

**Frederick S. Dennin  
Veteran**

**Michael Russert  
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Interviewers**

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New York State Military Museum,  
Saratoga Springs, NY  
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**Q:** Could you tell me your full name, date of birth and place of birth, please?

**FD:** Frederick S. Dennin. Date of birth June 25, 1923. Place of birth, Canton, NY, St. Lawrence County.

**Q:** Could you tell me your pre-war educational experience, please?

**FD:** I grew up in Lake Placid. I attended Lake Placid High School. I graduated from there in 1941. I had two years of college at St. Lawrence University in Canton from 1941 to 1943 prior to my entry into the military service.

**Q:** Did you have any jobs before the war?

**FD:** Before the war I had summer jobs. I caddied from the time I was eleven. I delivered special deliveries at the post office. Whatever was available.

**Q:** Where were you and what was your reaction to the news about Pearl Harbor?

**FD:** That was a Sunday afternoon. It was right after I got out of high school and had started college. I was at my grandmother's house; I was born in that home. I stayed there during my tenure; I did belong to a fraternity, but that's where I stayed. It was a Sunday afternoon and I was just resting in the house at that time when that news came on. I knew it was momentous. I knew it necessarily had an effect on my life. I listened to everything. I listened to the President and his speech. I went to the fraternity house I belonged to and we talked about it there. And we just knew it would have a significant impact. To what extent and how far it would go was rather hard to envision at that time.

**Q:** Where you drafted or did you enlist?

**FD:** I enlisted in an enlisted reserve corp. That dealt generally with people in my category who were in college. That meant that the Army was free to call us up at any time. But, until they did, we were free to continue with our studies. I actually finished that year and my second year, which would have been my sophomore year at St. Lawrence. I was then called up into the infantry. I reported, along with others in my similar category, to Fort Niagara. We were issued infantry gear and

what have you. We were then shipped during the summer of 1943 to Fort McClellan, Alabama for thirteen weeks of basic training. My comment on Fort McClellan was that it was very well done. It was summer in Alabama, the cadre were professionals, and the officers were professional. It was arduous, but, I'm glad I had it. It was tough infantry basic training. A friend of mine from Lake Placid attended at the same time. And both of said that after that it made military life and what followed from it relatively easier than it certainly would have been without it. I think I was fortunate to get the full basic training at that time. Some went in later when I was in prison camp that did not have the benefit of that. And they were also younger than me. That pursued that summer. I can't say that I liked it, but I respected what they were doing. I remember some interesting episodes. There were some German prisoners-of-war at Fort McClellan at that time who were from the Africa Corp.

**Q:** Were there any at Fort Niagara at that time? I know Fort Niagara was used as a prison camp.

**FD:** It may have, but I didn't see them. We were at Fort Niagara a very short time. And then we were taken by train down to Fort McClellan. We were starting out the training with close-order drills, rifle-bayonet drills. These Germans were very elite soldiers. I'm sure of that. They were the Africa Corp. They were blonde, husky and they were really laughing at us. [laughs] As we were out there doing it. They had a fair amount...they looked very healthy. You could see that they were elite soldiers, certainly compared to what I saw later. I concluded the basic training at Fort McClellan. At that point, they put us...we took tests and what have you...they put me and most of the others there who had been in college in what they called an Army Specialized Training Program. Which was essentially a continuation of college. I was, along with many others from there, was sent to Auburn University, which is also in Alabama. Not too far from Birmingham, in Auburn. It is a fine college. We were given really soft living compared to what we had been doing. We took over what had been a girl's dormitory. There would have been two in each one. There were four of us. The food was good. The teachers were high quality, if anything, perhaps higher. Academics had always...I was strong on academics anyways. The other side of the coin is that we knew we were going to be shipped off soon. We were having a good time. Well, you normally would have because we pretty well knew that was down the road. I did have some teachers there during that winter that I held in high regard. And then, in probably May we were all shipped out and many of us, including myself, were sent to Indiana and were made part of the 106<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Which was at Camp Atterbury, about thirty miles from Indianapolis. What they had done there; they had retained the cadre and the officers. But they had shipped out as replacements, all of the privates and PFC's and we were all privates at that time. We filled up the ranks of the privates and PFC's and took over the cadre that were there beforehand. They were fine. They were not the same level as Fort McClellan, Alabama. Which was that training center. The summer...we had long

hikes and we got into Indianapolis. We were waiting to be shipped out. The summer went fairly fast. It wasn't that tough after the basic training. In the fall, probably October, we were shipped out. We were shipped to Boston for transport overseas. We crossed on the Queen Elizabeth, as a matter of fact, which held I think as many as fifteen-thousand troops going over. Other than being crowded, we whiled away our time with crap games or lousy food, so to speak. [laughs] At that time, it was greasy, but nothing bad at all.

**Q:** Did you go across in a convoy?

**FD:** No, we didn't. We relied on the speed of the Queen Elizabeth. I remember thinking of that. We asked about it, and the theory was that that ship was so fast, that it could change directions from time to time. The thought did cross my mind that if a German submarine was looking for a target, that would have been a fruitful target. That would have been an ideal one to hit. One, I didn't have any choice about it and two, I had to think they weren't going to risk not just the ship but fifteen-thousand replacements. Plus, the whole crew unless they were reasonably sure that it was...very sure that it was going to make the crossing. We had no convoy, no protection or anything on the way across. I think the ship did it many other times. And thank God for myself and others that it always made it. We landed in Scotland, which was Edinburgh. We took a train down to...sort of, it was near Stratford-Upon-Avon. What did they call it, Sandy Well Park? It was a training ground, so to speak. This was in the fall of 1944. Again, the weather, was typical English weather but we were having a good time. We could go to town. We'd go to these English huge dances. They would have these halls. What was it...oopsy daisy, your left foot in, your left foot out ...

**Q:** Boopsy Daisy [unclear]

**FD:** Yeah, yeah. I was well trained and I was attuned to the military life. Again, I go back to that McClellan experience. I think that may have had certain similarities with Marine Corp training because they were good. I could tell that at that time. We stayed there until about the end of November. We shipped across the channel and I believe we landed at Le Havre, which was flattened. It, had been, I think, flattened by our own forces primarily at or around the invasion of Normandy. We went over in a British private sailboat. This channel crossing was remarkably rough for the short one. It was sort of a sailboat; it had to have a motor on it too. The one I was on anyways. It was the only time I got seasick in any traversing of that area. It was a very rough crossing and I think that was fairly typical of the channel. We landed at Le Havre; I think that was the second of December. We were there a short while. One experience there that had an effect on me...while we were there, we would play football. We did some at Atterbury and it was fairly rough. I fellow that I knew, although not well, was very artistically inclined. He would play a violin. His temperament or mood seemed to get messed up. He was not himself; I didn't understand it. They would have us do guard duty. I don't believe there were any Germans near that area because we

had to travel quite a while before we pulled into the Siegfried Line. This is one of the first rough experiences that I somewhat encountered. But I was doing this guard duty and I noticed this fellow, it was at night, and I thought he was cleaning his M1 rifle. The M1 rifle was sort of pointed that way. We've all cleaned M1 rifles and gone through all that in basic. Instead, he put the rifle in his mouth and shot himself at that point when I was right beside him. Or very close to him. That was somewhat...oh, boy, this is really bothering some people before we had really gotten into an area where you would expect it to. Anyway, but for that, it was in December, they loaded us into two-and-a-half ton trucks. We moved across France and Belgium and probably Luxembourg through St. Vith. St. Vith was the last community we were in. I've been back to it since the war. We crossed into Germany at that point. We were to occupy positions in the Siegfried Line which were pillboxes. A pillbox is maybe a misnomer. They were really large, rather comfortable quarters with bunks and that type of thing in it. This story is interesting because my combat experience wasn't that long. Those quarters were occupied by a veteran, I believe it was an armored division, a New York division that had seen all sorts of combat. The pillboxes had sort of a long entrance into them. They looked very awesome to me. And I said "how did you people capture these things?" They said it was very simple. I said "well, please tell me". He said we would put a Bangalore torpedo into the entrance, blow it up and that's all there was to it. The pillbox that I was in with probably fifteen to twenty other people was as far as you could get. The German line...there was a road...it was a forested area in the Ardennes. There was a road that descended down and the German lines were down there. We were clearly advised that this was going to be a very quiet sector. Our lines were strung way out. The division, of course, had three regiments. I had been into the 423<sup>rd</sup>. Shortly I had been a scout, been a BAR man, that's a Browning Automatic Rifle. And at the last minute when they shifted me to the 422<sup>nd</sup> where I was in a headquarters company, which is a mortar and the only side arm you have is a .45. At that point, it got very cold. It stuck in my mind, the story about how they occupied and destroyed those pillboxes. I thought, I'm not so sure it's the smartest thing to be inside that pillbox. So, I did talk to another soldier into going outside and digging two foxholes right on the road. The German lines were right down that road. And taking a bazooka, I don't know if we had one or two, figuring if they did choose to come up that road, we were in a better position to do some damage. What follows now is recorded in a book I believe which was "The Last Hundred Days". This was the prelude to the Bulge. Remember, the rest of them are in the pillbox. This fellow and I are out in a foxhole out in front. We dug it. I heard and he did too all sorts of motorized activity that went on into the night. Trucks, just about everything that was making an awful noise and an awful racket down that road. We reported it. I reported it...this was reported in an account of mistakes that were made. In effect, not picking up this intelligence. The company commander, the battalion commander I know came and interviewed me along with the company commander. I am not sure if the regiment commander came or not, but I dealt

with him later. That was a Colonel Devereaux, that happened to be his name, who was the regimental commander. I told him most explicitly what I had heard. They were cynical about it. They said "are you sure you weren't hearing recordings". I said, "My opinion is, that I was not. That this was something that I truly had heard." I remember one of them asked me if I was neurotic. And I'm not. I wasn't. I said "I am not neurotic". I think I said I am probably the least neurotic of most privates in this army at that time. [laughs] They reported that along with a nurse, a Belgium nurse came through that area and saw all the build-up and reported it. It was largely ignored, it was ignored, it was ignored. So, we stayed there a few more days. In the meantime, the Germans had cut through and we were isolated in that position. We then left the pillbox and sort of meandered around. It was really cold. It was the Ardennes.

**Q:** Did you have any winter gear?

**FD:** No. All I had was the regular leather shoes, which were terrible. I almost lost my toes, but I will get into that later on. It was a night or two out there. Then the colonel got the regiment together. It was a wooded high area. He said "we are going to form a skirmish line" of everyone that was there. We had no artillery. It was terribly overcast. There was no air cover. We are going to move through these woods in a direction he set forth and obviously the enemy is out there somewhere. We did and at that time, all I had was the sidearm, the .45, the pistol. We went quite a way and it was the full regiment to start with. I went myself and another individual specifically to a where a point where the woods stopped. There was a plain, an open field, like a hill, but it was a grass field that went down to a road. The road sort of wound around the promontory of the wooded area that we were. There weren't many of us that had come that far. At the foot of the hill where the road was, all of a sudden it was lined up with Tiger Tanks. I heard later that they got screwed up in the German transportation system which was messed up and they happened to be coming through. There were lots of them and they all had 88's. They all started shelling that particular point I was in, right at that point. My companion, I think, was killed. I was struck in the upper thigh, way upper thigh with shrapnel. I was almost, what did I call it, an involuntary celibate by the sake of one inch. [laughs] At that point, you don't know how bad you are hurt, you're bleeding. Then the Germans did...that was a fairly long hill. One lone soldier came up with a Schneider pistol. He was a kid. And he wore one of...this is the first time I saw a couple of dead Germans back where we were wandering around. He had what they called a Schneider pistol...I don't think he was over sixteen years of age. I was wounded and he was coming up to get who ever was in there out at that point. He was taking some risk, but there were very few of our soldiers there. The fellow beside me, I believe, was dead. I did go out with my hands up. He was stabbing me with the Schneider pistol and motioning. What he wanted me to do was to go back into the woods because they were still shelling the woods. I looked at him and I looked at the woods and I managed to get back in there. Then I went up about another...I dragged myself up about another fifty

yards and another German soldier was coming up, an older one. I limped out surrendering to him and he was great to me.

We carried these sulfur packs with us. He treated the wounds at that time at least with the sulfur and helped me get down to the foot of the hill. I was put in a barn with other wounded people. Many of whom were very seriously wounded. Many died that night. It was bitter cold. I'm not really blaming the Germans. I think it's probably all they had. In my own experience with the German military, where I was more fortunate to deal with, was that they did not treat me...and what I considered civilians, I could say something different. And perhaps I will. But they were all right with us. Then the next day they marched us out. My feet were terribly frozen, you're right. They marched us to a hospital train, we that were wounded and were still living. And we were put on the hospital train. We were put on the hospital train with German wounded. German nurses, German doctors and we were treated there just the same as they. That's when my feet had turned black and they had to cut the boots. They were black and they were split, the big toe especially was split. They talked of some amputation. I didn't want it done and they went along with what I had wanted done. It worked out because I did save my feet and I really had nothing special in the way of foot problems. That really was a blessing to me in many ways because even though I was wounded, I did not have to walk out of that area. And with the foot problems I had, that would have been exceedingly difficult. Because it was brutally cold and the ones that did do that, took long walks. They let me off at a Prisoner-of-War (POW) camp on Christmas Eve. I believe it was near Hamburg. I was in two POW camps, 11B and 2A and I think this one was 2A. It was a huge one. There were some Russian prisoners there, whose lot was terrible. We were generally put with American prisoners. There were displaced people. We oddly enough got in there Christmas Eve in a mess. Although, my trip in the hospital was not that bad. They actually gave us a piece of steak that night to it being Christmas Eve which surprised me. I stayed there until early in January. It was a huge motley place. Cold, but you are in bunks. The food was terrible, but they didn't have that much themselves. Around the tenth of January, when it was bitter cold, they shipped us out. This is an interesting story here. We were loaded into...it was about the ninth or tenth of January...we were loaded into freight cars, they were unheated, the door was then locked. There were no sanitary facilities. They gave us a loaf of bread and I believe a little water. They then locked the door. It was January 1945 and history tells me that it was one of the coldest Januarys that they had ever had. It took us probably five days to complete that route. The sanitary conditions and the food were terrible. There was just straw in there. At one point, and this is quite interesting, the whole train was stopped. We were laying or trying to sit against the wall. We were strafed by one of our own aircraft. I believe it was a P-47 which carries eight 50-caliber machine guns which were almost like eight cannons. The first strafing flight he took, we did not hear the plane. But the machine guns went off like eight cannons. He made two or three more passes. He

did not hit our car; he hit cars further down where there were all sorts of casualties. The strafing stopped. The Germans then did open a door and gave us some water and pointed to what they said was a shot down aircraft. Over in a field along side of it. It was somewhat surprising, but it was possible. It was hard for me to tell what type of anti-aircraft activity they had there. The strafing did stop. It was very scary. Then you could hear the plane come down when it was going through it. Whether it wasn't marked...those things happened at that time. The people I was with, we were ok. Then we came to...where was it I got to...there were two places. There was a city and it was Rostock. Rostock was in East Germany, up near the Baltic Sea.

At Rostock, we were unloaded from the boxcar for the first time and we walked through the streets of Rostock. We were a very sorry looking outfit. The civilians, they jeered at us and yelled at us and screamed at us. But they did not molest us physically. We then walked to a prison camp and this one I believe was 11B. Which again was a large one. There was a book written about it, Stalag 11B, about a person who was taken prisoner in North Africa, but it happened to be an American. He wrote a book about his stay in Stalag 11B. There, the food was little or nothing. But we did get, if we were fortunate, some Red Cross parcels. In the American Government, the problem was, one of the problems was the Germans didn't have any food at this particular point. I believe, the deal was made that through the auspices of the Red Cross, they would agree that these Red Cross parcels would be delivered. In theory, you were to get one a week. You wouldn't get one a week. There were all sorts of...but they were a life saver. An interesting side note, I had never smoked before then and never have since. But they would send five packs of cigarettes, Camel cigarettes, very powerful. I would trade those for food. Invariable, later on, I saw a person starve themselves to death almost to get those cigarettes. In a follow up there, I wasn't in this place too long. Where I was were Americans. I ran into some British prisoners who were also in the same place I was. They had been prisoners almost since way back in the war when conditions were, as far as certain types of treatment, I think, much worse. I tended to admire them. They were very independent, self-reliant. They would never bother your goods or anything and you better not do theirs. Sometimes, with the most recent recruits, the ones that came in in the recent replacements, were only eighteen or so. Remember, I say I was only twenty-one, but twenty-one is a little older than an eighteen-year-old. And I was going on twenty-two. [laughs] I had the advantage of more time and that really excellent basic training. I was there a good deal of January and then a surprising thing happened. I was picked out or my number was drawn for some reason or other, because they could work privates and PFCs. Non-coms weren't supposed to.

There was a small work group between Rostock and Stettin, they were both on the Baltic Sea. Which was on the estate of a German, call him a squire, call him a baron, he also was high up in the Gestapo. He maintained this beautiful estate

where the deer ran free and it was beautifully forested. This work group of probably twenty-five to thirty people worked those grounds for him. When I first got there, you would go out with a crew. There was an old German sergeant named Brown who had once spent time in the United States. He had been on the Russian front and we all loved him. [laughs] He knew it was coming to an end. He spoke pretty good English. But we worked under civilian overseers and they were rough. We would plant trees. You would get in a line and go so far and you plant a tree and then go on. We called this German...he was a Prussian and they were tough people up in that agriculture area. I know we called him Old-four-hundred because it reminded us of a train. Some of the prisoners had been there longer than I...remember I was only picked out to fill the place of one person who had died. They wanted to fill that group. I actually had a German guard take me on a German train to there and walk with me to that particular small camp that night. Another interesting coincidence, in that small group was a fellow named Joe Shuba. Who, oddly enough, had gone to St. Lawrence with me before the war. We had never met at St. Lawrence. He was one year ahead of me and was in the Theological School and I wasn't. We became quite friendly there. We had probably had more college and more education than the ones that they happened to have filling that area. I got a bad back injury there because they had us planting trees and I had fallen off a two-and-a-half-ton truck, catching my foot on the gate. While I was planting the trees going along, it acted up terribly. Fortunately it recovered enough so that I even went back...they put me back to work. About this time, it was approaching spring. It was quite early in April. Before long, we were hearing we were not far from Stettin. We were hearing the Russian artillery. One thing I remember so well, it was as though it was going to come to an end. The weather turned nice all of a sudden. I always remember we went out working one day and we came back with Brown escorting us. This young school girl came along, probably eight or nine years old, and she said "Heil, Hitler", she went. [imitating the Hitler salute] Poor old Brown just ignored her completely.

Oddly enough, I knew some French. I was the only one who knew some French because I had it in...I had some more in high school than college. The French prisoners had far more freedom than we did. Again, there was a lot of barter going on, those cigarettes. Therefor; I became the person who did a lot of the bartering, because the French that were near us could speak French, but their English was very poor. I remember doing most of the trading. I remember something else that was interesting. In all of these Red Cross parcels, they would give you a can of powdered milk. They had candy bars and you had other things, but I always felt the powdered milk probably...so I was always trading cigarettes for these cans of powdered milk. I picked up the nomer or mis-nomer, the sweet-milk-kid. [laughs]



One other fascinating thing that happened there. One time, the guards came and we had some officer guys but it was always Brown who walked us out. They said the Gauleiter, or the squire or whoever was in charge would like to see you. Of course, we were always told you only tell your name, rank and serial number. Everyone said you shouldn't go there. So, I don't know anything. Perhaps I was curious. I have no information of an intelligence area that could possibly serve an area, so, I'll go. I was escorted to this palatial manor and he was as educated and smooth. He spoke perfect English. He offered me a cup of tea which I took. He thought I was German nationality. My name was Frederick and the short haircut I had had not worn off. He really was inquiring why I was over here fighting the Father-Land. Trying to get a feel on that type of thing. I did indicate to him, especially the course that their leader was taking was Adolf Hitler and I had seen this. His treatment of all sorts of minorities especially the Jewish people, which I had personally seen, was something that the civilized world could not endure. I felt that it was an evil that was part of my responsibility to be involved in. He took no offense at that. Just surprising. Had me escorted back, thanked me very much, to my quarters. An anomalous thing, I heard after, when the Russians were in that area, they had executed him. I'm not sure that was so.

There came a time in April, it was a beautiful day and the guns were going. Brown and ourselves, there may have been another one or two but Brown is the one that sticks in my mind. He said why don't we all head westward; our lines are that way. The Germans especially would much rather be captured by the Allied Forces than the Russians. And for good reason as I will tell you later. I will always remember it was a bright sunny day. We started out and we were headed westward. I took out a cigarette and smoked it. [laughs] And they all couldn't believe it. I didn't inhale it, I never did. But they all couldn't believe I was smoking that cigarette. We walked for most of that day and came to the Oder River. The port was Peenemunde. The story gets very interesting now. At Peenemunde, there was the rocket base where the German V2 rocket was developed. We got down to the river which was not too far down from the estuary going out into the sea. There was one small ferry boat taking everyone across. There were displaced persons in their striped uniforms all over. There were German military women in uniforms changing to get out of the uniforms. They were all deathly fearful of the Russians. As we waited to see if we would ever get across, on the other side of the river, a whole phalanx of American two-and-a-half ton trucks came tearing up. We thought it was our forces at first blush on that side but it wasn't. It was the Russian forces under Rokossovsky, I believe it was. They all had machine guns on the back and they were shooting and killing with everything. We were with some French prisoners. They were staying in that area. They invited us to come back while all this mayhem was going on and stay with them. Which would be a rather secure place. There were probably twenty-five of us, the same group that had left that area. We did go back there and we stayed there that night. The following morning, it might have been the second morning,

but I think it was the following morning, Shuba and I ventured outside. It was quiet. We walked and very shortly we came to where the headquarters at Peenemunde were for the offices of...where all the paperwork was done for this rocket base. There was no one there. No one there. We actually went inside. Papers were thrown all over and destroyed as though they were trying to do something, but whether the Russians hadn't actually gone quite that far or what. There was no one there.

We left and then we came to, it had to be a dam or a concrete fixture which went out into the Oder River right near where it went into the sea. Out on that were a whole flock of bicycles that had just been left there. My friend went out first; he thought maybe we would get a bicycle or something. Then all of a sudden, a Russian did appear a few hundred yards away and fired at him. He may have fired at me. He said he heard the trajectory go right over his head. Well, we made a quick exit from there. We went back to the place where we were and we tried to talk the rest of them into going back and getting these bicycles the next day. Then cycling as a group westward assuming we could get across the river. But they didn't want to do it, except one. Shuba said one went with us and my memory is fuzzy. It was always my recollections of Shuba during these next few days as being together. I remember Shuba, one thing he said to me, if you stay here, the Russians are going to have you burying dead horses. He ran into one of them later and that is exactly what they did have him doing. [laughs] You were there, Helen, I think. Because I got together with Shuba after the war. We did go out and the bicycles were still there and we got the bicycles. We bicycled back to that spot where we were going to take the ferry over. The Russians, at that point, were on both sides. They were mostly Tartars and Mongols. You will read of Rokossovsky's army in north-eastern Germany being set there almost purposefully to treat the German's very, very rigorously, and they did. And they did. They were pretty good to us. Either they had our equipment or "Americanski" you got as good treatment as anything. The long and short of it is, that we got across on a small ferry. The Russians were there. We started traveling on the bikes along the road westward to where we understood our lines were. We did see atrocities. I ran into German military who were just run over by tanks purposefully. I saw several instances of rape along the side of the road. We would come to a German farmhouse. They saw we were Americans and they would beg us to stay over. Because if we were around, they knew the Russians would not bother them. But otherwise, they were in a terrible situation. I'm sure there were parts of Russian they treated those people the same way. But it was a terrible thing to see. With the Russian army, we would go into a pub or a place there and they would bring out the liquor. They were always drinking. We drank some too. And ate more than we had eaten before.

One very interesting story. We then seemed to lose the Russians. We were in sort of a no-mans area headed towards the Allied lines. Which were at the...it's on the

Elbe at Lubeck, Lubeck. That's the name; that's where we were headed for. So, we are bicycling into this German town from the east and the mayor comes out in a high black hat. And all of the town's people there cheering us. They thought we were the American army coming in, [laughs] you know, they were going to be liberated. Because we still had our uniforms on, although I did not have my helmet. We disillusioned them rather rapidly and went on. I think at that time we did have drinks and food with some Russian people that were sacking that town in a pub. We then did proceed. And just before, Lubeck was intended to be in the Russian zone under what I believe was the Potsdam agreement. But it was occupied by a British Unit of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army who had gone further than they were supposed to have. We suddenly came to where the Russian road ended and it was British from that point on. They were allowing no one across that zone. The Russians weren't at all; however, they did allow us across, being Americans. We went to Lubeck, which had been in German hands until very recently. I noted one instance, war if tough, a sniper had been holed out up in a tower and killed several allied soldiers. I was there when they executed the sniper. Meanwhile we were eating the British mess kits. I suddenly, fortunately it didn't happen earlier, got terribly sick to my stomach. It was just the sudden food and that's where I lost Shuba. Because I was terribly sick. I was very fortunate; they put me in a military hospital. The treatment was lining your stomach with chalk and feeding you reasonably well. I was in with prisoners who were wounded and in far worse condition that I was. I only stayed there a day or two.

They flew me back to Brussels on one of those cargo planes. We were put up in wonderful quarters which had been occupied by German officers. We were given twenty dollars a day to be applied towards back pay. Which they never caught up with. [laugh] They never gave me all my back pay. It wasn't much; I was only a private. But it seemed like quite a bit at that time. Brussels was a lovely, wonderful city to be in. It was well into May; it must have been close to June. I got in Lubeck around V-E Day. I stayed in Brussels probably ten days or so. Then they took us over to London and we were given a place in London to stay. I ran into some of my initial comrades both at Auburn and in Fort McClellan, Alabama. Two of them particularly I remember, Joe, uh [directs question to Helen] "do you remember the Jewish fellow?" Joe [Helen says something] ...he ended up in California. Joe, he lived in the Bronx. I ran into him and another fellow. His name will come to me. Not Lieberman, something like that though. Could have been Lieberman.

It was interesting there, we were invited out to an English country estate. They were just interested in meeting us. We had helped them in the war. I admired the British people very much. It was a fascinating experience. There were many Canadian soldiers there the weekend. You could see the changes in the government coming. The Labor Party was about to win the election. There were some strong feelings about the American Navy and their Navy and which was

superior. And I probably said I think we probably have the more powerful Navy. [laughs] Some of them were very, very nice and we played golf, even though I am a terrible golfer, on their course. It was really a fascinating experience. From there, we went back to London. They shipped us back to the States including a couple that I had known way back which was by coincidence. We shipped back on a Merchant, one of those Liberty Ships. Because the war was over in Europe, we took the gun crews quarters. Again, the food was excellent. The trip across was uneventful. We landed in New York. That night we bar hopped and reminisced. An interesting finale to the story; I was then given a ninety-day furlough. All prisoners-of-war at that point were given a ninety-day furlough. I happened to live in Lake Placid. This was around the first of July, it was right before the fourth, as I recall. I was ordered to report to Lake Placid at the end of the ninety days because they maintained a rehab center up there. Soldiers who had had the ninety-day furloughs were often times prisoners-of-war but not necessarily. Or they were severely wounded. They would then report for whatever their destiny was to be from that point on.

So, that summer, I was at my home. I got back a little later than some of the others. So, many of the buddies that I knew were coming through Lake Placid at that facility at that time. We got to renew acquaintances again. It was a ball, so to speak. The word was, and I do follow history quite a bit, the word was that we were planning on being shipped west then for the invasion of Japan. In fact, during the course of my summer there when they dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima then Nagasaki, I remember discussing it with a rather learned man who was staying in my father's house. He really saw the consequences of what this was going to be. I recall my immediate reaction was, as horrible as it is, it is going to end the war, which it did. The invasion of Japan, even I knew it, was not going to be a picnic. I have since ascertained from my study of history that those were the intents and that they had envisioned tremendous casualties if they hadn't gone that route. It was a wonderful summer and I was very fortunate to have met my wife [Helen] that summer. [motions to her off camera]. She was working up there at that time and staying at my own house.

The fall, they give you points that enable you to get out. I think I was five points shy because my length of service wasn't quite enough. So, they sent me up to Pine Camp for a month at which time I would have the points. When the war was over, they shut down the rehab center at Lake Placid just about the time that I went through it. I came back and my wife Helen and I were engaged. She had moved back to Rome. I entered directly into law school under the GI Bill and the rest of it is different history. That's about it.

**Q:** You used the GI Bill?

**FD:** Oh, yes. Yes. The GI Bill was very generous to me. I was able to get through law school in two-years' time because we went in the summer. Remember, I had

had two years of college before the war. My academics were strong. Even after I went there, I tried New York for a while and I took graduate work at NYU in tax law. One of my motivations was, because you were working for nothing in New York, was that they were paying us some maintenance at NYU. I had some wonderful teachers in tax law. I tried that for a year. We were married while I was in law school. I then returned to Lake Placid to set up and to practice law with an older lawyer. He was sort of a gentleman's lawyer who didn't have much practice. We had two kids, no car. I was on a twenty-five-dollar a week drawing account for a period of time and I owed him a thousand dollars. And then everything turned good at least as far as my career and everything else was. I had a good law career, I had a good business career and I was very blessed from every point of view. In many ways, I considered the war a rewarding experience for me. I tended to feel that I was a survivor. I think the lessons I learned there, also learned some foolishness there, but having said all that, I do think that the overall experience and the early years I had and the training I had and the life I had before in sum total was a real positive thing as far as our life and my life are concerned. I really felt in many ways that the army did me a favor. But I also learned that I could survive. Others had it infinitely worse than I did, don't get me wrong. I'd much rather have been a prisoner in Germany than Japan. By far. But having said that, it was no picnic.

Actually, the ones that stayed in that prison camp, remember I said I was left and pulled out, they had to walk. I think within a day or two, that book I told you about, Stalag 11B. They pulled everyone out and made them walk in the winter westward at that point. And they had a tough time. I'd much rather have been in the work group doing what I did. And do the walking when we did, in April.

**Q:** Do you belong to any Veteran's Groups? Did you join any Veteran's groups?

**FD:** I belong to the American Legion. I belong to the Ex-POW's. I've been somewhat active in the Legion, but I wouldn't call myself a tremendously active one.

[Helen says something about a picture] That's right. They took my picture in the Legion parade standing up there. I didn't know they were taking it and it was the best picture I ever had taken. I look remarkably young. I was surprised. [laughs]

**Q:** One thing you mentioned, you said you knew or said you saw something about the treatment of Jewish prisoners.

**FD:** Oh, yes. Going through the cities, you would see these horrid signs. Juden with the large noses. When we were ready to cross the river, what concentration inmates that were left, many of whom were Jewish, were emaciated and could hardly walk. It was the attitude in the cities and the ones I actually saw there. I was never actually in a concentration camp. But I did see the inmates of the concentration camp at that stage of the war and I saw the propaganda. Every time

we would go through a city which was tremendously pointed toward making them victims. Demonizing them in every possible way. The only time I probably saw...another interesting one. When I hit this first prison camp, which I told you was near Hamburg, we were going through an inspection. We used to have in the States, it was a genital inspection. I thought they were checking to see if I was Jewish. One, I wasn't and two, I was never circumcised. So, I will show them, I couldn't be. [laughs] Instead, they were checking for lice. Which I did catch, but only towards the end.

**Q:** Really.

**FD:** And I was immediately deloused by the Allied Forces. I was fortunate that it got me near the end and then of course, they were in a position to clear it up.

**Q:** I was going to ask how the war affected your life, but you answered all those.

**FD:** It was positive. I always felt that it was positive. And I always felt very fortunate that I got out of it as well as I did. The GI Bill was very helpful to me. I've also paid the government back a lot in taxes for sending me there. So, I have paid for it.

**Q:** You were a tax lawyer. [laughs]

**FD:** Well, no. But I pay income taxes. [laughs] Significant.

**Q:** Well, thank you very much for your interview.

**FD:** You are welcome, Mike.

**Q:** I wanted to ask you one question. Do you have any wartime photographs of yourself in uniform or anything?

**FD:** I have one in uniform.

**Q:** Would you mind sending us a copy? And we can put it in the folder.

**FD:** I will send it down. I have several copies of it. It's one I had when I came home on furlough after I was in basic training. I look very young then. But I do have that one.

**Q:** Ok. Great. And maybe you could do a copy of that article where you were...

**FD:** Oh, that was a good picture. I was standing along side a Korean War veteran and I actually looked younger than he did because I had the hat on. The Legion hat.

Helen: A year ago, he spoke at the Veteran's Day Service and you know, the local media, there was not one bit of coverage. Not a soul there. Somebody must have put a notice, so this year they covered it well. But it was Fred and one other, unbeknownst to them...

**FD:** We were saluting the colors. It was a great picture. I never knew they took it, as I said. Probably why it was great. [laughs]

Helen: Do you have the address here to send it?

**FD:** Yeah, I do. Yeah, I have it.