

Mr. Callis: 1923 up here on the end of Highland Drive. My mother was Bessie Pickens Callis and my dad was John Laneer Callis. My dad had been married before and he had three sons my raised them cause his wife had died and he married my mother. And my mother she had 11 children so there was 14 of us there. She had three other children before that had died. So 17 in all of my dad's children. We were all raised up here in Ridge top every one of us born and raised up on the hill we call it because all of them were born at home. So my dad was in the trucking business and I trucked until I was 17 years old from 11 years old I started hauling ice by myself on the truck. Had a little ole pickup truck and I hauled ice. So I graduated on up until I got a big truck. When I was 17 years old I told my dad this is not for me it's killing me so I got out of the business.

Interviewer: How much were you paid when you were hauling Ice?

Mr. Callis: How much was I paid? I got my keep I lived just whatever I ate and so forth and maybe at the end of the week I might get a buck or two to spend.

Interviewer: What is your full name?

Mr. Callis: Ford Laneer Callis. And so I went to work in Nashville just piddling and things in the shipping department and worked for about 3 three months and my wife and I had been dating for a little over a year so in the meantime we decided we'd get married. I was almost 19 and she was almost 18. So we got married lived down her in Greenbrier with her mother and sister. Her father had gone to Cleveland, Ohio so we left here in August and went to Cleveland, Ohio with her mother cause they wanted her up there with them. So I stayed up there and worked from August of 1942 until November 43 when I was drafted in the service. So I went in service November 11 which now it is Veterans Day I went in November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Interviewer: How did you know you were drafted, how did you find out?

Mr. Callis: They sent me a notice to report. They send you a notice to report to your draft board on a certain day so I reported to Springfield that's where my draft board I left all my draft board here.

Interviewer: How did your family and your wife react to this?

Mr. Callis: Well they were all upset about it. Cause they thought I was going to get to stay out of it because where I worked in Ohio I was the youngest man working in the plant the rest of them were like 40 and 50 year old men and I was the youngest one there. So they couldn't understand why I wasn't in service everybody else was gone. So I left and went to Shelby, Mississippi and got there I don't know about the same time two or three days later. I'll always remember the night we got on the train in fact we got on the bus in Springfield we rode to Nashville we walked from the bus station to Union Station which is about 7 or 8 blocks all of us had to stream down Broad Street to get to there. We got there and they called the roll, finally got us all together we got on a train they put us in a Pullman trailer, there was another group from somewhere had come in. We got to Birmingham, Alabama and they put us on a side track way back out in the boondocks. We hadn't had anything to eat all day now. We'd been on that train all day with nothing to eat. So we got all the way down there and some boy got off and went

to a little old restaurant or something climbed the fence and told them we were over there a bunch free fellows about to starve to death and said we need to get some food for them. So they cooked up a bunch of hamburgers and sent them to us. So we got a little bite of this that and the other that's about all I think I got a little bitty small hamburger of some sort. Anyway along about 2 o'clock in the morning they hitched up and carried us to Shelby, Mississippi we got there and they told me where to go and what to do. There was six of us sitting in the barracks from sometime right around Thanksgiving that's where we were at Thanksgiving November 43. We sat there until the first of January before anybody else came in. They came in right at the last of December and they filled up the whole company. So here we go training and we train until sometime in June. I did get one furlough home. I came home, I had a seven day furlough took two days to get here by train from Shelby, Mississippi I stayed almost three days the third day I said well I've got to get out of here and go back. I knew good and well I couldn't stand to be a wall so I took off and I got back on Sunday night. I was supposed to be back by roll call on Monday morning. I made the mistake of signing in I should have signed in on Monday morning. About 9 o'clock Sunday night they came and said we're going on a force march and we'll be all night long. Here I'd rode a train the night before so we went on a forced march and low and behold that sergeant put me out a connecting file between the company in front and us and I'm supposed to be where I can see them and their supposed to be where they can see me, my company. Well I'm walking along asleep somebody would punch me and I would wake up and he said where's the rest of the people and I said well there somewhere of course we had to double time for about fifteen minutes to catch them. Of course my name was mud with the company. The next morning Captain came by and we were all sitting on the side of the road sullied up and he said we're going to have breakfast in a while when we get over yonder about three miles I said man I don't know if I can go three miles he said what's the matter and I said my feet are killing me. He said you got any blisters and I said both of them are just covered in blisters so I pulled my shoes off well we went to first aid and pulled my shoes off and they doctored my feet put my socks back on fell in line and went on. We'd stayed out there all week. But we trained those six months down there as a company the 65<sup>th</sup> division and I mean the whole division it was the complete division. They did go overseas afterwards sometime in the later part of 45 the 65<sup>th</sup> did but of course they'd come and a new crew of people and worked in that.

Interviewer: Which branch of the service was that?

Mr. Callis: That was the infantry.

Interviewer: Infantry Army?

Mr. Callis: Army infantry. So they broke up the 65<sup>th</sup> down there and shipped us all out to Fort Mead, Maryland. Then we went to Patrick Henry, Virginia boarded the ship we drew all new clothing up there. We drew clothing for summer and winter. When we got there we went over on I remember it was the General Black was the transport ship that we went over on it was a transport is what it was it wasn't a troop transport but they had turned it in to one. We got to Naples, Italy and we all got off of the ship and they said we're going up here to a little town name Kasir. Of course we were all replacements we went through the Depot and thought we were going down it had been bombed and all everything it was just a big hole. We thought we were going down where into where the trains came in and catch a train.

We just kept walking right on out the railroad tracks it was 14 miles up to Kasir. And so we went and got to Kasir that was with all our, we had a full filled pack on then of course our duffle bag was left they brought it out later but we did carry our full filled pack all the way. We got to Kasir and they said well we've got a little bit farther to go and they put us on trucks carried us about 3 miles on trucks to what they call Purple Heart Valley. It was where Mussolini's son-in-law had a big dairy farm. It was a valley that was seven miles long and four miles wide. And the reason they called it Purple Heart Valley it had mountains all the way around it and the Repetto River run right through it and the Repetto River was one of the worst crossing that they ever tried to do. The 36 and 3<sup>rd</sup> division tried to cross it time and time and time again and nearly every time aw everybody got killed or wounded. They finally did get across Repetto River and that's the reason they call this Purple Heart Valley they said. We were ill wacked in it and when I come around the mountain and looked down at that all them tents they had pyramid tents set from one end of that place to the other. You can't believe what it looked like cause it was full of tents and the was side by side by side by side. Well we got there we stayed there a few days and they called us all out I joined the 36<sup>th</sup> division didn't know a thing in the world about what I was doing just knew that I was signings up with the 36<sup>th</sup> division. They put us in trucks we circled around and come up over a mountain and I looked down there on the beach and there was millions and millions of trucks and cars and all kind of tanks and everything down there loading on ships. I thought to myself man there is something big coming on we don't know what it is. So we got down there and they said you'll be in Company B 141<sup>st</sup> infantry.

Interviewer: What year is this?

Mr. Callis: 1943 and 44, 1944. This was in the later part of July well I don't remember what day it was I couldn't keep up with the dates too well. I can look it up and know exactly where I was at certain dates if I look at my history. But they said you're in Company B 141<sup>st</sup> infantry welcome platoon that's 60 mm mortars and 30 caliber air cooled machine guns and I was a ammunition bearer for mortars so got down there and somewhere along the line they made a mistake and put me in company D. Instead of B and I kept telling them I'm not supposed to be in D. D was 90mm mortar and water cooled machine guns, I'd never even hardly seen them just people passing with them. Never had fired one of them at all but they were operated about the same way. Anyway, I stayed with company D and made the landing in Southern France we had one real bad but then we had a lot of opposition. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 1944 is when we made the invasion in Southern France just below Marsa what we call what we call below Marsa I don't know which way it is I think it's north or east or something. Here's a map here showing where I went I left we left here all up through here this red mark and came to Masooa, France and that was the little town where the had the national people from different nationalities were in a concentration camp there called The Grand Hotel. It was a huge thing big beautiful grounds and wire was just about an inch apart barbed wire around the thing and it was about 12 to 15 foot town. Well we went in and liberated those people there they were all nationalities from everywhere in this place. We liberated them and then when we got out of there we got to the little town right here. I called it Remiremont and Saint Die just above it we were supposed to go to Saint Die and when I got to there we were waiting for some more replacements of course this was I forget not exactly where it was but it was

about the somewhere in November no it was in August, September, September it was in August we liberated this town September we went up there.

Interviewer: When you liberated the concentration camp with was their reaction to you as an American?

Mr. Callis: Oh they were thrilled to death to see us.

Interviewer: Had they ever seen Americans?

Mr. Callis: Oh yeh they were all nationalities from everywhere every country in the world that had just got in France and hadn't got out and of course the French people were glad to see it. Every time went through they were just coming out kissing you and hugging you and wanting you to take wine and all this stuff and of course you couldn't take everything and you felt bad about taking anything because you felt like the people didn't have nothing which they didn't have. They didn't even have good food. Which we didn't have either. I went sometimes for three or four days without food because we didn't have any they weren't catching up with us and bringing us food sometimes you'd run out of ammunition and maybe you'd find some fellow that had been shot or something and you'd pick up his ammunition or something to that effect and rifles I have come back after we'd been in battle for two or three days I have come in with four or five rifles hanging on each shoulder where somebody got wounded or killed. Cause you bring them back cause you're short on arms. But when we got to this little town right here we were all sitting out there one day and we'd cleaned all of our guns up and I didn't know none of the guys in my outfit I couldn't tell you if their names were John, Bill or what because I didn't want to know because if you got to know them too well you know somebody is going to get killed anyway this guy walked up this lieutenant walked up and said I'm looking for a guy by the name of Callis and I said you've found him what do you want. And he said well we've been looking for you ever since we made the invasion and we can't find you. I said I've been here all the time he said you're supposed to be in Company B. I pulled out my papers and I said I've been telling these people this all of the way all these months that I'm supposed to be in Company B. He said well get your stuff and let's go. So I picked up my I had a carbon 30 caliber carbon that's that the opposition I picked it up and got all of my equipment I had which was a blanket roll and a little old bitty light pack we called it, you carried your mess kit in this little pack on your back, hardly ever used it cause you never did get any hot food. But anyway when you pulled back like that you did get a hot meal once in a while. Anyway I picked up my pack and got it on got my riffle and he said that all you got and I said that's all I want. I went back off the mountain a little ways down there and joined up with Company B and didn't know anybody there of course and I said well I finally come home one of the guys spoke up and said you've been a wall since we made the landing. I said well I'm sorry but I've tried to tell them I'm not supposed to be in Company D and I said my papers here say Company B. So we stayed there a couple of days and about sometime late in the afternoon they fed us chow, I don't remember what I ate but it was something hot. They said everybody get your equipment together we are pulling out said we're going back to the front line. Well I hadn't seen with a riffle company all this time see B Company is a rifle Company, Company D is a heavy weapons company. A rifle carries light machine guns like mortars with the rifle company. So here I am with a rifle company so we started out and the sergeant says to me said have you ever been an observer and I said just a little bit I don't know much about it he said well you're going to be an observer when we

get out there. He handed me two phones I hooked them on my backpack right here a roll of wire about this big said you know how this works and I said yeh you attach this wire here to this phone and give it to somebody with a gun and I crawl out there somewhere where I can see to fire and he said you've got it down pat that's all you need to know. So I said well okay. So here I'm going along they gave me six rounds of ammunition, mortar shells about this long and about this big around I had six of those on my back besides this other stuff my car beam and of course my canteen and stuff and they put us on trucks and we go right back through a little town by the name of Berewares I can't think remember where it's at but anyway went through this town about seven miles out of town got there about dark they said deep truck dig in and we'll be here over night. I said to the guy next to me what are they talking about digging in do you see any bullets flying hear any gun shooting and he said no and I said do you usually when you come to a place like that we were out in this open field.

Interviewer: In France?

Mr. Callis: Yeh there wasn't nothing there and I said you can dig all you want to I dug a little place there enough that I could lay down and I threw my shelter half out and my blanket and laid down on it and they had give us two boxes of k-rations, k-rations was a little box about like a cracker jack box a little bit bigger it had some kind of a meat or cheese something like potted meat or something like that in it two or three crackers a little candy bar three cigarettes bullion powder, salt pepper and stuff like that the bullion powder and salt and pepper and things you didn't use you just stuck in your pocket somewhere cause you might need it and the bullion power you could make you some soup you know. So I got out there and I told that boy I said I'm hungry I didn't eat much and he said well I didn't either and I said well I'm going to eat one of these k-rations well I ate one buried the box you know you have to bury the box and laid down and went to sleep about 4 o'clock they woke us up and said we're going to head out and I thought which way are we going now. We came right back through Berewares right back where they had just trucked us through seven miles and we walked all the way back through it we walked all day long in the snow, rain the sun would shine it would turn back cold you'd get chilled and this that and the other we walked all day long now nothing to eat every now and then we'd stop and everybody would take a sip of water or something like that, that's all you had maybe some. I did smoke then I think I had a half a pack of cigarettes when I started out and of course when you're in battle you don't smoke. So we go on up to the edge of the mountain get nearly to the crest of the mountain and here's a 442 and the other battalion of the Japanese American outfit. They are the children of the people they incarcerated on the west coast and they volunteered now they volunteered for service. Fightingest little dudes that ever walked on two feet. They could outfight anybody that ever walked now, they carried pick shovels big pick axes double beaded chopping axes cross cut saws that's what they carried with them all of the time on their backs. We had little bitty pick shovels like women use to dig in their garden, that's what we had little pick axes and shovels you couldn't if you got in to a rocky place you didn't do nothing. Well I had trained in Shelby, Mississippi just a little ways from these guys and I knew some of them so they began hollering at all of us telling us hey what are you doing in that collision you're in the wrong outfit what are you doing up here with these guys and I said no I just finally found my. I knew some lieutenants in the outfit and forth, so we went through their line they had just pulled back from fighting just about 500 yards from where they had made contact with the enemy so they had pulled

back. And they said you boys go on out there and get them and we won't have to be fighting all of this time what's what some of them were hollering at us and we told them we'd take care of it just don't worry about it. So they said stop dig in, I looked around and I said dig in on a mountain of rock I told this boy along there with me I don't even remember a little bitty short fellow here I'm almost six foot tall and he said yeh we dig in. I looked around and I said there's a little rock pile right over there looks like somebody just made it for us and he said you can get in there if you want but I'm gonna dig in and I said you start digging. I crawled over there and laid there a little while and noting happening you know no guns you could hear the guns firing somewhere else. I said I'm hungry again I'm going to eat this k-ration I ate it, turned over and laid down and went to sleep. About three of four o'clock in the morning they come around rousing us up, alright men let's go we got to get out of here we've got a long trip ahead of us.

Interviewer: What month is this?

Mr. Callis: This was in Vosges Mountains.

Interviewer: And this was what of 1944?

Mr. Callis: This was in October 1944. And we started out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> I looked in my book to find out what date it was because I didn't know what date anything was. The 23<sup>rd</sup> we started out and just as soon as we started out on the edge of the mountain we run into fire with the enemy well my rifle company was in front of me because I'm in weapons platoon. We can't fire because there is so many trees you can't shoot threw the trees with the bullets I mean our shells would explode just overhead. So here we are we are just tagging along behind trying to watch where we walk because there are mines everywhere the Germans have mined everything they've cut trees down and blocked little trails and so forth and minded and here you are walking and stepping here and yonder trying to keep from stepping on a mine you can see some of them where they put them down in such a hurry they were retrieved. So we ran them back out the end of this mountain we got out to our objective at the end of the mountain they said everybody dig in now we are going to stay right here, it was just getting good and dark. Well we started to dig and you'd dig about two foot and water would start coming in your fox hole and we were up on this mountain snow just coming from everywhere big pine trees huge pine trees. Nobody had ever fought over this territory in history that anybody knows of. Well we were fighting once out on the perimeter fighting and us trying to dig fox holes and bullets flying everywhere so we dug in what we could they got the machine guns set up in certain places to watch where the enemy was coming from. And I'm down here on the lower part of the hill and it's kind of grassy up on the hill we dug a fox hole this guy and I did, we got lucky and got into some just plain old dirt I mean we were digging fast we got down in our fox hole you could stand up and your head was just to the top of the fox hole six foot deep. Well we found out we were supposed to cover it you covered your fox hole if you could with some kind of anything like timber well to keep the Germans from knowing where we were at we took our trench knives and cut down saplings what we could and didn't have nothing to cut down like if we'd have listened to these boys back here in the 442 we'd have carries us a double blade chopping ax and a cross blade saw. But we, we cut all of those saplings down and you'd lay them across you hole then you'd put dirt on top of it to keep shell burst from coming in on you cause those shell burst are as bad as a bullet

coming at you. So and they were firing at us all the time with 88s and of this that and the other and they we fought there for sometime the next morning and I don't know whether I believe it was a lieutenant in charge or a captain or something I can't remember we had lost so many officers' we didn't have any. So they said were going to send out a patrol and see what we can find out. They sent out a 45 man patrol and didn't hear nothing from them all of them were captures except for about four or five they just walked into a trap they were all captured but about four or five and some of these boys were the four or five were just recruits first time they had ever been on the front line and they wondered around and finally they came back to our company somehow they got back we don't know but they came back scared to death oh just fatigued completely out after two or three days that's when they finally got back. We finally found out that day that the Germans had encircled us and kept us on this mountain. They'd cut off our supply line behind us and we couldn't get out. We tried to fight our way out and we couldn't so we went back to our foxhole dug in refurnished the top of them the best we could and everything they said we just have to lay low. We had a fellow with us from the artillery and he had a radio and his radio batteries were real weak he could just barely hear what they were saying. So he slept with this radio for seven days and nights kept it wrapped up to keep it warm and dry so we could make contact. He kept radioing them every day once a day is the only time he could make contact. Send food, water, medical supplies and ammunition that's what he kept saying. They said hold on help is coming. Well in a battalion ours was a full battalion well I say a full battalion because you never were up to strength nowhere. There was three men in my squad and there was supposed to be seven so that's how many you had you had about half the men. There was some company D boys there, there was Company A, B and C just part of each Company some of them were in the back there's a first battalion second battalion third and fourth battalion. The second, third and fourth was in back of us and they were the ones that were supposed to have kept the supply line open and they didn't so they fought for five days trying to get to us and they couldn't the Germans kept them back. The Germans they were just at a standstill couldn't make it three or four hundred yards. Well they called up this 442 and 100<sup>th</sup> battalion they come and they started fighting and they fought five days and broke through to us. I was sitting looking off the mountain I had just a clear view of about three or four miles that I could see and that's what I was guarding. I was looking off that mountain and the sun had come out, beautiful day, that day before two days before they had dropped supplies the supplies didn't get to us so the Germans got all of them, they floated off the mountain the day before the Japanese Americans broke through us they dropped supplies and we got some of them and I've got a piece of parachute I go the whole parachute but everybody started running up cutting pieces out of it and I've got a piece about so big of the parachute that they dropped supplies to us they dropped us ammunition, food and water and some medical supplies. I'll tell you about the parachute later but anyway we I was sitting looking off this mountain and I could see looked like thousands of men coming up that mountain and I told this boy go up to the CP and tell them we're fixing to be taken they better get something down here. So here comes two or three of the officers down there looking, watching they brought a couple of machine guns down there we had about six or eight or ten machine guns. So they come and brought that we didn't have none set on that perimeter there so they come and set them up. We sat there and the sun was just getting down over the horizon getting real dark and a guy walked out of the woods a great big tall fellow. And there's a sergeant up on the hill threw his gun down and said don't shoot he's an American ran to him, ran down there to him and he said you fellows need a cigarette? It's in our book, in

our history what he said so we thought well every things loaded now here they come on that mountain and brought all that equipment there they went up on that mountain and they started sawing cutting down trees and built their captain a house a little cabin up there and I mean it was after dark before they got through with it you never heard so much chopping here we were real quiet up there we didn't do anything we didn't shoot at anything until we seen it they were up there hooping and a hollering and carrying on and made all, well we paid for it that night. The Germans shelled us with everything they had. Had one gun they called we called it the screaming meaning if you've ever heard four or five women screaming I mean really screaming well this was about like 20 or 25 screaming those guns those bullets shells when they come through the air sound just like a woman screaming and you think something won't unnerve you it will. You get so scared and nervous and you can't even hold your gun. But anyway they shot all night long at us and I finally told a boy I have fought so long and stood up there against that tree so long I'm just give out, I can't stand no more. I said if they take us they take us I'm going to lay down I laid right down beside the foxhole, you couldn't get in it cause there was water up to your waist I laid down beside of the foxhole and went to sleep. About sometime in the early morning I heard this screaming and hollering and I raised up and looked and there was an old boy that had walked up somewhere he was one of these new recruits or something and a shell had hit and just took off his arm he didn't have no arm. And I told this boy I said well medics I don't know if they can get anything they began hollering for medics I jumped up and grabbed something I don't know what it was and tied his arm off to keep off to keep it from bleeding to death. And the medics got there and said well we'll do the best we can with him we don't know whether we can save him or not. I never did know what happened to him just his arm is gone. And so we about daylight everything kind of quieted down we had done shot everything that was around us they'd all withdrew I reckon everything got quiet. Of course I heard these Japanese Americans they give out a yell and the Germans run like scared rabbits they were the best fighting people I ever met in my life and I owe my life to them. So they said we are getting out of here they are going to hold this place for the time being but we're going out. Well we started walking out and here was all of these reporters just about the time we got out making pictures. I'm with a beard caked in red clay mud filthy nasty stinking I don't know how they stood us even walking by. I can't remember even having a bath I know it had been I can remember taking three baths from the time I landed in southern France until I left my outfit that was the Halloween we came out on Halloween the 31<sup>st</sup> day of October.

Interviewer: That was 1944.

Mr. Callis: In 1944, so I know what it's like to be put in there to be shot at and this that and the other but thank the good lord I never got a bullet never took a bullet the whole time I was there. I got both feet frozen both hands frozen I got blown out of a foxhole one time, that's the reason I'm wearing hearing aids today. I got a concussion in the back of my head and I still carry that I have I reckon I've had a headache ever since I got blown out of the foxhole. I don't I still have a real dull headache all of the time.

Interviewer: Where were you blown out of the foxhole?

Mr. Callis: Somewhere around I reckon it was Limes, France somewhere there. We were going through this wooded area and they were shelling us from above and all the shells were bursting and everything.

There was a boy in front of me I never did know what he was or who he was seen a foxhole there the Germans had left and he dived in it and I dived on top of him and just about they said about the time we hit a shell hit right beside of this foxhole said ya'll looked like two ragged dolls going through the air. Well the medics come over and checked us and I was partially coherent a little bit they worked on us there a little while, I got up and they said well we'll send you back to the eighth station and I said no that's about four or five miles and I ain't walking nowhere I'm going this other way. Well for about two or three days they liked to have had to leave me all the time cause I couldn't see I had bleed threw the ears and the nose and the eyes and I don't know what happened to the other guy. They put him on a stretcher and left with him but I do remember getting up and sitting up and they said are you able to get up and I said well I'll see and I got up and looked around and I said well where's my gun I didn't have no helmet my helmet blowed off I found a helmet I didn't know whether it was min or not course I didn't look to see if it had my name in it. I found me a helmet there it might have been the other guys and picked me up a gun and went on and about three or four days I was alright except for having a headache but you have a headache all the time your there listening to all of these shells going off banging and booming and you don't have no ear plugs in there, they didn't know what they were I guess back in those days. But we came out of there and came back and they said everybody's going to get a shower and a good hot meal said you can have your hot meal now or you can have your shower. I said I believe I'll have a shower so s bunch of us went to the shower they set it up next to a creek they made hot water of course you all go into this great big tent and they got this hot steamy water just pouring out of it and you just run in there lather up real good and soap up all over yourself I came out of there and I said boy I sure would like to have a razor somewhere I need to get this beard off of me. I had been six or eight weeks and I hadn't shaved you don't shave you don't brush your teeth you don't have a tooth brush so what are you going to do? Anyway I spent about an hour after I got I did go eat first they give is hotcakes we had talked about hotcakes for one whole day on that mountain just how good they were and how our wives had cooked hotcakes for us once a week and so forth another day we discussed all about fried chicken then we discussed about going out an eating hamburgers but of coursed in our day see you went out and got a coke and a hamburger when you were dating that's all you did, go to the show. But anyway made it through that ordeal so they said everybody that hadn't got in trouble said go up and see the captain. Well I went up on the hill the medical doctors the captain and we went up there and lined up and went into see him and this old guy I called him an old guy cause he must have been about 50 years old, we were all 18, 19, 20 year old boys. So he called I went in and he said what's the matter with you and I said I don't know and he said how's your feet and I said they're killing me. He said let's look at them so I took my shoes off, I had a pair of shoes I'd been wearing for three months, never had they had holes in the bottom of them oh they were terrible. I had these old leggings son I undone the leggings and put them on the floor and got my old muddy boots off, he looked at my feet, my feet were just as white as cotton. He said man you've got frozen feet and I said is that what it is he said we call it trench feet here, I said well what do I do. He said I'm going to send you to rest camp for four days and see how they do. I said alright so I picked up my shoes socks what was left of them get outside before I put them back on. I go down to the where the company area was they called and said everybody come down they've got all of your clean clothes. What they did was you pulled off all of your clothes and they washed them. And somebody else got them and you got somebody else's that they had done washed. So I had on two pair of winter underwear, two pair of OD pants I had on a sweater a field

jack a overcoat and a raincoat on top of that now that's what we wore that netted pack. I did have a heavy wool undershirt that I put on under that but I did have on two pair of underwear. Well it took fifteen minutes to undress so when you come back out and they say what size do you wear and you tell them about what size you wear and they just throw you a pair and I said I got have two pair I just pulled off two, well they throw you another pair. And you're lucky if they fit sometimes you get luck and they are a little bit too big. But that's what you want if you're going to put on two pair. Well I got two more pair of underwear and two more shirts and pants and I got me another undershirt like I wanted cause it was mine I carried it with me I should have carried it all the time I guess but anyway I got me another sweater a wool sweater OD sweater I got a new field jacket they gave us new field jackets, some of us, a new over coat and I don't remember I think maybe we got I know we got a raincoat and of course I had my helmet I carried it with me all of the time you carried it in your hand even when you shower cause you didn't want to loose that. And your gun you have to carry it with you too of course we carried it in and washed it out too real good. Anyway I got down to got out there and finally found a guy that had a razor but didn't have no shaving cream well I found some old GI soap and I lathered my beard up real goo first a found a guy that had some old GI scissors and I cut off all I could but I got it I finally scraped it all off I got most of it off but I was burning up where I had scrapped my skin. I got out of there and went down and told my company commander said the captain says for me to go to rest camp he said did he give you a slip and I said right here. He said alright rest camp is it was about a half a mile down the road. Now to show you how bad things were they gave us new boots they were called snow packs and the bottom part of them was rubber the top was leather. They had two insoles one you carried in your pack or somewhere and one you put in the bottom of your shoe. And I put those things on and walked down there and when I got down there I was on fire it was just like you put pepper on your tongue my feet were burning me up I went in down there and gave them my slip of paper and told them what I had come for of course I had my everything with me my gun and all and they said told me where to go lay down, found a bed, they had a bed and I though boy I'm really getting up town now. I went in put my gun on the bed my helmet and all on the bed took off my old coat and OD field jacket kindly felt relieved a little bit and they said there's a show up on the hill if you'll want to go see it. Got up there we had seen the thing before we left the states six or eight months before some of us had I said heck I can't stay here these boots are killing me. I went back and pulled my boots and socks off and I asked the guy I said where's the latrine? He said told me where to go to the latrine. I went in there and stood with cold water running on my feet trying to cool them off, found out later that was the worst thing I could have done. But anyway my feet started turning black then they would turn white and so forth so we went I was there for two days the second day they called me in and set up a place to fill teeth and I had two teeth down here that were giving me trouble before I left the states but they didn't have no lights they opened a big curtain over here and the sun shined through and there was a guy over here pumping that old machine and there's belts and cogs and everything running over here. And that's what run that drill him drilling and that guy pumping. I hadn't ever seen one I mean it was a gadget it was the funniest looking outfit all over that wall. So they filled my two teeth said you're going to be good for awhile now. I went back down and they fed us supper I don't remember what it was now just some but it was better than nothing. And some time later on I guess it was about dark, some guy came in and called me and another fellow and said ya'll are going to the hospital. I said why and he said because you got trench feet you've got to go to the hospital. I said okay so I turned around, another guy had just come in and I had

seen him in Company B and I said you with Company B and he said yeh I said I just came in a short time ago were you with us up on the hill and he said no I came in just after that said I just joined the outfit two or three days ago. I aid well I'm going to the hospital if you don't mind take my gun and carry it back to the company and I turned my gun over to him I don't know what ever happened to it. But me and this other guy they put us in the ambulance and carried us about four miles down the road and we got down there and there was a bid dairy barn and that was the hospital. They had cleaned it all out we reported and they said you boys go down to the end of that bench down there at the end of the building and sit down, it was the main entrance to the old barn. We went down there and sat down we sat there and talked and talked and talked and along about two or three hours later this guy come by and called our names and we said yeh. He said come on and get in this ambulance we're going somewhere else. So we road about two or three hours in the ambulance and got to another place and it was getting bad cold, it was so cold that you couldn't hardly stand it. Of course it was on the mountain but we this was getting terrible cause here we were we had been in some heat and took a good shower and got our pores all open and we were freezing. And we went in and this nurse said I'll find you a bed back here and we went in and these old folding cots that the Army has if you've ever seen on their canvas it's like people carry out camping and they had a bunch of blankets laying in it to keep you from going down so far. She said now don't pull your clothes off cause you'll freeze to death if you do just get in and pull that cover up over you. Well I got in there and I began to shake and shiver and she kept coming pilling blankets on me and she said I've done all I can for you except build a fire under you. And I said I'll get warm in a minute I guess I still had on my old wool cap I searched around under my bed and fond my helmet and I put it on buckled it under my chin and just laid there with my head and all covered up. I finally got warm I guess I dropped off to sleep. Next morning I heard them coming through she came and pulled the cover back and I said yeh I'm still here she said well we didn't know every once in a while we check one and he's not with us any more he's done gone on. Said we check them every hours or two. Every once in a while I felt people during the night pulling the cover back seeing if I was breathing I guess. But I hadn't been wounded just my feet and my hands. She said if you want some chow you better get up and I said okay and I got up and took I didn't even have a light back just my blanket roll then. So I went out there and found a mess kit hanging out there somewhere. They said pick up one of those mess kits and when you get through with it wash it and hang it up back for somebody else. I don't know what they even had to eat some kind of I'd say it was some kind of soup or something they poured it over bread. Anyway I ate that got me a cup a coffee course I hadn't any coffee didn't know if I could even drink it you know and they called me about the time I got threw and they said you're going on further said we can't use you at this field hospital you've got to go to another one so I traveled from there on the mountain to Dijon, France I don't know how far it was but it was way down there.

Interviewer: What year was this?

Mr. Callis: That was the same year. That was in November 44. So we got down to Dijon, France and the had a bunch of big quanta huts and they told us to go down and find us a bunk went in there and here I am trying to hobble around and every chance I got I pulled them boots off I finally got to where I wouldn't even lace them I put I would just tie the strings around my ankle. About dark that night they began calling out names mine was in the bunch to come out of there and I heard somebody calling Callis

and I said who are you Phil Anderson an old boy I had trained with in Shelby, Mississippi and we went overseas we got separated. He was with my same 36<sup>th</sup> division but he was with another company somewhere another battalion he had just come off the front line and he was fixing to go back and I was hollering at him see ya later you know. Got into these ambulances they just crammed us into it went about three miles got out of the ambulance and this was the day before Thanksgiving 1944 got out of the ambulances and there were some houses there and they said this is where we'll be staying until the fog lifts it's so heavy we can't fly out said all of ya'll are going to England so we stayed there until the day after Thanksgiving we had our Thanksgiving dinner there that night. Don't ask me what it was cause when you picked up this mess kit you went up there and they just started piling everything on it and you had cranberries on top of everything and whatever else you had chicken, turkey or whatever it was down there. You just started eating and the top and kept on eating through. I remember sitting down on a bank out there with my mess kit eating and I guess I ate for two hours cause I didn't want I knew good and well I hadn't had that much to eat can I just didn't want to upset myself. The next morning they came and said get all of your equipment of course all of the equipment I had was myself I had done got ride of everything throwed it away I didn't want any of it so we went over to the airport we was just a little ways away from the airport and got on these C I call them C47s I believe it was that's what the paratroopers' always bailed out of during WWII well they had gun sights in the windows, they were all gone just holes there you could look anywhere you want to and gun holes there were they had been shot at no telling how many time they had been shot. And they flew is to Reading, England five hours we flew when I got there I couldn't hardly see my head was killing me I was sick I told this nurse when we got there I don't know what happened but I feel worse now than I did when I left the front line. She said it was that flight and that plane you see the air and everything was coming in all that ole sound and everything I guess it just got in your head and tore you up. They gave me something and said go to sleep and I did I don't know what time I woke up but I slept all night. We stayed there through Christmas on in to around the first of January second of January something like that. Low and behold they called my name said you're going home. You're going down to the ship go get on the ship and go home I was hoping it was an airplane they weren't flying any airplanes back with bodies then. We went down and the chateau ferry it was a hospital ship I never seen anything like it and they put us on that thing and I never seen so many people in all my life I don't know how many hundreds were on it and it was a little bitty ship. And we were coming to South Carolina that's where we were supposed to come in Charleston, South Carolina we got on that ship and there were guys on there that had been shot half in to and people in cast and I never seen the like of them and all of us that could walk was in the bottom of the ship and the next group that could get around a little bit was on up and they just kept going up and we set sail. Of course we didn't know how long we'd be we'd get up every day and get out there they'd feed us I don't know what it was and we'd go out on deck when they'd let us. Of course the Red Cross would come around every day and give cigarettes and candy I'd just about quick smoking by then cause I didn't have any didn't care much about the cigarettes anyway we'd go on deck stay up there a little while bask in the sun we were on our way home. About three days out a big storm came up and that old ship it was at night and that old ship was a creaking and a popping and everything. Finally sometime up in the morning abandon ship so one of the guys said going, going where I said if this cotton picking thing can't float we can't float on anything else. He said well there's life boats all over the place. I said one of them little bitty ole canoes they got out there you think you can do anything in a storm like this in one of

them things. I sad if this things goes down I'm going down with it cause I'm not getting off of this ship he said you're crazy and I said I know that too but I said let's go up on top and see and we got up there and there was people with cast on the arms and their legs sitting up there in them life boats and the water was coming up over the life boats I mean you nearly drowned. They had a great big life raft that was sitting sloped on the other sided of the ship it had done blowed off and lost it, it had done gone. I told this guy I'm going back down in the hole of this thing and he said what for and I said I don't even want to see the water come in on me I just want to be down there when it's gone I said I ain't fix in. Well we started down and the guards wouldn't even let us go back down we had to stay on that ship and I said man I ain't going back out there when I was out there I had to hold on to something to stay on the ship I said there ain't telling how many men you've lost back there. He said well the captain said nobody go back down and I said well I'm gonna sit on this step and I sat down and about the time I sat down water come in that step and nearly washed me down. I said of all of the crazy things here we fight all of these battles and things and we get on a ship and drown. I said its' awful. I said they put us on something like this I said they should have had us on something five thousand feet long it wasn't I thought it was a pretty good size ship until I to looking at it and you could run from one end to the other in just a few seconds. But we got on that thing and it finally everything calmed down and we came on in.

Interviewer: Did you lose anybody?

Mr. Callis: I don't know if they lost anybody or not but I'm pretty sure that somebody got washed overboard because them guys that were trying to get in them life boats there's bound to have been some of them that got washed overboard. But any way we got on in to Charleston, South Carolina. I got down there and I told some of them well I've lost everything they stole of my clothes when I was in England I didn't have any cloths to come home on I was wearing pajamas and an old robe I didn't have any shoes they stole my snow packs so that was the orderly boys in the hospital there the ones that stole all of this stuff see they'd carry it out and sell it. So I was trying to get some shoes to come home on what I had done I found some felt thick pieces of felt and tied strings around them and that's what I would walk cause I couldn't put nothing on my feet. My left foot I had done I could see the bones in it where the meat had just fell out of it and I had went into the latrine and I had always heard my grandmother say if you can wash a wound enough it would heal itself so I would go in to the latrine two or three times a day there and England and stick that foot under that hop water it was so hot it was just cooking it is what it was doing. But it just was washing all of that out of my foot just kept washing it. I'd come out and they gave us some big ole jar of yellow Vaseline and I'd cake it with Vaseline and I'd wrap it up with a rag I found me a rag somewhere to wrap it up. We didn't have things to wrap things up with in the hospital they didn't have hardly anything. So I wrapped it up put a sock on it after about I was there from the day after Thanksgiving until the end of December well I was there about a month and I started doing that about a week after I got there and they kept saying we're going to have to cut that foot off we're going to have to cut that foot off and I said no, you don't cut that foot off until I tell you to. Well gain green is going to set in I said let gain green set in you can take it off at the knee just as well as you can take it off at the foot. No, I said well you ain't cutting my foot off other guys were just letting them cut them off they were cutting them off at the instep and at the ankle and all this that and the other. They said man you better get that done said the government will take care of you. I said you go

ahead and believe all of that you want to but I'm going to keep my foot if it will stay with me. I kept doing that and one day the doctor said unwrap that thing and let me see what you got. He began to said you know that meat is growing back on that thing and I said your darn right I know how to cure that thing I listened to my grandmother. He said we could have probably saved some more of these feet and I said yeh but ya'll have gotten knife happy I said no ya'll ain't cutting my foot off and I've still got it today. So we came in down there and then about two or three days there in the hospital and they said we've got a hospital in Durham, North Carolina and that's where you boy's that's got trench feet will go to. So they shipped us to Durham, North Carolina there was a big hospital up there called Camp Butner, North Carolina and it was we got there and there wasn't nobody there wasn't even any personnel there. We just went in and they told us go find you a place to sleep and the beds was all there and everything so we just went in and made ourselves at home. The next few days the nurses and doctors started coming in it was a great big place I think some of the tank division had been in there. But anyway we went they had all kind of equipment and stuff there they wanted us to go to school and all this that and the other. I told them all I want to do is get well and go home. Well this was in February I kept trying to get a pass a furlough to come home and they wouldn't give me a furlough said I wasn't well enough to go so sometime in May they gave me a 15 day furlough. I had done called my wife she was in Cleveland, Ohio and I told her I was coming in to Nashville so she got leave from where she was working she was working in a bomber plant they made the B29 wings for the B29 airplanes so she was a riveter on that. And so she got a leave of absence and came here met me here we stayed here about five days with my parents and caught the train and went to Cleveland, Ohio to be with her parents got up there about three days before time for me to report back I sent a telegram and asked for an extension and about six days later a telegram came back denied. I was three days late going back. Got on a train started back I had to go to Lynchburg, Virginia catch a little ole train out of Lynchburg, Virginia to Raleigh, North Carolina called it Durham, North Carolina. It went on to Raleigh but it was just a milk train had these old wooden cars no air conditioner nothing on them. Got on that train got somewhere out between Pennsylvania and Ohio and the railroad has washed out. I took us about five days to get back to and I was about 8 days late to get back and I got back took my papers up to the hospital and they check, you're not supposed to be here I said where am I supposed to be they said well check in over at the convalescent and I said where's that they said it's about four or five miles over there I saw well how do you get there is there a bus they said yeh the bus runs about every two hours I spent the whole day trying to find where I was supposed to be. I got there went in and showed them my papers and they said you're not supposed to be here. I said where do I go and she said I don't know and I said who can tell me? Well go down yonder to so and so well there's four or five of us together trying to find where we were supposed to be and finally we found a place down there and we said can we spend the night here? We were just begging for a place to spend the night. We didn't have no place to go we didn't know where we were supposed to go. Finally the next day they found out where we were supposed to be. We went down there and there was two or three thousand guys there maybe four. So I got back there and found where we were supposed to be. Stayed there a couple of days well they wanted us to march and this that and the other and we told them we're not doing anything we just came back from overseas we are going to lay around here and do nothing and we did they were just raising cane because we wouldn't get out and hike or do nothing. And we kept telling them our feet won't let us do anything. We went to chow one night and was coming back and there was a bunch of guys around the company

order room and I said what's going on and they said they're giving out furloughs. Well I kept crowding my was up there and the guy said you won't a furlough and I said yeh you got one and he said yeh and I said I tried to get one extended but I didn't. And he said you can have a fifteen day convolution furlough right now. And I said hand it to me, I didn't have no money. I went up to the Red Cross and I said I've got to have some money to go home. I borrowed \$30 from them went out finally caught a bus out to Durham, North Carolina got me a bed for the night for a quarter. The next morning got on that little milk train 5 o'clock in the morning headed for Lynchburg and I came back to Cleveland and spent my furlough there in Cleveland all the time the rest of the time and went back and they said we're going to give you a discharge and I said what are you going to give me with it and they said well just a discharge and I said no when I came in to this man's army I was 100% I'm leaving out of here zero. I said now if you give me 100% disability I'll take a discharge. We can't do that I said well I'll just stay with it then. I'm not going nowhere I don't have a job my wife has got t job she's keeping making herself a living I said I'll just stay with you people I just walked out and sat down. A few days later they called me in and said are you ready for your discharge and I said are you ready to give me 100% and they said no and I said I ain't either and I got up and left. I was just as adamant as they were. Finally one day this captain came to me and said you're going to have to take a discharge and I said have to no ya'll haven't den a thing for my feet I cured my feet myself to what they will be and they tell me they will never be no better they will always give me trouble and I will always have trouble with them and my hand. And I said ya'll haven't give me no rating what so ever so when I get ready to leave if I don't have 100% in my hand you don't have no discharge cause I'm going to stay right here with you I'll stay here the rest of my life I said I don't have to go home I can get a furlough ever once in a while to go home and see my wife. Well a few days later this lieutenant came in and said Callis come in here we want to talk to you. I said if you fellows is wanting to give me a discharge I got to have the paper saying I can have 100% disability they said we have it and I said well show me and they showed me the papers that said you are 100% disabled. Fine, that's good now where's my discharge they said its right here and I said well sign it and sign this right here too and I made him sign it and I came home. They give me \$23 to come on home and I had to go to Atlanta, Georgia by train, train from Atlanta, Georgia to Nashville then I caught the bus from Nashville got off over here at the highway and Lucille was waiting for me. And that was the 10<sup>th</sup> day of August 1945. I left the front lines on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of October that was 1944 and I didn't get out until the 10<sup>th</sup> day of August 1945. So that was my military career.

Interviewer: Were you promoted during your military service?

Mr. Callis: Private.

Interviewer: You were a private all the way through?

Mr. Callis: I didn't want no promotion. They offered me sergeant and first one thing and another and I said no I'd rather be a private that way I take orders instead of giving. I acted as a sergeant quite a few times I had two or three men that I had to see after but I mean that was just acting nobody else would take the job. I was the one that carried the phone and wired it the observer out front and call where they would fire the shots. I'd give them 300 yards and so many feet wind age and so many feet wind age

and then they'd fire and if they didn't hit the target I'd give them so many feet wind age. We'd finally after about the second or third shot we'd hit the target. I was glad to serve my country.

Interviewer: What did you think of the German soldiers what was your opinion of them?

Mr. Callis: Right at the last they weren't much cause they were just people they had brought from other countries we fought young boys, kids, old men now the SS troopers their the one s that fought to death in other words you would have had to kill them to get them to surrender or wound them pretty bad. We fought quite a few SS troopers through the whole campaign. And they were but uh we went from August 15<sup>th</sup> to the 31 of October and that wasn't too long when you think about it and we were ready to go into France then I mean into Germany then. We were right on the edge of the mountains going in to Germany. So we had fought pretty hard. It was the 45<sup>th</sup> division the 3<sup>rd</sup> division and my 36 that made the invasion in Southern France and the map shows all of that.

Interviewer: How many metals do you have?

Mr. Callis: How many what?

Interviewer: Metals?

Mr. Callis: I have this metal here is the American campaign ribbon this one here is the European Theatre of operations metal with one cluster that's for an extra invasion. This down here is the WWII metal combat infantry badge here you had to be in combat before you earned that. This is the good conduct badge. This is the one I'm proud of the bronze star.

Interviewer: And how did you get your bronze star?

Mr. Callis: That's for bravery in the time of battle and you don't know what you get it for they come by and say you've earned a bronze star. I got back to the states I didn't have anything I had the combat infantry badge I bought in. I had my dog tags and this little brass thing here that's what they called the ruptured duck that's what they gave you when you were discharged that showed that you were discharged service man. I had been home a good number of years and one day this fellow in Springfield told me said you've got a have you ever got your metals and I said I've never seen anything they've never issued me nothing. And he said here's an address if you want to write them. So I went and got a copy of my discharge and wrote them. And one day through the mail all of this stuff come in I got mine through the mail about somewhere around 30 years after I had been out of the service. And nothing was ever issued to me you know you see them pen them on them and this that and the other and I forgot know in our book there it tells you how many, that year the 36<sup>th</sup> division since entering combat we had 27,343 casualties that's dead and wounded we 56,374 prisoners. That's what we did in France. My outfit did all of the fighting in Italy to the went all the way, way above Rome here's Rome and then they pulled out. It tells here when they pulled out June 6, 1944 they pulled back and that's when joined them down in southern Italy and made the invasion southern France. They had there was 36 division camp A in France there was 3 bronze stars given that's not like mine and another guy and somebody else that was for each division I mean battalion there won three bronze stars my outfit won three

bronze stars but I mean we all got this that and the other and you made another invasion if you crossed a huge river they would sometime call that an invasion because you had to ford that river to get over it and so forth. I thought we did a fairly good job of it. This is my dog tags you see that little notch if you got killed they'd take it and drive that little notch right here and drive it between your teeth and close your mouth on it so they would recognize you when you if you were buried or if you were just laying there. So they could tell who you were. So they didn't get you mixed up with somebody else.

Interviewer: What was your most memorable moment during WWII, do you have just one?

Mr. Callis: I guess it would be the time we were on the mountain that's about the most memorable I can remember I can remember it I can sit down and get quiet by myself and I can relive every minute of it for the seven days.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Mr. Callis: I recon that's all I'm thankful to the Lord that I'm here today and sixty years ago this month that I ended service so I'm going on 81 years old and I thank the Lord I've made it this far.

Interviewer: And your feet?

Mr. Callis: My feet still give me trouble I was cut from 100% to 30% after 18 months after I got of the service but a little over two and a half years ago I was returned to 100% I draw 100% disability now. So I'm thankful to the Lord I can make it.