

Interviewer: Well Mr. McGregor if you could for the sake of the camera state your full name.

McGregor: My name is Paul McGregor

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And I was in the army as a sergeant.

Interviewer: Okay this is a real treat for me so I appreciate you going through this interview. It's my favorite period in history World War II but I'm just gonna go through and ask you some questions about your experiences during the military and some of the situations you were in over in Germany during World War II. So what year did you join the United States Army?

McGregor: I first went in as the 39th engineers and then as then as they draft me they sent me up to 8th core headquarters and then I went overseas with the 8th core.

Interviewer: Okay what year was that?

McGregor: Nineteen and well you've got me there.

Interviewer: Woman in the background: Forty-one wasn't it Paul?

McGregor: Yeah 41

Interviewer: Forty-one okay

McGregor: I was overseas about two years.

Interviewer: Two years okay so what did you mentioned 41 what were your parents doing during this time? What were their occupations during the early 40's?

McGregor: I was teaching school over at the _____.

Interviewer: Okay so both of your parents were farmers? Both your parents were farmers?

McGregor: Both yes

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: That's right both my parents was farmers. My wife's parents worked in the coalmines and had a farm too.

Interviewer: Okay well I'm interested to know what your experiences were during the 30's during the great depression. What were you doing during that time? First of all when were you born what year were you born?

McGregor: Born in 1912.

Interviewer: Nineteen twelve so you would have been in your teenage years during

McGregor: I was about 30 when I went in.

Interviewer: Okay so I'm curious about your experiences during the 30's during the great depression. What were you and your family doing during the great depression? You were here in Kentucky were your parent's farmers or?

McGregor: We were farming yes.

Interviewer: Okay what was life like during the great depression for you and your parents?

McGregor: Before the war we just had gone through the depression.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And things was real cheap and people was working for a dollar a day on the farm.

Interviewer: I'm going through a history course right now where we're learning a lot about Franklin Roosevelt what were your impressions of Franklin Roosevelt when he first took office? Did were you and your family confident in his leadership or did you question whether or not he would be a good president?

McGregor: Well we probably questioned it because it was a lot different from anything we'd ever done before when he started the work programs and all that.

Interviewer: Was that general attitude in this area of Franklin Roosevelt.

McGregor: Well they all needed help so he did help people.

Interviewer: Okay so I'm curious what area of Kentucky did you grow up in?

McGregor: In the western coal fields.

Interviewer: Western coal fields okay great. Were you old enough to have a job during the 1039's?

McGregor: Yeah I taught school.

Interviewer: Okay and you taught here in Kentucky?

McGregor: In Hopkins County.

Interviewer: Hopkins County okay great okay before Pearl Harbor actually took place in December 7, 1941 how seriously did you take the threat of Japanese invasion?

McGregor: We didn't take it very seriously. We didn't think they would do it.

Interviewer: Okay what was your impression of the Germans and the movement that they were undertaking in Europe? What was your attitude toward that at the time?

McGregor: Well we felt like that they we were gonna have to fight them and we were prepared for the fight.

Interviewer: Okay so you really weren't expecting the Japanese to do anything you were more concerned about Germany at that time?

McGregor: Well Roosevelt made a statement one time said "Your sons will never fight on foreign soil." And of course that was he has to renew that.

Interviewer: Had to come back on that one. Okay do you remember where you were when you heard the news of Pearl Harbor the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor and what you were doing at that time? This would have been December 7th

McGregor: It was about three o'clock on Sunday afternoon and I think I had been to the show at Dawson.

Interviewer: Okay in Dawson Springs here in Kentucky?

McGregor: Uh huh and heard it heard the news on the car radio.

Interviewer: Can you give some of your impressions of that that experience? Were you shocked surprised that the Japanese had invaded?

McGregor: No particularly we just kind of took it as a news we didn't realize it was so serious.

Interviewer: Okay you mentioned that you came in in 1941. Were you drafted or did you actually join the army at the time.

McGregor: I was drafted.

Interviewer: You were drafted. And how old were you when you were drafted?

McGregor: About 29 I guess and I got a deferment I was teaching school and got a deferment until school was out. Then I left the next day after school was out.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: I was teaching in the high school at Norton Dale.

Interviewer: And what subject did you teach?

McGregor: I was teaching mathematics.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And industrial arts.

Interviewer: I asked that because I'm gonna teach history so I'm gonna go through some of the same things. Did you get to when you were drafted did you get to choose what branch you wanted to go into or did they assign you a particular branch?

McGregor: No they assigned me to the engineers.

Interviewer: Okay so they told you that you were going to be an engineer?

McGregor: Uh huh

Interviewer: Okay did you was there an induction center or a recruiting center that they sent you to to test you on some of your skills like an IQ test or something along that lines?

McGregor: Uh huh there was a bus left Madisonville they gave us a parade and that bus went to Indianapolis and we stayed there two or three days and they gave us the examinations. Then the ones that passed and all went to Camp Hood Texas.

Interviewer: Okay so did you find out that you were going to be an engineer before you took the test or after?

McGregor: After

Interviewer: Okay so they used the specialized tests to figure out what branch of the service you would best fit your scores on the test?

McGregor: Uh huh

Interviewer: Great so you did your basic training in Texas you said.

McGregor: Uh huh

Interviewer: Okay what were your impressions of your fellow recruits as you were going to basic training? Were most of them scared? You mentioned that you were 29 were most of them pretty young or scared?

McGregor: They were young fellows. We had in the basic training we had to make a 25 mile walk carrying a 60 pound pack and an eight pound riffle.

Interviewer: Wow

McGregor: And we the one that didn't make it didn't get to go overseas.

Interviewer: I was in for about five years and the most we ever did was a 15 mile road march with a 30 pound load and a lot of people feel out there and couldn't make it.

McGregor: Several of these fell out. I come in I had a big blister between each one of my feet right in the center of my foot.

Interviewer: Now was this the first time that you were away from Kentucky for any prolong period of time?

McGregor: Well yeah I went to college but it was in Kentucky.

Interviewer: But you were a little bit more experienced than the general recruit that came in.

McGregor: Yeah I kind of got weaned away from home but some of them big ole boys would stand up and cry because they was homesick.

Interviewer: Well I'm interested in did you participate in any of the maneuvers that they did stateside? I know they had Louisiana maneuvers.

McGregor: Yeah we went through the Louisiana maneuvers.

Interviewer: Okay and how good do you thing the training was compared to the task that you actually endured in Germany? How much did it prepare you for that task the training that you endured?

McGregor: Well see I changed places I went through the maneuvers as a n engineer then I went overseas as a draftsman.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: So it was different see.

Interviewer: Okay where did you do your maneuvers? Where did you do your maneuvers what state?

McGregor: What did we do in maneuvers?

Interviewer: Where what state?

McGregor: Louisiana

Interviewer: Okay so you did the Louisianan

McGregor: Yeah our headquarters was in Leesville.

Interviewer: Okay how about now you mentioned that you were a draftsman but there was actually how well do you think they prepared you for the actual combat situation that you would be in? In terms of preparing you to understand what it would be like the environments of combat and the just the general how to in combat. How well do you think they prepared you for that other than your specialization in drafting draftsman?

McGregor: Well you can't get ready for a battle.

Interviewer: Okay right okay how well what were the living conditions like during the maneuvers in Louisiana?

McGregor: You want me to tell you about an experience?

Interviewer: Sure

McGregor: Okay we were maneuvering against the calvary outfit they had horse calvary and one of these horses jumped up off of one bridge that we built and killed one of our boys. And everybody was putting in 50 cents or a dollar for flowers and I gave ten dollars. And that night the sergeant came around and asked if we were good friends and I said we had been running around together and he said he wanted me to go back with the corps. So I went back with the corps to Indianapolis and come back by home and stayed two or three days and then went back to the outfit. And the only way you could get a pass when you were in the army was something like that.

Interviewer: You mentioned the horse calvary. Did they at this time did they stop using the horse calvary and switch?

McGregor: The horse calvary never did go overseas.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: I think they took some mules and stuff to Italy as a pack on them mountains a mountain outfit went over there. But the calvary was motorized.

Interviewer: Okay so was this the decisive training exercise that decided whether or not they were going to use horse calvary anymore in the military?

McGregor: I don't think they got any horses. The Germans had a lot of horses and when they retreated we killed a lot of them when they was trying to get back to Germany pulling their outfit. The planes would straf them.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Okay now after you immediately left your advanced training and Louisiana maneuvers what kind of unit did you go to and serve with right after training?

McGregor: Eighth core

Interviewer: Eighth core and what is eighth core what type of division?

McGregor: Eighth what is it?

Interviewer: Yes

McGregor: You have your two divisions or more under a core then one or two more cores under the army. So it's between the army headquarters and the division headquarters.

Interviewer: What type of units comprised the eighth core?

McGregor: About six or seven hundred men.

Interviewer: Six or seven hundred men.

McGregor: Well that's counting the guards and all that.

Interviewer: Okay what type of divisions did they have? Did they have any armor divisions underneath them infantry divisions?

McGregor: Yeah we had armored divisions and airborne divisions and regular infantry divisions.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: Plus the artillery

Interviewer: How did your unit travel overseas? What type of ship did your

McGregor: We left Texas on a train a troop train and went into New York and then we left New York Shell on the Queen Mary.

Interviewer: Oh wow

McGregor: And went into Scotland and at I believe it was it was right about Christmas and we went into I can't think of the name of the town there. Anyway then we got on a train and went down to Kitty Minister a little town close to Birmingham.

Interviewer: What was that like traveling in that ship overseas? What were the accommodations like?

McGregor: It was rough it was a British ship you see and we didn't think they fed us too good. And the ships had a big long trough that your plate stayed in and if somebody threw up at that end it runs down this end. So it was rough going over there and there was so many people on there they just fed everybody ever six hours.

Interviewer: Wow

McGregor: It was about 15,000 people on the ship.

Interviewer: Wow how long was the voyage from the U.S. New York?

McGregor: Took us six days to go over.

Interviewer: Okay now you mentioned that you went to Scotland immediately after your voyage. Did you see combat soon after arriving in Scotland or were you actually prolonged in Scotland for a while?

McGregor: We just stayed there I think we came in one day and loaded on to a train the next day.

Interviewer: Okay and that train where was the demarcation?

McGregor: Demarcation it was at Edinburg Scotland.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And we go on in New York Shell that's part of New York.

Interviewer: Okay so you traveled in the same unit throughout your experience in Germany. You went overseas as an 8th core and you stayed in the 8th core throughout your whole time?

McGregor: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: After the war was over the 8th core was supposed to come back to the states and then go to the Pacific. And we got a month's furlough when we got back to the states and during that month they dropped the atomic bomb and the war was over. And I was back home but I had to go back to Texas to be dismissed.

Interviewer: Huh who was your commanding general of the 8th core?

McGregor: Middleton Troy H Middleton.

Interviewer: Middleton and what was from what I've read in some of the books that I've read it seemed like since this war was such a FDR geared up for this war so fast that a lot of the noncommissioned officer and officers in the military had not had too much experience in the military before they actually joined the military. So what were your impressions of the fellow officers and noncommissioned officers did you feel comfortable with their leadership or were you and the men kind of questioning their experience?

McGregor: Middleton was at West Point and he'd been in the army all of his life.

Interviewer: What about some of the other officers and

McGregor: Our colonel our G2 colonel was a military man and then the lieutenant and the others one of them was a lawyer and some more people like that.

Interviewer: Did you ever have any experience with what they call the 90 day wonders?

McGregor: Well they called the lieutenants that but then I didn't have much experience with them.

Interviewer: Okay what rank did you come

McGregor: I was a sergeant.

Interviewer: And did you get that rank before you actually arrived to Germany?

McGregor: No

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: In fact I got the T4 first I went in as a T4 and was a company carpenter. And then I went up to headquarters and they changed the T4 to a sergeant.

Interviewer: You came straight in as basically a sergeant.

McGregor: Yeah and I stayed all the way through as a sergeant.

Interviewer: Wow now why just curious why did they assign you the rank of sergeant?

McGregor: Your office whatever you do they call that you're TO calls for certain sergeants or privates or whatever you are doing that's what you get the rank you've got. See I was company carpenter and that called for a T5 T4.

Interviewer: So when you came in your job was to actually be an engineer and you said that you were a draftsman. What did you actually do as a draftsman?

McGregor: I was teaching mechanical drawing in high school and I put that on my record and they pulled it out and sent me up to headquarters.

Interviewer: So did you draw maps or did you actually draft engineered vehicles or what did you actually use your expertise in?

McGregor: We had a big map up on the tent and it had ascertain over it and put the drawings on it what you think the enemy had. See the G2 kept the enemy information and we had the CIC connecting to and the CIC is civilian intelligence. And they can speak the language and interrogate prisoners and all like that then send us a message and we made the report to the general.

Interviewer: Wow that's an interesting position to be in in the military.

McGregor: Yeah

Interviewer: Well I'm curious before we get into this I just had one last question before we get into some of your combat experience. What kind of equipment and arms did you train with and how well do you think they operated once you got to combat?

McGregor: I had a carbam.

Interviewer: And how well do you think that operated once you were actually in combat?

McGregor: well we were on the firing range and took practice that way.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And when I got over there when I went in D-Day there was a lot of carbams laying around and I picked up one that pulls up shoots like a pistol and opens up and I used that all during the war.

Interviewer: Okay did you like that was that your weapon of choice?

McGregor: You could carry it a lot easier than you could the other carbene.

Interviewer: Okay well okay I would what was your first experience with combat and what kind of reaction did you have and some others have around you to those experiences. First of all where were you?

McGregor: Actually the first combat was in London. I was in London in a military school and they were bombing London real heavy in fact two blocks over from where we were a 500 pound block hit a hotel that had a lot of French soldiers in it.

Interviewer: Wow how did the other soldiers react to that situation?

McGregor: Well they had of course they had a blackout everybody had to have curtains and no lights showing on the count of the bombing.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you actually went in on D-Day June 6, 1944. How did can you describe that landing from the beginning of the actual deportation from England and some of the situations that you were in?

McGregor: Well it was like this a day or two before D-Day we loaded up like we was going in on an invasion. We went out turned around and come back and there was a bunch of them that went over the hill didn't want to go in and we laughed at them and had them digging ditches and things. So the next time we got ready to go they went with us.

Interviewer: So this was where were you where did you leave from?

McGregor: South Hampton.

Interviewer: South Hampton okay and what was

McGregor: It took about six hours to go from South Hampton to the beach.

Interviewer: And what did you travel in? What kind of ship did you travel in?

McGregor: Oh landing craft.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And when we got there the end of it let down and then our jeep went out and went it and we made it.

Interviewer: Can you describe what type of landing craft it was?

McGregor: That's what it was a landing craft.

Interviewer: Okay and you were actually you said you were in a jeep at the time?

McGregor: Uh huh there was four of us sitting in a jeep two officers and two enlisted men.

Interviewer: Now which beach was there I know there were several beaches Juno, Gold, Omaha, Utah which beach was this that you landed at?

McGregor: Utah

Interviewer: Utah okay

McGregor: And we pushed back about two miles the first day.

Interviewer: Wow that's this is kind of exciting I have to tell you this because I'm doing a lot of studying on this and this is my favorite period in history and my favorite battle. So I'm really curious as to what your experiences were when you landed at Utah. What were some of the first things that you saw and your reaction to those things?

McGregor: Well now the pillboxes had already been cleaned out most of them was but there was one or two I think they were shooting from way back across the beach. They couldn't see us like we were when we first landed.

Interviewer: Okay so how many hours had the operation already been going on when you touched ground on D-Day?

McGregor: I guess 8 or 10 or more than that because you see the airborne dropped in there at midnight then at daylight the infantry started in and they had pushed back a mile or two when I went in. Our headquarters we went in and the 8th core or the 7th core set up their operation and we were with them.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And we stayed with them for six days.

Interviewer: During that six day period what was your actual role during the conflict and fighting.

McGregor: I was an observer we were positioned military observers.

Interviewers: Okay

McGregor: So we could pick out a place for the 8th core to come in.

Interviewer: Okay just curious were you ever shot at during that time?

McGregor: Yeah

Interviewer: How did it may sound like a silly question how did you respond to that?

McGregor: Nobody could you didn't see anybody just everybody was shooting. There was a machine gun shooting across the beach they didn't see us they were just shooting.

Interviewer: You know everyone says I have friends and

McGregor: You don't usually you don't usually see anybody when you're shooting at them.

Interviewer: What did it I have friends that tell me when they get into that situation they'll be the one that responds correctly but what did it feel like to actually be shot at in combat?

McGregor: I doubt that we were because we were shot at mostly with artillery.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: See we were a mile or so back from the front line.

Interviewer: I read a I read a book it mentioned that WWII was the good war by Stud Sturkle and he mentioned in there about some of the comrades that some of the soldiers felt together. Were you really close to a lot of the soldiers that you went in with? Was there a close friendship that you had with those soldiers?

McGregor: Yeah you had to live with them and usually see you had a sergeant in charge of 8 or 10 men and he was kind of the daddy for them.

Interviewer: Was that the role you were in with a lot of these soldiers being a sergeant?

McGregor: Well yeah we had a master sergeant over us over all of us.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And see we had a colonel a lieutenant colonel and a captain and at one time had a lieutenant with him too. But then the colonel run our office Colonel Reese.

Interviewer: Now you said that you were there on D-Day so you were there when Patton made his move across Normandy and his famous move that he made?

McGregor: That wasn't on D-Day see.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: D-Day general there's a story about that General Roosevelt was Teddy Roosevelt's son and he lead the 7th core in. He was up front and he was aiming he went in with the front line and don't many generals do that. Because he done that and brave and all they wanted to give him the 9th armor division and he died with a heart attack before they gave it to him.

Interviewer: Well I'm curious as to I've heard stories out of the British soldiers General Montgomery and the beach he tried to take from what I understand I guess it took him two weeks to clear the beach that he was trying to clear at the time. What were some of your impressions or your attitudes toward the British as you were going into D-Day?

McGregor: Well see the British had done been whipped and it was hard for them to get the men up there and get them fighting. In other word you see they were what was that the British went over in France and they had to come back what was that called?

Interviewer: Right the invasion with the Canadians where they repulsed?

McGregor: Yeah now the Canadians fought better than the British did. You can understand that British was a small place over there England got more than one of our states.

Interviewer: Right

McGregor: Of course they had a lot of people over there but they had done been whipped.

Interviewer: So there was an actually so the soldiers that you fought with

McGregor: Dunkirk was what I was trying to think about the British went had to come back home from Dunkirk after they'd been whipped. And they had to just get back any way they could and civilians went over there in boats and helped them get back in the battle of Dunkirk.

Interviewer: I'm curious as to your experiences actually as you were progressing from Normandy through France. Where did you move to once you cleared Utah beach during that six day period what was your next step?

McGregor: We first took Brisk the city of Brisk and it was a big not a ship port but a oh what is go in water?

Interviewer: Subversive?

McGregor: No

Interviewer: A submarine

McGregor: Submarine it was a big submarine base I couldn't say it.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: Brisk was a big submarine base and we captured that the first thing.

Interviewer: Oh wow so did you destroy some submarines?

McGregor: What's that?

Interviewer: Destroy submarines during that time or just

McGregor: Well we bombed it

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: They had a big hill there and they dug out under that hill had a hospital and everything under ground. But we finally captured it.

Interviewer: Where did you move to after Brisk?

McGregor: After Brisk?

Interviewer: Yes

McGregor: We pulled in the hedgerows. Now I wasn't in the fight I was in the headquarters and we were keeping the situation map for them.

Interviewer: Okay can you describe some of the work that you did? Now you said G2 could bring you the intell what were some of the decisions you had to make? You reported to your colonel directly or to your master sergeant?

McGregor: Yeah well sometimes you did and sometimes you just kept the situation map and each day we sent a report to the general.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: Colonel Reese we helped him but he was the one who made the report.

Interviewer: Okay great so what was the you mentioned after Brisk and you mentioned the turning point of the war for you when you were in country.

McGregor: Well as it turned the full yeah at Crutance when we made the breakthrough and went around to the east gap that was the turning point in the war. After that the Germans tried to come back to Germany and we followed them and killed all we could while they was trying to get back home.

Interviewer: Okay so what did what was your role in Crutance? You said the what was your role as Patton was moving through trying to close the Panitian police gap? Where were you and what were you doing at that time?

McGregor: We were following the two armored divisions. Headquarters moved up as they went around see. Patton was still behind us.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: When we captured Brisk we were under the first army then they transferred us up to Patton's army 3rd army when we had the Panitian Gap.

Interviewer: Okay some of these hedgerows I know they talked about were a real problem because the Germans actually forced the American soldiers to go on one MSR one road and because of the hedgerows the American soldiers couldn't actually branch out. What were some of the things that you saw the Americans do at that point to remedy the problem of the hedgerows?

McGregor: Well we solved the problem the hedgerows. We took and put some bulldozer blade in front of the tanks after that we solved the problem.

Interviewer: So did you actually see these did you actually see these tanks with the blades on the top of them?

McGregor: Uh huh

Interviewer: Wow interesting what did they use to make these blades in the front of the tanks?

McGregor: Well we just welded them on to the tank just like a bulldozer.

Interviewer: Alright interesting how they could improvise in the field like that. So you went from Brisk to where was your next stop after Brisk?

McGregor: Well it's up there I'll show you where I went each day.

Interviewer: Okay why don't we look at the map you can show what you did through your time in Germany.

McGregor: Here's where we landed right here (point to a location on a map that is hanging on the wall). See this yellow line from South Hampton into right here. That was the first headquarters we set up.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: Then we came down this away see the different headquarters as the days moved up.

Interviewer: Gotcha

McGregor: Here and we stayed here and captured Brisk out here. Now wait a minute no see this yellow line going around?

Interviewer: Yes

McGregor: That's the way the armored division went.

Interviewer: Now where is the Fleece Gap?

McGregor: Then right in here somewhere right there I can't see I think that's it right there (point to a location on the map).

Interviewer: Okay now is this you had mentioned

McGregor: When we captured Brisk you see we had these divisions under us.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: When we made the Fleece Gap they gave us these divisions. You see in other words that's just old paper they just transferred from one headquarters to the other and then we'd we in charge of it.

Interviewer: So after you captured Brisk where did you move to from there? That's seems like it was in August or September.

McGregor: Well we came back and they put us under the third armor see this is Patton's army.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And Patton had the two tank divisions the two airborne divisions that made the breakthrough. And the air force sent a general up there to do the bombing and we bombed we wanted them to bomb this away and whenever they did bomb they come over us. And they dropped the bomb on the 101st airborne one of the companies and killed about 100 men.

Interviewer: Oh wow

McGregor: And the next day I was in and after they done that we couldn't go through then the next day they come back and done a good job and bombed it again and then we went through and made the breakthrough.

Interviewer: So what you actually arrived in Paris with Patton?

McGregor: Is that Paris?

Interviewer: This is Paris right.

McGregor: That's not one Fleece Gap was right in here this is the Rhine River.

Interviewer: Right

McGregor: And right in there was the Fleece Gap. And I went through Paris but I didn't stop.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: But after the war was over I got a furlough and come back through Paris and stayed a day and come back to London and England. And I was gone 21 days from my outfit.

Interviewer: So once you pushed through first of all at the Fleece Gap I heard that some of the soldiers were frustrated at Montgomery that he didn't close the Gap. What were your impressions of the gap and whose responsibility it was that didn't close and let the Germans escape?

McGregor: He wanted us to spend some time in Paris but we didn't do it we went on pass and kept pushing the Germans. See they were retreating and we didn't want to put a division two or three days in Paris when we could be pushing the Germans.

Interviewer: So where did you guys push through after Paris where was your next stop?

McGregor: Bastogne and we went into Bastogne and stayed there nearly a month. Bastogne is right in there somewhere.

Interviewer: So were you there at the Battle of the Bulge?

McGregor: Yeah and the time of the month we were there there wasn't no activity on the front up there. We were just holding the front up there actually with some divisions that had been shot up and wasn't full divisions. And we stayed there and then when they made the breakthrough we moved back to New Chatue and the 101st airborne moved into Bastogne.

Interviewer: Okay so you were there when the actual fighting was going on initially during the Battle of the Bulge. So what were your experiences when the Nazis attacked with their panzer units?

McGregor: Well we kept we stayed I kept the situation map and everything we could but there wasn't no front line anywhere to it was just all confusion. But the 101st did hold Bastogne you know.

Interviewer: Right

McGregor: And Bastogne was so important because all the roads there were five or six roads all come through there and the rest of it was mountains and you couldn't go you had to stay come through one of those roads.

Interviewer: What was the moral like of the men during this during the Battle of the Bulge? The men that you were around that you experienced what was the moral like?

McGregor: We just didn't know you didn't know whether you was winning or not.

Interviewer: And this went on for a month you say?

McGregor: Well the Battle yeah it went on it wasn't a month. We was there a month before it started then after it started it was that was Christmas Day was the turning point in the battle there at Bastogne. In other words we'd been fighting and it was raining and snowing and cloudy and the air force couldn't help us. But it come two or three pretty days around Christmas and the air force got all their stuff on the road and really helped us out. After that we pushed them back.

Interviewer: Yeah I heard that was the problem they couldn't get any air cover during this point when the battle first started. Okay after

McGregor: And it would be a foggy day like this and the Germans had a lot of light that they would shoot up in the air that would blind that would let them see us and we couldn't see them.

Interviewer: Interesting where did you push to after the Battle of the Bulge and Bastogne? Where did you guys move on from there?

McGregor: We went back to New Chatue another little town back there.

Interviewer: New Chatue great.

McGregor: A little college town.

Interviewer: And where after that where did you push on to with Patton?

McGregor: We went across the bridge the Rhine River what's that railroad bridge that they captured there.

Interviewer: Oh right the one that didn't fall?

McGregor: Pardon

Interviewer: The one they kept up.

McGregor: Yeah

Interviewer: Reims or

McGregor: Reims the very long bridge at Reims. Now when I crossed it the Germans had done bombed it enough to tear it up but we had built a pontoon bridge right on the edge of it.

Interviewer: So you went over the secondary bridge the pontoon bridge.

McGregor: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: I went across the pontoon bridge.

Interviewer: Great so what did you do once you crossed over the Rhine River? What was your

McGregor: Well we went to Southern Germany all the way to the Czechoslovakian border.

Interviewer: And how long did that take?

McGregor: Let's see now here at Bastogne at Christmas was when we started pushing them back and then in the spring the war was over by March I guess it was April somewhere along in there.

Interviewer: Okay so you crossed over the Rhine about March and then it was a month.

McGregor: We got over there about March. You see where we went to where the yellow line is.

Interviewer: Great wow

McGregor: That's on the Czechoslovakian border and

Interviewer: Did you meet up with any of the Russians at that point?

McGregor: Yeah we saw them and they were riding in our jeeps our kind of jeeps. We'd give them jeeps and stuff.

Interviewer: What was that like did you get to talk with or meet or interact?

McGregor: You couldn't talk to them I didn't speak Russian.

Interviewer: But did you actually get within

McGregor: We seen them yeah

Interviewer: Okay great what was that like just meeting up with the Russians?

McGregor: What's that?

Interviewer: What was it like to meet the Russians?

McGregor: Well we were friendly tried to be friends with one another. And another thing that happened in Germany we went through the town where oh what's the Martin Luther you remember?

Interviewer: Oh Burns

McGregor: Martin Luther's town

Interviewer: Yeah Burns

McGregor: And I saw the rock where he was struck by lightning.

Interviewers: Oh really

McGregor: Martin Luther

Interviewer: I don't know what town that is.

McGregor: I can't recall the name of the town I know what it is.

Interviewer: You're not talking about Gutenberg are you? Okay now is this your unit patch?

McGregor: That's my shoulder patch I wore shoulder patches on my shoulder.

Interviewer: Okay what medal is this here?

McGregor: Oh that's a Troy Gear French medal.

Interviewer: Okay I guess we can have a seat. Is this the?

McGregor: That's the graveyard on Utah beach on Omaha Beach where there's 5,000 American soldiers buried.

Interviewer: Okay and this is rock that you.

McGregor: That rock come off of Utah Beach.

Interviewer: Okay did you get that when you first went over?

McGregor: No I got that 40 years after we went back on the 40th anniversary.

Interviewer: Okay we'll finish up here. Well I'm interested what did you do during your free time?

McGregor: What did I do at Crutance?

Interviewer: Yeah did you have any free time during this time or?

McGregor: Well yeah the air general was in our office and he was directing the air bombardment and they bombarded the line or a path through there and we rushed through it. And we fought our headquarters followed them through there.

Interviewer: What did you actually do when you weren't at your post working what did you do in your spare time your free time when you weren't actually on duty? Did you have any free time at all?

McGregor: Yeah we had some free time.

Interviewer: What did you do in that time?

McGregor: Well there wasn't much to do you just sat around and talked. I don't know there wasn't nothing you could do. Yeah they wouldn't they didn't in other words they told us not to they wouldn't let us fraternize with the civilians.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: But when we went in D-Day they said there's only one person that's not your enemy and that's God. Shoot at everybody else.

Interviewer: When you were in the field actually in the field did you get hot food to eat c-rations what type of

McGregor: Some of the time some of the time we were on k-rations.

Interviewer: Okay what were k-rations?

McGregor: A little box of something like it would have some crackers and some meat potted ham would be one of them. Or sometime they had eggs and ham it would be in a little can you'd open that. Then you had a candy bar.

Interviewer: Was there any complaints over the food that you guys had?

McGregor: Oh yeah it wasn't too good. But then it was better than the Germans had I'm sure.

Interviewer: What about your sleeping arrangements how did you guys what accommodations did you have for sleeping?

McGregor: We had well just different times whenever we were winning the war and going on we'd be either in a hotel or post office or some kind of building like that our office would be. But then whenever things got hot we'd be out in a tent working.

Interviewer: Okay so it was just whatever you could put up at the time.

McGregor: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay well I know that did you ever feel sleep deprived overworked?

McGregor: Huh

Interviewer: Did you ever feel deprived of sleep and overworked?

McGregor: Overworked you

Interviewer: Yeah did you feel like that, that you had been awake for too long too many hours?

McGregor: Yeah

Interviewer: You were deprived of sleep?

McGregor: Uh huh around Bastogne and there, there just wasn't no rest we were just on duty all the time.

Interviewer: Well to transition to some more of some of the general awards that were given during the time. I know that today in the military there is talk that a lot of the soldiers receive medals if they just spend their time in the military they are gonna get a medal. They just keep their nose clean they'll get an award or a medal. During the drive across Germany from D-Day to the actual conquest of Germany the medals given out do you think they were given out liberally or do you think people they were given out conservatively meaning that people actually deserved the awards and accommodations they got?

McGregor: Well most of them was earned I'd say.

Interviewer: Okay and that's a problem today there's talk that if you just keep your nose clean and you're in for a few years you're gonna get an award or a medal. Okay that's good to know. Well what about your impressions of the Germans. Their leadership and the type of soldier they were overall what were your personal impression of them?

McGregor: Well they were good soldiers alright and they were well trained. They didn't give up much.

Interviewer: How about their equipment were they well equipped?

McGregor: They weren't too well equipped but they had some good guns. That 88 millimeter that 88 they had was one of the best guns that anybody had it was more accurate.

Interviewer: What about their own personal bravery and tenacity.

McGregor: You're talking about the Hitler youth?

Interviewer: Yeah or the average German or Nazi soldier.

McGregor: That's what happened in other words Hitler started training the youth when they were in high school and on up. And they were better soldier than they would be if they hadn't been trained.

Interviewer: So generally overall you find they were very tenacious and brave?

McGregor: Uh huh

Interviewer: Okay do you feel that you actually had sort of a respect for their tenacity overall?

McGregor: What's that now?

Interviewer: Do you feel at all that you had a respect for the Germans and their bravery and courage?

McGregor: I don't know what you're talking about tell me again.

Interviewer: Well I know some I've heard of some reports where some soldiers actually respected how brave the enemy was the Germans were in actual combat. Did you find yourself respecting how brave they were?

McGregor: There were two younger classes now. They had the first class SS troops they were just like the 101st airborne we had. They were big troops and then they had a lot of volunteers from France and Czechoslovakia and those countries that they had took over and they were second class soldiers.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: And there's a whole lot difference when you was fighting one of those first class bunch.

Interviewer: I'm sure. Well what words would you use to describe your feelings towards the Germans? In your own words how would you describe them?

McGregor: They felt like that they were a special race or something like that. And they wanted everything top shop shape I guess you'd say.

Interviewer: Okay well were you ever wounded during the conflict during the war.

McGregor: Was I ever

Interviewer: Wounded

McGregor: No

Interviewer: Okay and were you ever recommended for a medal and how did you earn it if you were?

McGregor: Well after the war was over and we had liberated France Digul came up and was giving us those troy de-gears and kissing everybody and I was on a vacation and wasn't there. And I didn't get my medal until after I got home they sent it to me in the mail.

Interviewer: Were did you ever have any friends or fellow soldiers who were wounded or killed in the war?

McGregor: Yeah we had a lieutenant we had a colonel that was killed. One of our officers a colonel was up on the Rhine River and was hit with a 20 millimeter shell.

Interviewer: Wow, well are there any experiences that you had that you'd like to share in your drive across Germany? It seems like a really high point in American History and I'm sure there's a lot of people that would like to be asking you questions and picking from your experiences. What would you say that out of all the experiences you had that you'd like to share what was probably some of the most profound and important to you?

McGregor: When we captured Bugandaugh the MPs marched all the civilians in Bugandaugh the whole town women and children they had people that had been killed. And that night the mayor of the town committed suicide and they sent me down there to investigate and make a report of it. And he had got up on the sink and cut his wrist and bled to death there in the sink.

Interviewer: Wow did you ever experience any of the I know that there was a horrible downside to the war in terms of the Jews that were killed for their race by the Germans. Did you ever experience any contact with any of the death that the Germans caused the Nazi's caused?

McGregor: I don't remember any

Interviewer: Okay well I what would you say out of all out of your whole time in the army what was the highest point? Or what did the actual conflict mean to you overall what did the war mean to you? What did it do for you as a person?

McGregor: Well I guess when we were up around we were around Bastogne General Eisenhower came up and looked out our maps and I guess that was about the best.

Interviewer: So you actually were next to General Eisenhower?

McGregor: Yeah I saw him didn't talk to him.

Interviewer: Okay

McGregor: We got the map ready then all the enlisted men went out and officers presented the map to him.

Interviewer: Okay just a what did the war overall mean to you personally. Going into it and all that you saw coming out form it what did it mean to you personally?

McGregor: Well we've had good times ever since we won the war. If we had lost it we'd have been like Germany we'd have had hard times.

Interviewer: There's a lot of people that share that sentiment. Well I just like to say I appreciate all that you and the soldiers did during that time because we're reaping some of the benefits of your hard work during the invasion and the war over there in Germany. I know that you've experienced a lot of this conflict and some of the experiences that you've had since that day. I just want to know personally after everything that you've been through what would you say that's really important now looking back over everything that you've gone through. Not only just in the conflict but in the years after that what's really important to you if you look back over everything?

McGregor: Well it don't seem it was too important we won it and that's all you can say.

Interviewer: Okay well I appreciate your time. Is there anything else that you'd like to add to the interviewer?

McGregor: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Well thank you.

McGregor: (Holding a book and a gun) This is a noncom that I picked up in a German officers quarters and it's in German and we used it as an autograph book for the boys in our outfit to sign as an autograph. This is my carbeam that I picked up on Utah Beach after the gliders had had a wreck and a bunch of them were killed. And they jumped with this folded up carbeam and I used it because it was easier to carry than a regular carbeam. And this opens up shoots like a carbeam closes up and shoots like a pushman.

Interviewer: Wow that's great can I look at this (showing the book). Maybe we can get a close up see that you have some of your fellow soldiers autograph this. And is this a piece of a parachute?

McGregor: Now this is not a parachute that the soldiers dropped with this is what they dropped the supplies with.

Interviewer: Oh okay

McGregor: They dropped this into Bastogne. This come from Bastogne.

Interviewer: Wow well thank you very much I really appreciate this. This is a good interview and I have a lot to share. Thank you

McGregor: Well I hope it helps you.

Interviewer: Definitely I'll get a good grade for it.

Tape ended