Now, prior to this, the farthest I've ever been from home was Buffalo or Rochester. So here I am in a foreign country, which is just across the border, but it's still a foreign country, I know absolutely no one there. He told me when I get to Hamilton, you'll get off on James Street, just start

walking up the street you'll find the armory there. So, I did, when we got to Hamilton, I got off the train, walked out of the terminal, I walked up the street, I saw a bobby standing there, like the British police, that's the way they used to dress in Canada. I asked him where the armory was, and he told me where it was. So, I went there, got there, they were having a huge party there that night. The Dragoons were stationed in that armory, they were having a big party, the guard at the gate said wait here I will get someone to escort you to one of the rooms. So, he got one of the soldiers to take me to a room on the second floor. I got up there, there were six or seven other Americans there. He said the only reason they put us there rather than private rooms was because of the party, they didn't have room for us there. There was one fella there from Louisiana, another one from Pennsylvania, one's from Texas, one was from Ohio. We sat down, we started to play some cards, pretty soon they come up with a couple cases of beer and cold cuts, treatin' us. Next morning, they came in, got our names, fell us out on the parade square, issued us food coupons to go to a local diner, because they said we have to stay here until we get enough troops to send you up to Toronto to swear you in. So, we were there about a week in Hamilton. Then they shipped us up to Toronto to the exhibition grounds, and we were in the horse palace. That's where they used to keep their horses to show and that's where they kept the troops now. In fact, when the Queen of England inspected the horse palace, she said she wouldn't allow her horses in that place, but they put the men in there. But anyway, that's where we were stationed.

I was assigned to the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps. In March, one day we fell out on parade, they marched us to a railroad siding. They started calling off the names. They said as your name is called off, go to whichever car we tell you to, you're going overseas. So, I was really happy, finally going to get overseas. Well they called my name, and the sergeant said stand over there. So, I stood aside, everybody else boarded the train except me. Pretty soon the trains pulling out. I said to Sarge what's going on, he said "You can't go." I said why not? He said you're not old enough. I said what do you mean I'm not old enough? He said you're not nineteen yet. Canada doesn't send any soldiers overseas until they're at

least nineteen. And they never send anyone overseas unless they were volunteers. That was quite unique at that time. Well believe it or not, these were the only people I knew in Canada, mind you, I've been with them for three months now. My good friends, I went back to that horse palace and I cried for two days. I was really lonesome. But then they assigned me to a unit, we went to Brampton, Ontario to set up a tent camp, for new recruits. Once we got the tent camp set up, they asked us for volunteers to do certain things, they asked if anybody knew how to type. So I raised my hand. I figured that's got to be an easy job. So they took me aside and made me the company runner. I hadn't even seen a typewriter before to be truthful. I was assigned to the Colonel's office to put out the part two orders. Now part two orders are what goes on in the camp for the whole next day, all the operations. We didn't have copy machines like you have now- we had the old mimeographs, and the sheet was about that long, it was coated with a wax substance, you had to type without the ribbon, and this would cut the wax, then you put on the big drum, then you ink the drum, then you would roll these things off like a printing press. Well I used to sit up until 2 o'clock in the morning, punching out those part two orders with one finger, until I got it so I can do it with 4 fingers. But I was glad I was in that position because I used to pick the mail up in town and when I brought it back into the Colonel's office, I would open all the mail except what was marked personal or secret or confidential, and then I had to distribute it throughout the camp. One of the orders I picked up said that Canada was going to start a paratroop unit, and they were looking for volunteers. So, I immediately went to the Colonel and asked him if I could put my name in, he said "Well I think you're a little too tall." he said "They're very fussy on the size." I said, "What's size got to do with it?" I don't know, but he says they don't want people over six feet. Well I was about six foot one then. I talked to him for the whole day. He said, "Well you put your name in and I'll sign it." but he said, "You make get to Montreal and they'll ship you back." I said, "Well I'll take my chances."

So, they finally got a group of us together and shipped us to Montreal, to the depot there. Sure enough, they gave me a hard time about my height. But I

argued and pleaded so they finally let me go through. We were there about a week, until they got enough together. And then they shipped us to Fort Benning, Georgia, for training, because Canada did not have a parachute school. On our way down to Fort Benning, we had to stop over in Washington D.C. and they took us through the Capitol. It was a real high point in my life because they took us into the Senate chamber, and the Senate was debating that day on whether they should draft eighteen-year-olds or not, and they passed that bill that day. So, I always felt pretty good about that, that I saw a piece of history taking place. Another interesting thing I didn't know about in fact until this book came out that was published about our unit, at that time, Canada's constitution said that no foreign officer could command any Canadian unit. Now we were going to train with the Americans down at Fort Benning. So, they had to have a special meeting of Parliament to pass a law just for that instance so we could go work under the American officers. So that was another piece of history, anyway we got down to Benning, and jump training was more physical training than jumping. The jumping part is easy, all you gotta do is step out of that plane and it's all over. But the physical training they gave you was just horrendous, you wouldn't believe it. But I qualified for my wings on November 21st, 1942, they were pinned on me by Brigadier General Howl, I still have the original certificate and the original wings at home. We stayed in Fort Benning until just before Christmas. We were taken to combat training there. It was a good place to train, they had nice warm weather. They had plenty of places, Fort Benning is a huge, big fort. Tank units, infantry, everything else there. So it was a good place for us to train. At Christmas time they gave us a leave to go home, and then we were supposed to report back to Toronto, which I did. We got to Toronto and they shipped us to Shilo, Manitoba and Shilo, Manitoba is about as flat as this floor. We used to say you could see a train coming three days before it got there. [laughter] That's how flat it was, it really was. And that's where they decided to set up the Canadian school. They found out later it was a poor place to have it because of the high winds there, caused a lot of casualties. But that's where we trained, we jumped there, and I qualified for the Canadian wings. In March of 1943, they gave us all a ten day leave home. That's very unusual for them to give you ten days, for no reason

at all. We had no idea why we were getting a leave. So, we went home, when we reported back, that's when we found out we were going overseas. They wouldn't let you know ahead of time when you were going. So, then they shipped us from there, we went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, went to England. We were in a place called Bulford Camp it's on a Salisbury Plain, which is in a southern part of England. That's where the Roman burial mounds are and where the Stonehenge is. In fact, when we used to go out on our forced marches we would go by the Stonehenge every time we went by that area. Then from there they shipped us up to Ringway, England, because we had to qualify with the British, for their wings. Because we were going to jump with the British, we were assigned to the British 6th Airborne Division. Now the British jumped entirely different than the Americans and Canadians did, they jumped from a hole in the bottom of the plane rather than out the door. And the only planes they had for training paratroops were the old Whitley bombers, which were an old World War One bomber, they flew all of ninety miles an hour I guess. They had a fuselage that was probably about that high, you couldn't stand up in them. The way we would jump out of that plane we'd scooch in, sit down on our butts and scooch along to the side until you got to the hole in the floor. Then you'd hook up and you'd have to swing into the hole in the floor and you'd sit there and wait for the command to jump. Jump master hollered and you'd lift yourself up on your hands and pull your chin in otherwise you'll hit it on the other side of the hole. On one of our jumps my good friend Bill Muer he was ahead of me, he swung into the hole and was just ready to go, and I grabbed him and pulled him back, he said what's the matter? Jump master said, "What's going on?" I said, "You didn't even hook up." Just, you get so excited you forget things. So, he never forgot that. He just died last year. He and I were very good friends. While there too, we had to make two jumps out of a barrage balloon. You kids probably have no idea what a barrage balloon is. Well they were a huge big balloon, fully as long as this room, it's like a big ol' sausage. What they used them for primarily, they put them up over the main cities, on cables they sent them up about seven or eight hundred feet. This would deter the dive bombers from coming in too low. It helped a lot, it didn't stop it, but it did help a lot. So, they took one of these balloons and they hung a

huge big wicker basket under it, they put eight of us in it, they sent us up on a cable, we had to jump out of that. That was quite a unique feeling because we had never jumped out of a so-called free-fall because when you jump out of a plane, you get the prop wash which kind of pushes you back and opens your chute. This you plummet right straight down. And we're only up there about 700 feet. We had to make one day jump and one night jump. The reason they did that, they thought they might be able to float us across the channel with these barrage balloons, but they gave that up because they couldn't figure out how to steer the dumb things because you're at the mercy of the wind of course, so they gave that up. From then on, it was all combat training. We used to go on, we called them schemes, the Americans always called them maneuvers, and the British would always call them schemes. We went on schemes all the time. Drop us everywhere, just intense combat training. We knew we had been told that we were going to be the spearhead for the Normandy invasion. We didn't know when, but we knew that that's what we were being trained for. Low and behold, it turned out that we were. The British 6th Airborne Division, and the Canadians were some of the first troops to land in France on D-Day. After our training we were sent to place called Down Anthony, and that's where the air drill was where we were going to be taking off for France.

I've got to back up here a little, you know when we speak of D-Day, we always mean the Normandy invasion. But D-Day in reality is just a code name for any day, any specified day that a military operation is going to take place. And then the hour it's going to take off is H-hour. So it's D-Day H-hour. But because of the size of the Normandy invasion, the immensity of it, the biggest military operation in history, when we speak of D-Day now, everybody means Normandy Invasion June 6th, 1944. It's been called the Longest Day too, and Cornelius Ryan when he wrote his book, titled his book "The Longest Day". I couldn't figure out where he got that title until I read his book. In it he has a direct quote and it says "Believe me, Lang, the first 24 hours of the invasion will be decisive. The fate of Germany hangs in the balance, for the Allies as well as Germany, this will be the longest day," signed Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, April 22nd, 1944. So, they knew that

we were coming but they didn't know when. That was the big secret. So, they sent us to a place called Down Anthony. When we got there, they put us in a camp completely surrounded by barbed wire with guards with orders to shoot anybody that tries to get in or out, no questions asked. Because we were the ones that knew when D-Day was coming. We had been told when it would be, June 5th, was the original date. We were there for approximately two weeks, while they were training. They had the barbed wire camp about a half mile out on our perimeter the provost marshals' corps had troops guarding the whole area, not to let anybody in or out. You'd never believe it, two teenage girls not only got by the provost marshals, they got right up to the barbed wire. They took them prisoner and kept them for almost two weeks after the invasion because they thought they might know something about what's going on. Can you imagine their poor parents? These kids went off to school, didn't show up again. But I always said that the young girls always knew where the good lookin' guys were [laughter]. Anyway, while in Down Anthony, they set up a huge tent, similar to a big top at the circus. And in it, they had these huge big pictures that were taken by the Air Force, of the areas we were going to be in, and they had blown them up like six or eight feet. You just wouldn't believe it, they were hanging on the flaps of the tent. And in the tent they had it all blacked out, you walked in in the daylight and it was just pitch black in there, and then they turn on these low lights to make it look like a moonlit night. In the center of the tent, they had these tables set up, and they had these topographical maps on there, of the areas that we're supposed to hit. Each one of our units had their own table, which showed our objectives. The one for our unit was a bridge, and a chateau that held a radio station, those were our two main objectives. You wouldn't believe these pictures, I'll tell you that, such detail in them, I couldn't believe it, you'd swear you were right there. How they could blow them up that big is beyond me but they did it, they did a terrific job. So we went through all our briefings. They came around the day before, handed us one sheet of paper. Said you have to write your last letter. What do you mean your last letter? Well you have to write this letter, as if you know you're going to die, and you're never coming back. And you're allowed to write one, that's all. Then address it to who you want, and if you come back, we'll give

you the letter back, if you don't come back, we'll mail the letter. It was very difficult, writing a letter, when you don't know what's going to happen and you gotta pretend you're dead. It's a difficult thing. I was fortunate, I got my letter back.

Well, June 5th came, they took us out to the air drone and then the jump was called off because of the weather, they had to cancel. So then we were put on forced rest, they make you try to lay down to get some rest. The evening of June 5th, they told us we're ready to go, went to load us on the aircraft. Now you just wouldn't believe I gotta tell you what we carried, in fact they quote it in the book here. Easier for me to read it than recite it. He says, "On June 5th, as it dawned cloudy and as the sun set, the men dressed and loaded up, it is astonishing that they could walk after their final exercise, Ted Kalicki recalls, and I told him, I said I thought many times what we had carried with us on that drop. My memory is pretty clear on a point. I had two bandoleers of 303 rifle ammunition on my denison smock." You folks know what a bandoleer of ammunition is? It's a wet belt, and there's 100 rounds of rifle ammunition in it. I had two of those, one on each side of my smock sewn on, and I crisscrossed them on each way this way. I also crisscrossed two more on my shoulders. We had felt bags which we strapped to our legs. This was unique. We had pioneered this, they had a big felt bag that went around our leg, and it clipped on here in three places, with a piano wire through it for a ripcord. Had a twenty-foot cord on it, a nylon cord that we tied to the seat of our harness. We loaded that with whatever we wanted, as I say in there. When you jumped, when you thought you were about forty feet from the ground, you would release that and lower the cord. Now if you let it go too soon, it would tend to act as a pendulum. In fact, in training, one of our guys got it going too quick, and boy I'll tell you he was really swinging. He approached the ground and, bag went up, he hit the ground and the bag came right down on top of him. About 150 pounds, just about killed him. But it was a very good thing because, we had all of our equipment with us. Anyway, I had the two bandoleers and one's on my shoulder. We had the felt bags, which we could release with the ripcord and then lower from us on a twenty-foot nylon cord. The bag held our

303 Lee-Enfield rifle, more 303 ammunition, some phosphorus grenades, several sticks of plastic high explosive, a couple of two-inch mortar shells, several hang grenades. In our backpacks, we had a change of underwear, socks, three-day supply of field rations. Our field rations were terrible - we had corned beef and hardtack and when they say hardtack, it's like cement believe me, we think it was left over from the first world war. We had hard candy, we had three tins of cigarettes, ten in each tin, and then whatever else we wanted to carry. We carried a plastic tube in there so that we could put the plastic explosive in, to make a bangalore torpedo. A bangalore torpedo, you generally slide under a wall or something to blow it or stick it alongside a building to blow the building down. We were told to take as much ammunition and gear with us as we could, because it would be at least three days before they would be able to resupply us. So that's why we carried so much. We had anti-tank mines in there, I carried some [unclear 26:53] magazines in there. We got to the air drone, ready to load, and believe me we could hardly walk. We got to the aircraft and it's not like now like when you go to the airport, you walk out of the building of the airport, you walk right into the airplane, these air drones that I'm speaking of, didn't even have concrete runways, they were just dirt, that's where they took off from. Most of the bombing raids and everything was taken off from just open fields. Here the entrance to the aircraft is about that high off the ground. They got two handles here to grab a hold of, and a square step here. Well you put your foot up, and there's no way we can pull ourselves in there. The guy on each side of the doorway, put their hands on our butts and just literally threw us into the plane. So I was the second man in the aircraft because, I was going to be next to the last out. We took off, it was dark, and we flew around quite a while because they had to rendezvous with other airborne units in the area that were taking off from different parts of England. Then we struck out over the channel, and when we got over the channel, it was a moonlit night, but not bright moonlight, but we could see all the silhouettes of the ships down there. All the different seagoing craft, it was just black with sea craft. Then as we approached the French coast, they knew we were coming because of all the activity. And I'll tell ya, you can talk about a Fourth of July, you never saw a Fourth of July like this one. There was so much

anti-aircraft fire and small arms fire, tracer bullets. And we're going in at 800 feet. And a lot of these pilots, had never faced small arm fire, they're flying way above the clouds, and they fly through anti-aircraft, but not through what they were flying through in this, and I guess a lot of them panicked. Two of our plane loads were dropped ninety miles away from our drop zone, right on the middle of an airfield in LaHave that was held by the Germans. Quite a few plane loads were dropped over swampy areas. I found out later that we were dropped, roughly nineteen miles away from where we were supposed to be.

We're flying along, and the red light came on, the fire that was going on was just unbelievable, I don't know how our plane didn't get hit. But we were lucky, our plane didn't get hit. The red light came on which means stand up, so we stand up and hook up. Green light comes on, jump master is back by the door, hollering "go". Fellas start taking off. The guy in front of me gets to the door. And I'll tell ya, I never saw anything like it. He would not go, he fell to the ground, he grabbed a seat. I swear he was going to tear them right off the wall of the plane. He was screaming, there was just no way he was he getting out of that plane. I turned to Evans behind me, I said "You with me?" He said "Yes, let's get the hell out of here." So I got over him, I don't know how I got over him, I think I stumbled out of the plane, but I got out. My chute opened, and I looked around. It's like a Fourth of July around there but there's nobody around. I'm all alone. I can't see the aircraft I just exited, it's gone. I don't see anybody else, I'm all alone. I don't know whether Evans got out. I hit the ground, had a good soft landing, surprisingly. Collapsed my chute, pulled in my gear, my hearts pounding 90 miles an hour, I don't know where I'm at, I don't know what's going on, nobody's around. When you're all alone, it's a terrible feeling. I pulled my bag over, got my rifle out, cradled it across my arm, got some of the grenades out, put them in my wet belt. Just then I happened to see some movement over here. I don't know who it is because it's dark. So, I took a grenade, put the ring over my finger here, held the grenade like this, got the rifle here. I'm lying there thinking if they're Germans, the only thing I can do is pull the pin and throw the grenade, get off as many rounds as I can, and it's goodbye Ted. So, they got to, I don't know

probably like from here to where that table is. And they stopped because that's when they saw me. I was trying to get as low to the ground as I could. I was hoping they were our own, but I was afraid they were Germans. Then one of them started toward me, while the others held their weapons pointed toward me. And as he got closer and closer, I said well this is going to be it. And I don't know he got to like this second row here. He looks and he says, "Blimey it's a bloomin' Canadian!" [laughter]. Well, I'll tell ya, you talk about a happy person. so I said "Where's your CO?" he says "He's back here with us." So, I went back, the Colonel was with him, one of their colonels. I told him who I was, I was with the Canadians and I said, "Do you know where my troops are? Where my chaps are?" He says, "We're strung out all over." He said, "I don't even know where most of my unit is." He says, "This is the worst [unclear 31:55] I've ever seen, just terrible." So, I said, "Well you have any idea where our DZ is because I should get back there." He says, "Well if you want you can go with us if you'd like." I said, "Well, I was told that no matter where we were, we should get back to the DZ because they would need all the troops there that they could get." He says, "Well that's right you should." So, he said, "Strike off in that direction, that's the right direction to go. I know that, but I don't know how far away we are. I have no idea. There's no familiar landmarks, nothing."

So, I struck out on my own. After two or three minutes I thought it was a mistake, because then I turned around I looked and I'm all alone again. I thought I should have stayed with them at least I was with somebody. But when I say I struck out, I mean this is, you're running you're crawling, anyway you can to stay out of sight. I got to a little wooded area. I dropped on the ground and I heard click. We had these clickers and if somebody approached you were supposed to give them one click, and they were supposed to reply with two if they were friend. Well somebody went click and I went click click. A voice said, "Who is it?" I said, "Kalicki" He says, "This is Evans!" I said, "Oh my god am I glad to hear you!" So, I told him what had happened, who I had met with, he says "Well that's good, well let's head in that direction." So, we did and in the mean time we picked up some other stragglers that have been dropped in the area. There were probably eight or

nine of us by now, I don't remember the numbers. Didn't pay much attention to numbers just as long as you had a crew with you. We came to a lane that had a stone wall on it. We were approaching it. Crouched low, we heard Germans approaching from the left. So, we got behind the wall, got grenades ready. I'll tell ya a grenade is the best weapon a soldier can carry. It's the greatest thing they ever had. We all got our grenades ready. Evans was our sergeant. He said, "When I say go, just jump up and get the grenades off, fire as much as you can." Quietly of course we're all saying this. They were moving up, there were quite a few of them. We don't know how many, but there were quite a few. We waited until they were just about… We figured they had the area covered, Ted hollered "Now!" and we jumped up and threw our grenades and fired, and then we took off. You never heard so much screaming and moaning. I think we did a hell of a number on them. But we didn't stay to find out because we knew we were outnumbered. And we took off.

We're moving through a wooded area. Again, we hear some troops coming from the right, we all hit the dirt. The cover in there was about that high. We're laying in the cover. Of course, we're all camouflaged. Here they come from the right, they're walking along. Very unconcerned apparently, they didn't expect any troops to be in that area. Heading to our left which was toward the north we figured. Well I swear, they weren't any more than from here to that machine away from me. And they never saw us. I couldn't believe they couldn't see us because I guess they never expected anybody there so they weren't looking for anything, and we were all laying perfectly still in that grass. Well the same procedure when they got by us. Grenades, rifle fire, and then take off again. Later on, another incident. We came out of the woods, and this was a hay field, pretty high, and there was a building off to the distance. Probably three to four hundred yards. We didn't know what it was, couldn't tell what it was, whether it was a barn or a house or what. But we thought we'd make for that building. And we'd start, jump up and run a ways and drop down. Our sniper Bastion, he had a scope on his rifle, I don't know why he did it but he wanted to get up to see what was going on, and he did it before we even knew that he was going to do it. But he stood up and held

his rifle up so he could look through his scope, and that's as far as he got. We never heard the shot, we heard the thud, and he just collapsed. And I'll tell ya whoever that person was who shot at him was a helluva shot, because that was over 200 yards and got him right through the heart. But I got thinking afterwards he was probably sighting on us as we were jumping up in the grass and moving up. So, he probably had an idea where somebody was going to jump up. But regardless it was one hell of a shot. But that was the first one of my comrades that I had actually seen shot dead in front of me. And I want to tell you when you see all these movies about how they get blown against walls and they fly here and they fly there. It doesn't happen that way, they just collapse. That's it. Life is gone. That is if it's a fatal hit. So, we got outta there because there was no sense in approaching, we had no idea who was there. Went back in the woods, and then through the day that's all it was. Skirmish after skirmish, constantly. Came evening, we came up on a barn. One of the guys ran in, said it was all clear. Quietly we moved into the barn. There were two horses in there, horse stable. We laid down to get some rest. Nice and warm in there. I didn't know how long we were in there, probably five or six hours, getting some rest, then we took off. It was a couple days later we found out from some fellas that came in the same area we were, that approached that barn, at daylight. They just got into the barn, they heard some movement upstairs so they waited. And as they came down they took each one prisoner, they took something like nine or ten Germans prisoners. They'd been up there while we were down below and neither of us knew that the other one was there [laughter]. Nobody ever made too much noise, because you didn't want to make noise. That was quite an incident. I forgot, during that day too, we came upon a road, and there were some of our boys there, they had a Bren gun set up (the Bren gun is a light machine gun, it's like the browning or the AR here that they use). It's a very good weapon. It's actually a Czechoslovakian weapon. One of the best during the second World War. They had a Bren gun set up and some rifles there. They told us that the Germans were coming toward them through this field in front of them. They were on kind of a mound by the road. So, Clancy was with them and he told the British commando, "Take Kalicki and one of the other guys with you, and go down around here, see if you can

outflank them, see how many men there are there if you can." So, we took off down the side there. And of course, same thing, you're crouching, you're crawling, whatever you can. Finally, we got down the road about probably 75 yards or so. We laid there. We see the Germans jumping up, moving forward, just like we do. And we determined there were quite a few of them there. More than we wanted to tangle with. But anyway, same procedure. Got grenades ready, Commando says "Wait for my signal." They're getting pretty close to us, I don't want to wait. I figure, let's open. He says, "No, wait wait." My gosh, they got to where I could reach out and touch one of them. Then he hollered "Go!" We let the grenades fly, fired. And when we did, the boys that we came from, they opened up too. We ran back to where they were. And surprisingly, the Germans retreated. And they determined later that there was almost a company of them there. But because of us hitting them from the side, and our troops opening up, they thought we had a full cordon there. Just out bluffed them I guess. But the one sad thing there, our Bren gunner there, when Clancy hit his leg so he'd fire, he didn't fire, he hit him again, he didn't fire. He rolled him over, he had a bullet right through his forehead. Nobody even knew he was hit, he was laying right there by his gun. So, that's the way things happened.

I had three close shaves. And I was very blessed. I must of had a guardian angel on each shoulder because I don't know how I got through it. The one time, we set up a Bren gun position in a bombed out building and I was standing in there watching the road, behind the gun. One shell hit behind me in the courtyard. Don't know where it came from. Don't know whether it was friendly fire or enemy fire. I got hit right in the leg. I went down, I thought I lost my leg. I couldn't believe the pain. But I reached down, I said "Hallelujah, I'm going to England" because if you got wounded they shipped us back to England. That's all we wanted was to get back to England. Hallelujah! I looked, no blood. And it hurt like you wouldn't believe. I reached again, no blood. And I pull my pants, and there's a piece of shrapnel about that big. It hit my pants and drove right into the skin. Had the pants creased right into the skin, I couldn't believe it. I was so black and blue here for about a week, you wouldn't believe it. And it hurt. But that was

it. Another time Huey and I, Huey [unclear 40:55] and I, was a good friend of mine. We had set up a Bren gun position to guard our area. I had shallowed out a little slit trench. We didn't dig foxholes we dug slit trenches, that deep, that's good enough. Just as long as you get below ground level, that's all you need because, if you get a direct hit, no matter how deep it is, it's gonna kill ya anyway. All you're trying to do is get away from shrapnel and gunfire. I was lying there, taking a little rest. He was on the Bren gun. All of a sudden, he kicked me. So I get up in a crouching position. Here comes this big mass moving towards us down the road, and it's moving so slowly, you have to look to make sure that it's moving. What they did, they had taken brush of all kinds and covered their weapons carrier. We knew they were enemy because that was enemy in front of us, there was no friends in front of us. So, I said "Huey as soon as you're ready you let go of the Bren gun, I'll throw a couple grenades." So, I got a couple of grenades ready. He waited, I don't know, they were very close to us. No further than Tom is away from us before we fired. Threw the grenades and fired. I fired from my rifle and all of a sudden, I looked up and here's a big German coming at me with a bayonet. Well, I was fortunate, I got him before he got me. But that was scary. We cleaned out the whole bunch. It was a reconnaissance group. So that was a good feat. Another time we were storming a chateau. We had to approach the chateau on an open road. As soon as we got within range they started firing. So were trying to make it to the other side of the road to stay out of sight. Sergeant Green would holler your name, and when he does you would have to dart across the road and head for the other side. There came a lull in the firing, he hollers "Kalicki." I jump up and about halfway across the road the damn machine gun opened up again. And I made a dive, I probably dove from here to the wall. I hit the dirt, and I'm lying there like this. And here come the bullets. And I said, "Goodbye Mama." Last one hit right there. Just barely drew blood, then stopped. One more bullet would have gone right through my head. That's why I say I just, I had to be blessed. Huey and I, we're out setting up a Bren gun position again. We stopped for a little rest to have a smoke. We were digging a big trench, to put the gun in, fortify it. I had some Lucky Strike cigarettes. I pulled out one, lit it up and said, "Huey would you like an American cigarette?" "Yeah, I'll have one," he said.

So, I gave it to 'em and he put it behind his ear. I said, "What are you doing that for?" He said, "Well, I'm going to smoke it later." Jokingly, I said, "You better smoke it now because you may not get a chance later." You know, ha ha ha. I no sooner got the words out of my mouth, then a shell hit, one lousy shell again, I don't know what it was with us. We always got one shell. It blew me through the air. I'm lying there because I'm expecting more artillery. Waited, nothing, and I look over and Huey's laying there. I called to him and he doesn't answer, I called to him, he doesn't answer. Now we had been sitting there like this. I slithered my way over to him. I rolled him over and he just let a little groan out. He had a big hunk of shrapnel right through his heart. So again, I just don't know how I was that lucky. I had to be blessed. I don't know why I was saved. But I was grateful of course. That's the way it went all through the [trails off].

We were 93 days on the front line. When they originally dropped us, we were supposed to be in front line combat for 48 hours. They were going to withdraw us and drop us again further inland. Well it never came to pass. We went all the way up through. We got to Ostend, Belgium. I was separated from the unit there, I was sent to the hospital. Then I was assigned to the Queen's Own Rifles and I was in Nijmegen when the Battle of the Bulge was on. Nijmegen is just outside of what the Americans refer to as the Battle of the Bulge. Nijmegen was just as big a battle. Probably not as big because it didn't have as many men, but just as vital. Then we were finally taken out of combat 93 days later. And I'll tell ya I never thought anyone could look so beautiful. But it sure was, it was a very beautiful sight. And ya know for every one of us that got away the way I did, there was so many thousands that never made it. People just don't realize how horrible war is. When you see bodies lying around and you know that they're your friends and they're the enemy, but they're still bodies. It makes you realize what it's all about. Limbs blown off. Johnson, a good friend of mine, we were behind a hedgerow, we were being shelled. And they're just shelling the living hell out of us. And we're laying there and I'm laying this way. He's facing me, the same way. All of a sudden, he looks at me and grins. He says, "Hey Ted, ya know what?" I said "What?" He says, "This is just like being on the Front Line!" I said, "You dummy,

where the hell do you think you are. We're way in front of the Front Line!" It was about two seconds later he lost his leg. Just, unbelievable. Just, hard to believe.

Our Canadian unit did something that most of the other units never did. We used to set up what we called listening posts. Now this is not a post of any kind. We used to try to get as close to the enemy as we could, in the dead of night. And just lay there and listen because you could hear what was going on, not the speech, but to hear what's going on with the equipment. You might hear if they're preparing attack or maybe they're withdrawing or whatever. We did a lot of that. One night three of us were assigned to go out. You know, you're lying on the ground trying to get a nap. All of a sudden, the Sergeant comes along "Kalicki, patrol" that's the worst thing you can hear. Because it means you're out there again. At least when you're on the ground sleeping you're safe. Anyway, he called me for the listening post. So, we started out across this field. Crawling and running, whatever we can. All of a sudden one of us tripped a flare, I don't know who it was. But I'll tell ya in the dead of night when a flare goes up, it lights it up like a football stadium. So, we hit the dirt and lay there. I surely expected they were going to open up on us, but they didn't. So, we waited probably ten minutes, just lying there perfectly still. Then we crawled up closer, and then we could hear all kinds of activity. They were moving horses. They used a lot of horses by the way, the German army used an awful lot of horses. We could hear the horses moving, we could hear the wagons rolling. So, we determined that they must be pulling out. I guess what they thought when the flare went off, they probably thought that there was going to be more of us coming. And were apparently in the process of moving out anyway but they just sped it up. So, we lay there for a while, it got deadly quiet. We thought, well now we'll head back. Never got to go, I'll tell ya. They apparently pulled back and zeroed in on that position because I guess the figured we would be coming through that area. And they laid down an artillery barrage in the dead of night, and I'm telling you, when you lay there on the ground and there's flames shooting up seven, eight feet next to ya. The ground is shaking. Anybody who says they're not scared is lying like hell. Because you'll try your damnedest to dig as low in the ground as you can. That's the way it

is with everybody that's on that front line. You talk to any man that's faced mortal combat, he'll tell you the same thing. All you can think of is to get down as low as you can into that ground. Get the hell out of the way. But that was just another one of the incidents. That's the way the whole battle went. The whole thing.

I was very proud to be a part of it. I would never want to go through it again. In fact, our brigadier General Gael, British General, the night before we went in, he gave us a big rally speech like we were going out to play football. He walked with a staff, looked just like a shepherd, you should see em'. Very heavy British accent, I used to be able to mimic him, but I can't do that anymore, I lost that now. I lived with that for four years, so I got to speak just like him. In fact, when I met my wife she thought I was a Canadian, that's why she wanted to meet me. Night I met her I told her I was going to marry her, and I did. 52 years ago, so, it was funny. But, he gave us a speech and he said, "My comrades tell me that I must be crazy, taking green troops into combat." and he said, "I told him that I would take green troops anytime." Of course, we stood up [cheers]. Of course, two minutes after we were in France, we knew why he wanted green troops because if you knew what it was like you wouldn't be so happy going. We just couldn't wait to get into combat. Really, it was unbelievable. But once we got in, it was a different story. But once you're in, you have to do your duty that's all you can do. So, that's about as much as I'd like to tell you. Except that there is a book about our battalion. It's called *Airborne,* it's in the Richmond Memorial library, because I dedicated it to my son who died two years ago. It's a historic story of the first Canadian parachute battalion. This is an autographed copy by the author, Brian Nolan, he interviewed me several times, had me make tapes. He told me one thing, he went to France to do some research on the book. He told me "You know when you told me about the hedgerows there, I didn't believe you until I got there because when you people speak of hedgerows, you're talking about these little hedges." Well, those hedgerows in Normandy, they were used to separate the lots of the French farmers. Now what they had done over the years, they had cleared the land, thrown the brush and dirt in these areas to fence of their areas. But by the time, 1942, those hedgerows, the bases of them were probably six or seven feet high,

ten or twelve feet through, and the brush and the bramble, a wild hog couldn't get through. In fact, the tank corps could not get through, they couldn't get through those hedgerows. One Canadian engineer took a bulldozer and welded eight-foot-long railroad irons onto the blade, and that's how they got through the hedgerows. Ripped em' up with that. They couldn't break them any other way. Another thing too you know, we had some great weapons, but lemme tell you that German 88. That was one of the worst weapons a person could face. And to this day it's still one of their best weapons. They had it mounted on carriers, we called them SP's, self-propelled, they had them on their tanks. The first day, we saw three Sherman tanks to the south of us. They just came around a hedge. There was a Tiger tank sitting there. We didn't know the tank was there. We just heard the 88s. You could hear the 88s they had a very distinct sound, it sounds like you're ripping a piece of galvanized steel. It's terribly demoralizing when they're firing at you. One shot [Boom!]. Blew the turret right off that thing. Just like nothing. Another tank pulled up, you got three of them within a minute and a half. We didn't have anything to stand up against those 88s until a little while later. It was unbelievable. They pull up and they could get so close to ya, and they'd fire those things point blank range and the sound alone was enough to make ya go nuts. It was unbelievable. And very accurate. They were a terrible weapon.

There's one thing I'd like to read to you. This is a copy of the citation that was presented to British 6th Airborne division. It says "What manner of men are these who wear the maroon beret. They are firstly, all volunteers, and are toughened by hard physical training. As a result, they have that infectious optimism, and that offensive eagerness, which comes from physical well-being. They have jumped from the air, and by so doing have conquered fear. Their duty lies in the van of the battle. They are proud of this honor and have never failed in any task. They have the highest standards in all things, whether it be skill in battle, or in smartness in execution of all peace time duties. They have shown themselves to be tenacious in defense as they are courageous in the attack. They are in fact - men apart - every man an emperor. Of all the fortune which make for

success in battle, the spirit of the warrior is the most desired. That spirit will be found in full measure, in the men who wear the maroon beret." It's signed Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein and that's the citation he gave to the 6th Airborne division after the Normandy invasion. So, we were very proud of that.

In fact our unit has four battle honors on our flag. We never failed in any objective that was given to us. We took every objective that was assigned to us. Maybe not in the time allotted but we did make it. Then there's just one other thing I'd like to read. This was a poem that was dedicated to the first Canadian Parachute Battalion by a poet by the name of Harold Mohn, he lives in Pennsylvania. It says "We came back from the depths of hell, we did not think could be. With memories that have scarred our minds, to last eternally. The stench of blood and dirt and sweat, will always with us stay. The sight of wounded, dying, dead, we cannot drive away. We learned of devastation, that only war can bring. We know how in the battle, how close to life we cling. We cannot forget our comrades, who lie across the sea. And were but for the grace of God, we too with them might be. We pray our sons who follow, will never know or see, the nightmare of another war, and its futility." And that last line is right. I never forget what Winston Churchill said. He always said that "Yack yack yack, is a lot better than war war war." And believe me it is. I've always been of the thought now that, when I hear these hawks "we gotta go in and get em!" I say, "I'll be the first one to follow you." That usually stops 'em. Because none of 'em want to go but they want us to go. I'm not saying that, a lot of wars aren't necessary, they are because of what happens. But it's not a pleasant thing, to ask the young men and women, today the women, to sacrifice their lives for something that should be able to be worked out with treaties. But it has to be. So that's about the end of my presentation, before I quit here's a picture of my company that I jumped with. These are the original guys that I went in with. Not many of 'em left. But that was sent by [unclear 56:35] Clancy, about six years ago. I didn't even know he had it, made me feel pretty good that I got it. Are there any questions? You must have some questions.

Q: How soon did you tell your parents where you were?
TK: Well that was funny, I didn't tell them, it was forced out of me. I was in the barracks in Toronto. This was towards the first part of February. It was night time we were there shootin' the breeze and two Mounties came in. "Is there a Kalicki here?" I said, "Yes right here." "What the hell have I done, I haven't done anything." he said "So you Theodore Kalicki?" "Yes." "You live on 17 Maple Street, Batavia, New York?" I said, "I did, yes." "Your mother and father know you're here, right?" "Oh yeah." "Well, I think you'd better come with us." I had no idea what they wanted. So, they took me in the Colonel's office. Colonel says, "How old are you?" I said. "I'm 21." He said, "We know you aren't 21." "How old are you?" I said, "I'm 18." "Well, if your parents knew you were here, how come your father is writing this scathing letter to Ottawa." He was going to invade Canada to get me back. But anyway, he said, "In Canada, you're legal age." "It's up to you, if you want to go back, we will give you an honorable discharge." "If you want to stay, you're of legal age and you can stay." So, I said "I do want to stay but I wish I could get back and talk to them now as long as they know where I'm at." so he said "Well, we'll give you a ten-day leave." "Now if you get home and you decide you don't want to come back, you have to come back or else you'll be a deserter." "So, you know if you want to stay there fine, but come back and get your official discharge." So, I came home and talked it over with my parents. I told them I wanted to stay. So that's when they found out. Henry finally told them. Because I didn't know until later, my mother used to go down the railroad station. Sometimes stand there for hours expecting me to come back. If I had known, what it did to her I would have never done it. But when you're a kid ya know you think of yourself only. So, it was a bad thing to do for my mother.

Q: Were your parents supportive after you told them [unclear 59:06]
TK: Yes yes. In fact, I came home on leave and back then Canadian army we wore shorts. Shorts and short sleeve khaki shirts and a pith helmet. When I was home on leave that was the official dress, that's what I had to wear. I went to church with my mother, she didn't know whether I should go in church or not with

shorts on, to the Sacred Heart Church. She was very proud of me, of course, once I was in and all the people came out and talked to 'em and yes they were very supportive. But my father used to listen to the radio every day, every day trying to keep track of where we were. All four of us boys were in. One of my brothers was in the Philippines, the other one served in Haiti. One of them went to the Philippines but it was after the war. He was in during war time, but he was sent there after the war and then discharged while he was over there. My older brother, Walt, they used to call him Tarzan, he was mad as can be when I went in because he wanted to be the first one in. He never forgave me for beating him into combat. He's dead now, but he always used to tell me "Damn you, I could have killed you when I found out you were in the Army."

Q: Did all of your brothers make it back home?
TK: Yes, yes. My mother was very thankful all four of us came back. You know during the war they had these gold stars that they used to put in the windows of houses where one of their children had died in battle in the war. And I'll tell ya, this gentlemen can tell ya, there were a lot of them in the city of Batavia. In fact I have a book at home, that was dedicated to the gold star mothers, and it has a picture of every one of those that was killed in combat, and a little history about 'em. Some of those boys were seventeen and eighteen, ya know. Never got to do anything. Because back then, like I tell you, we didn't have the freedom that you kids have today. Unless you were seventeen or eighteen, there wasn't much you could do. Everybody watched you like a hawk, and you couldn't do anything really until you were twenty-one. That was the age of consent. So, anything else?

Q: [question about the letter that he wrote -unclear 01:01:23]
TK: No, I tore it up. No, I wouldn't want anybody to see that because you bare your soul. No, I didn't want anybody to see that. If I had died, that's a different story.

Q: If you would have known, ahead of time, what you would have had to go through, would you not have done it?

TK: That's a hard question you know, I don't know. I know now that I wouldn't like to go through it again. But how would you know? That fella that couldn't leave our plane. Not a one of us held anything against him. How could you? The poor guy was absolutely petrified. He went through all that training with us and everything. I mean he was one of us, we never expected that to happen. But fortunately, he was the only one in our outfit. There could have been more. That could have caused a serious problem for us. But we all saw him in England afterwards, and he apologized. We said no apology needed. I mean it was just one of those things, could have happened to any one of us. Who knows how they're gonna react, in the face of fire. I've seen people run off the line. Just petrified. You just don't know, you have no idea. One of our men, Rod [unclear 01:02:45], he was dropped in a different area away from us. And when daylight broke, they got hit with heavy enemy fire. And there were a whole bunch of 'em knocked down on the field and he was laying there, he was badly wounded. His leg was all shattered, bleeding, and here come the Germans. And they're walking along, they've got an officer with 'em, he's rolling everybody over like this and putting a bullet through their head, just to make sure that they're dead. Mark said later on, after we got back to England, he said I didn't know what to do so I took the blood… He was off in the back, they were working their way towards him. He said I smeared my whole head, my face and everything with blood, and then I rolled over on my stomach, he said I was in terrible pain. Came to me, he said they rolled me over and kicked me real hard in the stomach. He said I didn't know how I kept from crying out but I didn't. He said he walked away. Why he didn't shoot I don't know. There again. Did it to everybody except him. Who gets the lucky draw? It's unbelievable, just a matter of fate. But there were a lot of our boys that… I told you about these gliders I'll tell ya it's the most horrible thing you could see. These gliders were supposed to be dropped in open areas. And again apparently the pilots panicked, let 'em go wherever they could. They held two of those gliders behind each plane. They would release the cable. That glider is very heavy, it doesn't soar like these gliders you see nowadays, they went right for the ground. And all they were trying to do is get down. Well some of those would hit the ground and right into a big tree. And all this heavy equipment, just

slammed right forward took all the troops right with 'em. They never knew what hit 'em. Never knew what happened. And that wasn't only ours but that was on the American side as well. You know there is one unique thing about the British 6th Airborne division. We had the British, we had the Canadians, we had Poles, we had French, we had Dutch, we had Norwegian, we had everybody in that unit. They had all kinds [unclear 01:04:46] in fact, the Polish battalion. I visited them quite a bit, being Polish myself, I used to have a good time with them. But we had quite a crew, we were very proud of our division. The British 6th Airborne, as well as the British 1st Airborne, we have an Airborne brotherhood, that's the pin. Anywhere I go, anywhere in England or Canada, if I meet another paratrooper, they know that instantly. Over in England, one of the retired Colonels is in charge of our unit. We donate money any time any one of our brothers is in dire financial straits, all he has to do is get a hold of him, he has carte blanche to go there and give him whatever he needs. Whatever he determines they need, and we all donate to that. So, it's a very nice brotherhood, we're very proud of it. This is our regimental tie, [unclear 01:05:43] out of the clouds. In fact, that's what our history book is called, it's called *Out of the Clouds*. Anybody else? You're probably all anxious to get out of here.

Q: Thank you very much.
TK: Thank you for having me.