

29 Apr 2006

Interviewer: Our interview subject today is Mr. Lewis Painter veteran of the 10th mountain division European theatre World War II. Mr. Painter when were you born sir and where?

Painter: April 22, 1918

Interviewer: So you were a little bit older than the average

Painter: That's right I was married at the time and of course the war came along and I was employed at the Zinc Plant in St. Louis. And I'd started there on the labor gang and at the time when the war came along I was a foreman. Ended up many years later I was in charge of the whole plant.

Interviewer: What are your memories of the depression years how did it affect your family?

Painter: Well my father at one time had been a very wealthy oil man. But he lost virtually all of his money and all during the depression years. So most of the depression years were spent in St. Louis county and I guess in terms of work there I worked for a while as a traffic manager which the title sounded good but it really wasn't much at all neither was the salary. Then I went with Bell Telephone Company as an installer and that went on until I found out about this Zinc Plant getting built and it was under construction at the time. And when I went there why I guess I was there as a kind of an assistant in a pilot plant. The pilot plant was about half the size of this room and it had all of the basic equipment in it. And so we tested oars in that pilot plant and then when the plant was completed why then the well let's in that pilot plant everybody in that was a graduate metal ___ engineer except for myself. I had one year of Washington University at the time. So when the plant started well all of these people took foreman jobs or department superintendent jobs and for myself why I can remember one of the men that I reported to at the plant had been a major in well what war was before that? I don't know but he was a major and I reported to him and his first assignment to me was go down and unload the cars ore cars coming in which was horrible horrible work. And I think about the third day I said well I'll give it another three days and if nothing happens I'm out of here you know. It turned out I went through that and I went through a whole stream of the plant jobs from laborer to operator to super operator and foreman and then much later on after I came back from the service department superintendent. And from there they sent me to Moab Utah and there I was general superintendent of a uranium plant at that town. And after six years of that they sent me back to the Zinc Plant and I was department superintendent at that time and then they decided to send me to Harvard. And I went to Harvard.

Interviewer: I would have to say that there was one heck of an opportunity there for you. Now it was a defense industry now initially when the draft first passed in 1940 were you notified that you had a deferment that that you were

Painter: No there was no notification it just seemed to not happen you know. Everybody in the plant was exempt from the draft because it was a defense industry at that time.

Interviewer: Now at the time in the years before Pearl Harbor had you been keeping up with the news? Had you been paying attention to what was going overseas in East Asia with Japan and Europe with Nazi Germany?

Painter: Not too much you know I was aware the war was going on you know I could see the soldiers you know on the streets and so on. At that time I looked at the soldiers and I thought good Lord if those were our soldiers we're in real trouble.

Interviewer: December 7, 1941 do you remember where you were then?

Painter: Yeah I was on the I heard it on the way to work from Kirkwood Missouri to the plant in East St. Louis and heard the news that we were in the war you know.

Interviewer: What was your feeling when you first heard it?

Painter: Well it was just news I didn't feel effected by it at all really. And I was aware that I was you know didn't have to go and that came about I guess just in my own mind. After a while why I just had the feeling I had the feeling that I should be doing something else other than working in a Zinc Plant. So I just had them cancel my deferment and automatically then I was called up and went to Jefferson Barracks and.

Interviewer: So you actually asked to have your deferment canceled?

Painter: Uh huh

Interviewer: What was the reaction of the person that you asked? Were they fairly ____ at this?

Painter: Well yeah they said are you sure you know what you're doing? I said yes I know.

Interviewer: So you volunteered to enter the service and you chose the army?

Painter: No they throw these choices out you know we have this we have that and I said well I'll take the army.

Interviewer: Now how did it come that you ended up in the artillery? Did you show some kind of mathematical aptitude or?

Painter: Probably probably that that I had at that time I had a year's college you see in engineering college which was I think that was taken into consideration. But my feeling at that time was that I would be on pretty quickly within officers training. Then I found out that that was it was too late in the war they weren't too interested in officers at that time they were just interested in bodies. So the artillery was where they sent me that was Camp Roberts California.

Interviewer: When did you get assigned to the 10th Mountain Division?

Painter: Well they we went through the training at Camp Roberts I think that was about a three months training period and at the end of that time why I had been trying to get myself into OCS you know and with no success at all. So then I had heard about the 10th Mountain Division and you know they were ski troops training there and I thought that sounded pretty exciting. So that's what got me into the 10th Mountain Division I just volunteered for it and was accepted. You had to turn in certain background papers before they would even accept you there and I think I kind of inflated my skills at that time.

Interviewer: Had you ever been skiing before?

Painter: On skies that just had little leather straps over the top not the regular skies you know. I had a pair of skies which I told them that I had done skiing which was down gentle slopes.

Interviewer: Now being an artillery guy how did what was different about being in the artillery in the 10th Mountain than it would have been anywhere else any other unit?

Painter: Well it really didn't seem to matter too much except that I had that in my background. So when they were setting up positions in the 10th Mountain Division why they put me in the forward observers.

Interviewer: Oh okay so forward observer that that particular job means you

Painter: Spend practically no time with the gun position it's all well you stayed there until something came up and then you were sent out with the infantry and it's a little bit different in the infantry.

Interviewer: The forward observer you were probably fairly intimate with the infantry guys.

Painter: Oh yeah well I really not really didn't get acquainted with virtually anyone in the infantry you were just with this group and with that group depending on where the battery was in service you know.

Interviewer: But still you were subject to the same kinds of things that the infantry had to do. You weren't back at the guns you were

Painter: No

Interviewer: In order to be a forward observer and a good forward observer you have to be close to the line of fire.

Painter: That's right yeah.

Interviewer: Describe that time from Camp Roberts up until the time that you were sent to Europe.

Painter: Well let's see we went to like I say I got myself into the 10th Mountain Division and that was just at the beginnings of winter. And actually the division at that time had done much of its really basic type of work that was rock climbing and skiing and that sort of thing. That was all kind of behind them and when I got there why what they were into was major movements you know division type movements and so on.

Interviewer: Describe your experience at Camp Hale when you first got there.

Painter: I'll tell you that was something else. I arrived there troop movement one because nobody volunteered from the Camp Roberts to Hale just me. So when I got there it was dead of night you know and this train stops you know you were going through the mountains for some time and it finally stops I guess the snow was probably two or three feet deep you know in the place. And there was a ski trooper there to meet me you know so he takes me into the camp which was walking distance from the railroad there and they send me to the place where they had out supplies you know and so on. Filled me up with all of that and I said well which barracks do I go into? And they said you don't go into a barracks I said where do I go? He said out there in the field he said when the division is in the field why everybody is in the field somewhere so you go out and lay down out there in this open space you know.

Interviewer: So you didn't necessarily get put in with a unit right away they just told you you're not sleeping the barracks because the division isn't sleeping in the barracks.

Painter: That's right exactly yeah so I take my stuff out there into this snow covered field and you know took out a sleeping bag I had a sleeping bag I took that out and laid it on the snow you know and climbed inside of it you know. Which seemed alright but when I woke up towards morning I was laying ice water. You know I just was weighted down by the stuff. That was a great way to start.

Interviewer: Was the sleeping bag soaked through?

Painter: Huh

Interviewer: Was the sleeping bag soaked?

Painter: Soaked absolutely soaked.

Interviewer: What did you do for breakfast that first morning?

Painter: You know I don't even remember that I'm sure there was a mess somewhere because I ate there. But it wasn't very long it was a matter of a day or two before the division came back in then I got assigned to a certain group.

Interviewer: Had the division already received its orders? Did they know where they were going?

Painter: No the assumption was that they would fight their way through the Alps that was the basic assumption. The war was going on in Italy and the trick was to get through Italy and get through the Alps and then on into Germany. And so that was the major effort there.

Interviewer: When you deployed overseas where did you leave from and where did you first land in Europe?

Painter: Well I've forgotten the ports that went out of the east coast I've forgotten what that was. It was the Blue Ridge Victory I think was the troop ship that went over.

Interviewer: Was it a liberty ship?

Painter: Yeah

Interviewer: How many men inside that liberty ship?

Painter: Oh boy I don't know but it was crowded. I can remember where we were in the ship itself the bunks were I think six stacked six high and you climbed up into them. But the amusing thing there was some of the people were just not used to the sea at all neither was I. We had one fellow in the group that the moment that he stepped on deck of that ship he was sea sick wasn't even moving.

Interviewer: I imagine you work it out during the trip that the guys that were prone to sea sickness had to be on the bottom bunk.

Painter: I don't think that was worked out but this one fellow I was telling you about he never got in his bunk he just laid by this big trashcan so he could get up and throw up every now and then. And that's

what he did he laid by the trashcan for the whole voyage over. I remember him telling me that if he has to come back like this he's going to stay over there.

Interviewer: What month was this?

Painter: Well let's see would have arrived oh over there in the winter time it was the beginnings of winter. But we went into Naples first and we were quartered there for a few days or a week something like that. And at that place we stayed and were quartered in a university fine university. But you didn't sleep in any rooms you just laid down on the marble floors you know.

Interviewer: Is this late 1943? I imagine this has to be.

Painter: About 43

Interviewer: Late 43 the beginning of 44.

Painter: Yeah

Interviewer: Now originally you were _____ at a university when did they tell you you were moving out and what happened from there to your first contact?

Painter: Well they just tell you you're moving out you know and pick up all your stuff. And they loaded us on a freighter and went from Naples past Rome and up to Lake Horn in Livorno. And at that point we marched off the ship but we didn't even stop I mean there was equipment there there was jeeps and they had a jeep to drive us with and headed for the mountains. And it was rough going you know we had to finally had to put on the chains you know to negotiate the roads and so on. And so we headed right into the Apennines at that point.

Interviewer: Now how long before you got into combat?

Painter: Well I guess we were immediately on the line but it was what I would call pretty far back on the line. We were near a little Italian village and quartered in barns or little houses and then we went out and as a radio operator why the forward observer came along and set up. I was on that and so you could look across the mountain and we all on and you could see occasionally German activity on the next mountain over which was pretty far away. And we would fire on things over there but I don't think anybody knew what they were firing at you know. The fact of the matter is the battery next to ours was down the way a little bit and they were firing fairly frequently you know. So what in the world are they firing at so I went out and tapped into their line you know and there were a couple of characters on the line laughing back and forth. And I can remember one of them said let's take out that church we haven't hit it yet you know. So they'd fire on the church so nothing striking at all was going on but. And we I guess we were in that situation maybe a week or two weeks something like that. We had one funny situation there everything was sand bagged you know we were in houses but they were sand bagged very heavily you know. And curtains across windows and all that sort of thing and I can remember waking up in the middle of the night and somebody was hammering on the door you know. So I went over and opened the door and here comes this soldier he stumbles into the room and falls down on the floor and he says the Germans are using gas. So everybody rushed for their gas masks and so on and what it turned out to be was they were in one of these rooms and these old charcoal fires came on

chewed up all the oxygen so that's what set on his oxygen starvation the gas and all. It was just a little funny thing.

Interviewer: A rumor like that gets out of control pretty quick though doesn't it?

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we went out and as a radio operator with the forward observers a forward observer came over and set up and I was on them. And so you could look across the mountains we were on and you could see occasionally German activity on the next mountain over. But it was pretty far away and we would fire on things over there but I don't think anybody knew what they were firing at you know. The fact of the matter is the battery next to ours was down the way a little bit and they were firing fairly frequently you know. So what in the world are they firing at so I went out and tapped into their line you know. And there were a couple of characters on the line laughing back and forth and I can remember one of them said "let's take out that church we haven't hit it yet" you know and they would fire on the church. So nothing striking at all was going on but and we were I guess we were in that situation maybe a week or two weeks something like that. Had one funny situation there everything was sand bagged you know we were in houses but they were sand bagged very heavily you know and curtains across windows and all of that sort of thing. And I can remember waking up in the middle of the night and somebody was hammering on the door you know. So went over and opened the door and here comes this soldier he stoles into the room and he falls down on the floor and he said the Germans are using gas. So everybody rushed for their gas masks and so on. And what it turned out to be is they were in one of these rooms and these little charcoal fires came on you know chewed up all of the oxygen so it was oxygen starvation there was no gas at all. That was just a little funny thing.

Interviewer: A rumor like that gets out of control pretty quick though doesn't it?

Painter: Oh yeah but we stayed there this period of time I remember I drove one of the lieutenants up and down the line and we received sniper fire. You know they were close enough that they could fire at you. I can remember I started zig zagging that jeep you know and the lieutenant finally said let's slow down a little let's just take out chances on the bullet don't kill me on the road. So it was just a lot of funny stuff that never amounted to much. Then from there we did move into the line you know and sat up the firing positions and then waited to go into action. And then when there was an advance why we them immediately went to the infantry see and marched on with them. And I can remember when we went into that kind of action the first thing I can remember is it was all trails you know because it was mule country. So everything was going forward by mules and the mule trains were going up with ammunition and that sort of thing and then the troops marching along with them. And then coming back down was the mules coming back carrying the bodies you know after that was going on up there.

Interviewer: And at that point there did things kind of change for you a little bit when you saw that? Did you kind of get the idea that this was

Painter: Yeah but it really didn't seem to affect me very much. You knew there was going to be some killing going on you know and there was.

Interviewer: Did you have soldiers in the unit who were trained to take care of mules or did civilians take care of them for you? How did you work that out?

Painter: It was all military.

Interviewer: So the military actually had mule skimmers?

Painter: Mules?

Interviewer: Uh huh mule skimmers or guys who took care of the mules.

Painter: Oh yeah we had something like 8,000 mules over there and everything moved forward on mules. I guess that went on for maybe a month and then the little trails that we were on turned into jeep roads and then truck roads.

Interviewer: I'm curious did you ever manual now did they have a manual for taking care of mules and how to strap the ammunition and stuff on them?

Painter: Yeah oh yeah I was never much on mules I just I hated them.

Interviewer: But you had to feed them you had to take care of them. Did they carry some of your equipment?

Painter: Well I wasn't in on that. There were people who took care of the mules you know and these were really rough types I'll tell you.

Interviewer: Why so slowly but surely though jeeps and trucks start to replace the mules and when did things start to get

Painter: Hot

Interviewer: Hot for you?

Painter: The first day I guess you see we just marched forward kept marching forward until we got to our destination which was kind of the top of a hill of a mountain. And when we got there why the captain from our outfit was already there with the troops. And we came in with the lieutenant and the three of us and the forward observer team. When we got there why there were Germans laying all over the place dead Germans. And we didn't I don't think we stayed there a matter of two or three hours no longer than that and then we took off with the next batch of infantry that was going down on the other side the other side of the hill. And of course the Germans had just come from there and so they knew all of the trails. So as soon as we hit that downhill trail why the German artillery zeroed in on us you know. And they hit pretty had I guess maybe two or three men ahead of me well a shell burst there killed those people right ahead of me. And so you just passed them by you know somebody else come pick them up I guess and kept going you know.

Interviewer: What was the quality of the German troops in the mountains?

Painter: I felt the Germans were superb soldiers you know yeah. They looked the part too you know except the dead ones. So that's the way it went after that why it was just one hill one mountain after another you know. Take one mountain and set up our artillery observer came and then onto the next one.

Interviewer: Winston Churchill was fond of calling Italy the soft underbelly of Europe. I imagine the 10th mountain troops in the mountains of central and northern Italy didn't find it exactly that soft.

Painter: Come again on that.

Interviewer: Yeah I mean Winston Churchill was fond of saying that was the soft underbelly of Europe. I imagine you know I've been up in the Alps myself a couple of times and it doesn't appear to me to be anything soft about that kind of terrain.

Painter: Oh no there's nothing soft about it you know no nothing soft. We'd sleep on the ground you know just in tents and slip trenches some of the time and some of the times we'd get into a village you know and take over the village and be there for a night or two and then move on. It was this continuous movement forward you know.

Interviewer: Continuous movement but just one hill at a time one hill at a time.

Painter: One hill at a time yeah.

Interviewer: If Germany hadn't surrendered when they did how you hadn't reached the Alps yet had you?

Painter: Oh no no we were way ahead of the Po and the first objective was to break through the Apennines into the Po Valley and then to cross the Po the Po River which we did. I guess we were probably only on the banks of the Po maybe a night or two. I think I got I had my first chance to dig a foxhole that was deep enough to get into you know. Prior to that time it was just scratching your way down as far as you could you know below artillery fire.

Interviewer: Now the Germans had their own artillery was that a pretty regular event?

Painter: Eighty eights' yes

Interviewer: Were they pretty good with it?

Painter: Oh they were very good with it. As I say on that trail we took over that hill they immediately had that zeroed in to just plaster it you know.

Interviewer: Once you reached the Po Valley did things speed up a little bit for you?

Painter: Huh

Interviewer: Did things speed up a little at that point?

Painter: Well it slowed down there for awhile while they kind of built up the strength as people came in to build up strength. And then when they were at that point well then they started crossing the Po and that was in these what do you call them ducks.

Interviewer: Now explain what a duck is.

Painter: Well it's a motorized vehicle and when it hits the water why it just turns into a boat to get you across and then continues on forward after that. But after we made one crossing why the jeeps started coming over then we got into jeeps.

Interviewer: Now you had been trained in the Rocky Mountains to fight in the Alps the Alp's the Alpinese were of course much smaller than the Rocky Mountains.

Painter: Yeah

Interviewer: Did the thought occur to everybody boy as hard as it was getting through the Alpinese what's it going to be like when we get to the Alps?

Painter: Boy the feeling that I have after going through the Alpines feeling that I had gotten through the Alps when casualties were just skyrocketing just skyrocket. But on the other side of the Poe there was again mountains you see.

Interviewer: Now during this time did you ever receive any kind of news when did Stars and Stripes first show up or magazines like Yank and things like that? Did that ever get to you guys where you were any kind of news about what was going on in Northern France and Germany?

Painter: Practically nothing yeah.

Interviewer: So you weren't aware of the progress that the army was making from Normandy through Northern France and through Belgium the Battle of the Bulge.

Painter: We were too preoccupies with what we were doing you know. We knew it was going on up there but we didn't pay no attention to that.

Interviewer: The reason I ask is you know it's a very very different time now where many of the soldiers in Iraq are quite aware of what goes on in Afghanistan and wherever else because of the communications revolution. But for most of the men in World War II your world was what was in front of you.

Painter: Right around you yeah. Well when we got across the Poe you know in air of the jeep or so I can remember driving along I guess it was oh what would you call a road that's mounded up you know.

Interviewer: A raised type of a road?

Painter: Yeah so you're up on top of that little raised section just one way to go you know. And I can remember it was nighttime and I remember this plane coming in and he came right down on that road and I didn't know whether he was ours or theirs you know. Apparently it was ours because it didn't take us out.

Interviewer: Being caught right on top of a dike is not a good place to be. The British found that out in Holland.

Painter: It happened to us once after that as we moved through Italy but the Germans did strafe our _____. They started just down one end en just went right down the line. And took a fair number of people off the trucks you know but we were lucky. So as we went up we finally came to Lake Garda. I have this I wanted to show you (rolling out a map). So we crossed the Poe and moved forward there was there was a lot of German equipment shot up you know and some German resistance but very very light. So we ended up here at a place called Malcesine a beautiful beautiful little town right on the Lake Garda. And

things just stopped there. Troops kept building up and then stopped and then finally we got the orders to move out again. So the 10th division was gathered here and one battalion went up this way through the mountains back into the mountains. Another one followed a railroad tunnel right along the lake fairly long tunnel and the group that I was with crossed Lake Garda and then came up this side. But the tunnel came under terrific fire the Germans just had their cannons at one end of the tunnel and our troops went into the other end of the tunnel just in the face of the cannon fire. They just shot the devil out of the troops in there. And over on the mountain side I don't think they had too much trouble and we didn't have much trouble on the other side. But Germans had cleared out and just followed up to the tip here which was a place called Riva.

Interviewer: Now once the war ended though it just were you prepared for that did anybody tell you we were getting close to that point?

Painter: We all knew we were getting close you know because we were moving pretty fast. But actually the war came to an end in Malcesine.

Interviewer: In Malcesine huh. Now that first night was there a celebration of any kind?

Painter: I would say so but I can't remember.

Interviewer: Those are the best celebrations the ones you can't remember.

Painter: So from there why we from there the war was over. From there we moved towards the border here this is Yugoslavia over here and we moved in this direction. And the Yugoslavians partisans were coming across the border so our instructions were there's two types of them. Some of them were on our side and some were on their side you know and I can remember the officer saying that if they are wearing a blue scarf with blue trim they are okay you know. But if they are wearing a red scarf with blue trim watch out they are on the other side. But he said we're not sure which is which so if they shoot at you shoot at them. Nothing ever really happened but those were really rough looking people those partisans. Three were women not in uniform but carrying their

Interviewer: Now once the war came to an end how soon was it before you were informed that the 10th mountain was possibly scheduled for another mission in the Pacific.

Painter: Well that was quite a little time because we moved up here to protect this Yugoslavian border a place called Tarcento which was very close to the border. And we I guess we were there maybe a month or two at this little town.

Interviewer: So May and June

Painter: And during that period of time they you know troops had nothing to do so they asked for any volunteers that wanted to go into Austria and ___ ice climbing on the glacier. And of course I volunteered for that and I guess there was probably 30 or 40 that went on that trip. And we spent our time practicing climbing up and down the face of the glacier you know. And the mountain you know what's the name of that mountain? Crow's Flock the mountain was Crow's Flock and that was in Austria. And I remember this one afternoon we got tired of climbing on the ice and three of us decided to climb the mountain. So we just dropped what we were doing and took off and climbed the mountain. Lucky we didn't get killed on that one you know. It was a very very rugged mountain.

Interviewer: What do you remember about Austria I mean did it appear that most of Austria was in pretty good shape?

Painter: Uh huh

Interviewer: I know there were areas of it that were bombed but.

Painter: No it was a beautiful countryside beautiful countryside.

Interviewer: I imagine in June late June especially I imagine it was absolutely beautiful.

Painter: Yeah that's true up on the mountains it was snow and ice.

Interviewer: Now once the war had come to an end was your feeling okay I've survived? I made it you know this is something I can put in the memory bank now. Was there a little bit of a worry about going to the Pacific? When did you first hear rumors about that?

Painter: While we were there of course in Italy why the news came move out you know. And at the time we were quartered in a German mountain training camp. And I guess we were in that area about two or three weeks something like that so when the news came to move out why the orders were if there's anything you fellows want here well take it with you. So this is where my _____ came from.

Interviewer: Well let's take a look at some of this.

Painter: That's a German ice axe.

Interviewer: Now what was the purpose of this I guess when you're

Painter: Well when you're

Interviewer: You plant the one end in the ground and pull yourself up or

Painter: Well basically it was making foot holes you see chopping foot holes and scooping them out and climbing straight up ice walls you know.

Interviewer: Good Lord

Painter: And these were

Interviewer: That sounds a lot easier saying it than you know doing it I'm sure.

Painter: And these are again German crampons designed to walk on ice you know. Of course that was a mountain training camp that the Germans had. I ended up with all of this equipment and this here and the background of this is a funny story. This was taken from a German soldier captured and that's a German Luger.

Interviewer: That was from what I heard that was the souvenir item of World War II.

Painter: That's right

Interviewer: I've never been to anyone's house who had one of these that didn't show it to me. It was just one of those things that you know there's war souvenirs and then there's war souvenirs and that one there was one of the big ones.

Painter: They had another rifle which was or hand gun which was a Beretta and I think I came out of the war with three Berettas and a Luger. The Berettas for one reason or another are all gone.

Interviewer: The Luger was primarily an officer's weapon wasn't it?

Painter: The Beretta these?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Painter: Well this came from a German just a regular German soldier. He was armed with this and a rifle and several hand grenades and so on.

Interviewer: What was the weapon of the German soldiers that the infantry man most feared? Was it the

Painter: The Germans feared or that we feared?

Interviewer: That the Americans feared most was it their assault rifle?

Painter: It was the 88s.

Interviewer: Could we take a look at some of the things in your album here? Maybe we should put this up on the kitchen table let me pause it a moment.

Painter: That's of course a ski trooper there.

Interviewer: So that's what you wore?

Painter: Yeah it changed I'll tell you we wore these clothes in the Rockies. And over there why we just dropped back to regular uniforms. These things were always appreciated (looking at a picture of comics).

Interviewer: I remember having a bunch of Sad Sack comics when I was a kid.

Painter: This was near Camp Roberts California. This is my wife at that time this is a cousin of mine that was in the navy (looking at pictures). This is a photocopy I made looking in the mirror a picture of myself there.

Interviewer: Wow let me see if I can get this without the glare on here. Wow that's pretty good.

Painter: Now this is Grossglockner over here and this is the glacier that we climbed on. And this is a team out on top of the glacier just to practice ice climbing and this there were three of us that climbed Grossglockner and the other one took the picture.

Interviewer: What was your rank at this time?

Painter: It was T-5 and this is a sergeant here boy he's an infantryman. Oh there's the mule in the Rockies. There were three or four of us in this forward observer team and we stayed together through most of the fighting and one of them was a pretty good artist.

Interviewer: There are aspects about the army that don't change that's for sure.

Painter: That was up in the Rockies (looking at a sketch). And this is Leadville which I guess is about nine miles from Camp Hale Leadville is about 11,000 feet as I recall.

Interviewer: Boy look at those beautiful old cars.

Painter: I got a Bronze Star a couple of Bronze Stars while I was over there.

Interviewer: Do you have your Bronze Star citations? Do you have your Bronze Star citations?

Painter: Bronze Star?

Interviewer: Yes

Painter: Yeah uh huh

Interviewer: Now who did this picture here (looking at a sketch)?

Painter: A friend of mine who was kind of a buddy these were his pictures.

Interviewer: Let me see if I can read the caption here if I can hold this up a little bit here. And now I want to volunteer on whom to demonstrate the strangle hold. Let me get the mule real quick here.

Painter: I hated those things.

Interviewer: You know in some terrain though they're about the only thing that works.

Painter: That's right even the jeeps couldn't make it.

Interviewer: You might say that was drawn by a Texan.

Painter: The last point in time before disembarkation was

Interviewer: Is that ____?

Painter: Yeah it was right. I picked that.

Interviewer: You picked that while you were there?

Painter: Yeah up in the Alps.

Interviewer: Wow that is so well preserved it's beautiful.

Painter: The 10th Mountain gets its patch.

Interviewer: Born thirty years too soon (looking at a comic).

Painter: My wife at that time made this.

Interviewer: Is that a homemade Christmas card?

Painter: Yeah homemade. My wife's name was Sally and she did that work she was an art student at Washington University. And this was ___ Smith I spent most of my time with this

Interviewer: Let me see if I can get this glare off real quick. So which one is you?

Painter: This is me here (pointing to the man on the left). Here's my Bronze Star with there. Now with this friend of mine being an art student why I started to take it up myself so these two are my pictures.

Interviewer: Now where was this at right here?

Painter: Italy kind of this is kind of at the beginning of things here then this is home sweet home. These are my sketches.

Interviewer: Now did you do all of these while you were over there?

Painter: Yeah this was first sergeant here.

Interviewer: First Sergeant Weaver?

Painter: Uh huh

Interviewer: I'd say you were developing pretty quickly here.

Painter: This guy was over there during the fighting but while the fighting was still going on he gets an appointment to West Point.

Interviewer: And by the time he got finished with West Point it was probably

Painter: It was all over. This guy never made it he got killed at the ____.

Interviewer: Wow

Painter: Carlson big Marlboro guy. That's I guess I did this of Coyle and he did this of me.

Interviewer: Okay so he did this one of you

Painter: Yeah and I did this one of him.

Interviewer: That's excellent that's really good I mean that's really good. You know when you make a transition between just drawing a picture and actually putting somebody's soul in there.

Painter: This is part of the three out of the four people on the forward observer team. And this is lieutenant Mushler he was the and this is Sergeant O' Toole.

Interviewer: He looks like a tough guy.

Painter: He's dead now and this fellows dead also. I think that's in Rome.

Interviewer: Is that you right there?

Painter: Yep

Interviewer: Wow

Painter: I made that sketch.

Interviewer: Now did you get a chance to go on pass to go to Rome?

Painter: Yeah

Interviewer: A couple of times?

Painter: Just once

Interviewer: Did you ever go back to Europe?

Painter: Oh yes a number of times. I've done a lot of traveling.

Interviewer: Did you ever try to trace some of the route that you

Painter: No I never well I did go back to this little town of Tarcento with one trip.

Interviewer: Now the SS troops did you come upon some of those?

Painter: Not that I knew of.

Interviewer: Just regular ___?

Painter: Yeah and this is a sergeant I'm in touch with him still.

Interviewer: Now do you go to regular association meetings?

Painter: I did for a while but not very long. This again is my sketch.

Interviewer: Home sweet home

Painter: Yeah

Interviewer: It's amazing the things we can expect as home after a while.

Tape ended