

Interviewer: Okay sir please tell us your full name, when and where you were born.

Mann: Clause Mann I was born in ___ Germany February 29, 1924.

Interviewer: And what branch did you serve in?

Mann: In the United States Army.

Interviewer: And what unit were you primarily with during that time?

Mann: Primarily with the 504 parachute infantry with the 82nd airborne division.

Interviewer: What were your parent's names and what were their occupations?

Mann: Gertrude and William Mann my father worked for standard oil company as a ship's captain he captained an oil tanker and my mother was a house wife and later became a dietician at a large hospital in New York.

Interviewer: Where did your family live during that time of the great depression?

Mann: We lived in East 64th Street on the east side of New York Manhattan. I lived in a predominantly Irish section of New York City.

Interviewer: What type of lifestyle was that with your father being a ship's captain of an oil tanker was he gone most of the time or?

Mann: Yes he was he shipped oil between the United States, Europe and also the Far East had to go through the Panama Canal. So he was gone quite a lot and my mother worked so I practically raised myself although my sisters they were already married.

Interviewer: When the great depression hit and when it was going on during the 20s and 30s did it hit your family as hard as it did others in your community?

Mann: Yes I think everyone was affected by it. My mother managed to work for John Monk Sr. New York City he owned the west side of Manhattan the dock area. And he was a multibillionaire so my mother did all their cooking for the whole family. So she not only was paid fairly good but she also was allowed to bring food home. But I would say it was meager times yeah. I remember people lining up down at the Salvation Army they would get a bowl of soup and an apple a day and it was a long line. Yeah I would say everybody was affected by it.

Interviewer: Did you or your family know anybody personally who was long term unemployed during that time?

Mann: Well I yes I believe most I would say most of the people were unemployed at the time. Although I remember President Roosevelt came out with a work program and put a lot of people to work. I know all the police department well all of the police department and fire department was run by Irish so most of the Irish were employed in New York City at that time during the depression. But I remember going through at the school going through Central Park you would see a lot of people camping out. Or living

under the stars you know without anything to protect them from the elements. I'm sure they were unemployed and I know that all the First World War Veterans used to line up along Columbus Circle and most of them had no legs and were double amputees and their only income was to sell one cent pencils to children on their way to school. So it was real bad times. We used to go into Central Park a bunch of us kids and we'd cut poles from young trees and then we'd put a piece of gum on the end of it and along the gratings along the sidewalks the money would roll what little money there was coins would roll into these grates. So we fished for the coins you know so we made pretty good money that way. You know a nickel was a lot of money especially for children so we used to do that. And you had to have your parents to go into the movie and of course your five cents to go into the movie. So once in a while I'd play hooky from school and I'd go along the movie line and I'd ask somebody to be my parent and I'd get somebody every time. You know I think as a child you didn't realize the hard times really you know. There was no lunch available during lunch time at school the only thing you had was a water fountain you had to bring your own lunch. And I remember a lot of children didn't bring anything just would drink water and that's it. So yeah I would say times were hard I was allowed one in those days if you were not in high school you had to wear knickers and long socks. You were allowed for one pair of shoes a year and just one nickers and one cap and a couple shirts and a jacket for the winter time. And that's all the clothing that we had and if your shoe got a hole in it we used to put a piece of cardboard in there because you couldn't afford to get them repaired. And then we used to get those roller skates that you could fit onto the shoe clamp them on. And I'd get on back of the trolley cars latch on back of the trolley car and I'd go uptown or downtown whichever the case may be on those roller skates boy the police tried to catch me all the time you know. We had a lot I had a lot of fun I know that. So we lived in an apartment complex underneath let's see the bottom floor was a speak easy you know what a speak easy is?

Interviewer: Yes yes I do

Mann: It's where they sell illegal alcohol illegal to drink and then we had two I think three stories above that and we lived on I think the second or third level. And shared one bathroom for all apartments the bathroom was on the end it had a commode no urinal a bathtub and a sink to wash up. And you had certain times that you could use the bathroom. I remember that and each apartment was only one room it was a kitchen, bedroom and living room combines. And separate the parents you'd have to hang a blanket separate your living quarter sleeping quarters of the parents from the children. And then the heating was done with a coal stove so the area was called cold water flats. There's no hot water just cold water running and so if you wanted hot water you had to heat it on this pot belly stove and they were all heated with coal. And they did have a radiator in the apartment and steam heat in the winter time only so I guess it was pretty dyer compared to now a days. That's mostly well I remember going down to near the Fulton Fish Market downtown and they also had the vendors for fruit and vegetable and we used to go down there and run along and grab an apple or a potato because if they caught you they'd whip the fire out of you. And we'd go down to the dock area and we'd have our can and wed get the water out of the East River and we'd boil our potato we'd all share it together we used to do that. So that's stealing but you know we did it.

Interviewer: So what did your family or you yourself think about Roosevelt during that time?

Mann: Well he was thought of highly he really was. I think he got the nation going you know. He had the work program WPA work program and put a lot of people to work. And then I remember they started the three Cs program where they got the young fellows off the streets and sent them out to the different states to work building bridges and building schools and all that kind of stuff. Take care of the

forests three Cs and I remember them rounding them guys up that were just hanging around the sidewalks you know doing nothing. They gave them a uniform it was just like being in the military I remember that program. That's about all I remember oh I adults could buy cokes those days Coca-Cola contained cocaine and so you had to go to a drug store to buy coke I remember that. I don't remember too much on crime so that's about it for the depression.

Interviewer: Did you ever happen to listen to Roosevelt's Fireside Chats on the radio did you ever have that opportunity?

Mann: Yeah I had the opportunity to listen to them I of course by then I was pretty a lot of a teenager well that's all you had was a radio. We listened to the radio every evening we moved out we left New York City and moved out to Long Island oh I guess when I was about 12 or 13 years old and we would listen to I remember a couple I remember the one right after Pearl Harbor. I remember listening to his speech about Pearl Harbor and recommended that we go to war I remember that. And I remember Orson Wells when he broadcasted from New Jersey about the aliens from Mars and we had people all shook up.

Interviewer: War of the worlds?

Mann: Yeah was of the worlds and that was convincing you know. I remember running into the kitchen to my mother and telling her man I think it's bad news. What do you mean? I said the aliens from Mars. That's a ridiculous stupid thing just don't listen to that shut it off. But I remember that man and I remember when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor I was listening to the radio I had just finished reading the Sunday paper. And I was listening to the radio and they broadcast a special report about Pearl Harbor being attacked by the Japanese. Pearl Harbor you know where the heck is that? So I had a globe and I looked for Pearl Harbor I didn't have an atlas or anything I looked on the west coast no didn't find it. I looked up in Alaska not that's Dutch Harbor that's not Pearl Harbor it's got to be south of there it's got to do something with pearls. I never figured looking at Hawaii you know the Hawaiian Islands. The next day I found out it was in Hawaii.

Interviewer: Back tracking just a bit before Pearl Harbor happened were you aware of Adolph Hitler and Mussolini and Tajo did you know of the threat that Japan and Germany and Italy were presenting to the free world?

Mann: Yeah we kept up with the news let's see I left Germany in 19 I think the winter of 1930. Hitler came into power in 33 my middle sister was see I was the only one that was a naturalized citizen because my father took his citizenship out in 1921. And my middle sister was 10 years older than I was my oldest sister was 13 years older than I was. So they both were German citizens but I remember let's see 1939 we started to realize that Hitler was on a conquest of Europe. I remember when he took over Austria and consolidated it to Germany and there was a portion of France that he took over that was populated by a lot of Germans. I forgot the region there and then I remember let's see I was 16 yeah I was 16 in 39 I got my juniors driver's license so I could drive my mother to work at the hospital. So I joined the civil defense they called for people that had driver's license and I took training took medical training first aid then we studied all airplane silhouettes submarine. Then I was given a certain area along the coast of Long Island I lived on the north shore and I got a certain sector of that had to black out my headlights. And I had I think it was two nights a week I had that area. So a whole bunch of us high school guys that were driving that had family cars joined the civil defiance. I remember wearing a World War I helmet you know it was colored blue with the big letters CD in front. So I did that and then

right after Pearl Harbor I talked my mother into joining the navy I was 17 at the time so I was a junior in high school. So I went over to the navy recruiting station and the recruiter said well what year of high school are you? I said I'm a junior he said go back and try to finish up before they get you. Man I was mad you know I wanted to get in the navy. So anyway the following year I had to sign up in the draft June of 42 I signed up with the first 18 year old draft and I got my call in December 42. So you want me to talk about that now?

Interviewer: Were you able to finish high school?

Mann: No

Interviewer: Oh you weren't.

Mann: No I was drafted in December I got my notice you know greetings you know friends and neighbors selecting you to represent them in the armed forces of the United States against the common foe you know I remember that. So anyway I had to report right after the holidays in January I forgot the day maybe January the 8th somewhere around in there. And everybody man that train that train was loaded down with guys I mean it was standing room only. They took us into Grand Central Station in New York City. Then all of Grand Central Station was just one big processing area I mean there was guys all over there place. And I had to go to the bathroom real bad you know I asked this mean looking sergeant I said I need to go to the bathroom real bad. He says the latrine is over that way I didn't know what latrine meant. I looked all over for it I never did find it and they gave you a quickie physical you know. They check your eyes and your ears and your throat and he listened to your lungs and your heart and that was it that was the physical. And then you had to line up and there was four or five lines and I just got into this one line and it was for the army. They had one line navy one marine's one army one coast guard. So I got in the army line and then they put us right on a train and shipped me back to Camp Upton which was out way out on Long Island and that was the processing center where they sent you to all different camps in the United States from there. And that's where you got all your uniform all of your shots and then you had to ship your civilian stuff home from there. And then that was off and I already had medical training and so they put me in a medic core. So I went up to they shipped me right direct to Battle Creek Michigan and the Kellogg cereal had huge buildings in Battle Creek Michigan and they converted them to a hospital. And that's where I took my medical training and I had see I had eight weeks of medical training. Basically we had to learn the general things that you learn when you join the army. General orders how to drill how to wear the uniform properly and things like that. And then how to properly stand guard duty and we had to go over the Geneva Convention as a medic. We were not allowed to carry any arms or a knife a scalpel was the only thing you were allowed to carry in your medical kit. And we had the wounded from Guagacanal at that hospital and that's where we got our medical training other than first aid. And from there I was shipped to Camp McCoy Wisconsin in the dead of winter about four or five feet of snow. Then I was assigned to a field hospital and they were in the process of going overseas. They were already loading all of their equipment up so I think I probably was there two weeks and was shipped out. Got on a troop transport and headed out I guess somewhere to Europe we didn't know the destination. It took quite a while I would say it took about three weeks to cover the Atlantic Ocean because they changed courses every few minutes to avoid being torpedoed.

Interviewer: The zig zagging maneuvers.

Mann: Zig zagging maneuver right. And we got you could see ___ when we got hit by submarines and also German aircraft the convoy got hit pretty hard. We had three ships on transport you had three

people to each bunk so for eight hours you had to bunk eight hours in the passageways and then eight hours on deck. So for guys I had the deck when we got hit witnessed the escort I don't know whether it was a destroyer it was about that size navy ship. And I don't know whether it was American or British I can't recall but I remember it took a torpedo towards the rear of it. It didn't sink right away but it listed real bad and then the planes the German planes would strafed up and down this convoy. And then we had a lot of wounded on deck so we finally landed in North Africa is where I landed in Algeria. And then I was in the North African campaign with the field hospital all the way to Tunisia and through Tunisia up into Bizerte Cape May that's when we defeated Germany. But the Germans had air power superiority the whole time we were in North Africa. And that was the biggest especially at night they would bomb every night and I'm sure they took pictures they knew where the hospital areas were. But the bombs got pretty close during the bombing raids at night. So and North Africa was something else experienced one dust storm and I don't want to go through another one. That was bad because we had no protection at all in those days you know. We only issued one canteen of water per day that's all the water we had. During the dust storm we went we had an army issued handkerchief OD color we'd wet down the handkerchief then put it over our face so it would protect our eyes and our nostrils and mouth from the sand but you couldn't see your hand in front of you that's how bad it was. And it really stung your skin you know.

Interviewer: How long did it last?

Mann: It would last two or three days yeah. And the best thing you could do was just squat sit down because if you were trying to find someone else you got lost and out there that's bad news. Because you had mind fields to contend with and without water you'd be really hurting. Let's see what else I know about it. North Africa was terrible during the summer time I'd say the temperature was well over 100 during the day and then once that sun set it would go down to about 40 degrees. And you'd you know it was just like freezing and in those days we had no sleeping bags not issued any blankets all you had was a raincoat. So you'd wrap up in that raincoat while you were laying on the ground forget about digging a foxhole in North Africa because you'd go down about six or eight inches and you'd hit limestone. So there was no use trying to dig during bomb raids all you could do was dig a shallow depression into the sand and then just hang on and just sweat it out. It was pretty tough at night you'd see all the tracers going up in the air trying to hit the German bombers and they had search lights on them you know. We'd watch that it was just like watching the 4th of July every night.

Interviewer: Did the Germans ever try to do any striking runs during the daytime?

Mann: Yeah especially well there was no roads but if they saw vehicles well they patrolled I guess certain areas if a vehicle was out running they'd try to get it. Troop formation solved the general war was to spread out as much as possible and then for vehicles well of course being with a field hospital we had all the stuff painted with the big red cross on it on a big white background. And they observed that pretty well we never got strafed at the hospital. But the rest of the units would camouflage as much as possible. The strafing was bad especially if you were on convoy moving. So we had that to contend with in North Africa minds were bad and so you didn't dare go off wondering too far off the beaten path. Could see pretty far I'd say visual range was about 20 miles unless you hit some hills sound at night carried very far. Couldn't light a match or anything unless you were undercover. So if you were a smoker you better not light a match at night out in the open or use a flashlight or anything like that. It's surprising how far you can see at night in the desert on a flat area.

Interviewer: Were you with any British or allied troops during that time?

Mann: No I volunteered they for the Sicily for the invasion of Sicily they asked they needed some medical personnel to volunteer so I volunteered. And that's how I got in with the 504 parachute infantry I took a couple hours training and then I went in with Headquarters Company the 3rd battalion probably in the next to the last serial flight into Sicily it was a night jump. And then I went in as a medic C47 carried 21 men we jumped in I landed well first of all there was the 1st airborne operation going across water and into an island of Sicily. And evidently no one let the navy know that we were jumping so our the unit I was with we had 27 planes shot down over Sicily. What was unfortunate was that the Germans jumped into a British zone which was north east part of Sicily. The Germans jumped in with their first parachute brigade the airplanes look and sound so much like the C47s. So you had that factor number two the navy was not informed of an airborne operation and so we lost a lot of planes. Our serial flew back and forth and couldn't find a drop zone finally we bailed out near a city called Batoria Sicily. I landed next to a cemetery I thought it was kind of ironic. But anyway we were I would say we were close to 40 maybe 60 miles from our drop zone. And it took us a little over a week to get back into our own line so we stayed on high ground because Sicily is very mountainous stayed on the high ground we only moved at night. And then we had one fellow that had broken his ankle he ricashade off one of the tombstones and so we had to take care of him because we don't leave anybody behind. So we had to take turns carrying him and finally we commandeered a cart and two wheel cart from an Italian and we transported him on that cart. So we finally got back in our lines and that's about it on the Sicilian campaign. I went in on landing craft into Italy I didn't get to jump I stayed with the 504 until Anzio we took a beating in Anzio real bad. About I would say between 80 and 90 percent casualties I got wounded in Anzio as a medic made a mistake of following a squad too close and I got hit in my knees with wooden bullets. The Germans used wooden bullets for close in fighting I got well my whole squad got hit with machine gun fire. And so I got evacuated and ended back in Naples then while recovering from that well I also had double pneumonia. I recovered from that and I contracted jaundice and hepatitis while I was at the hospital. And so I spent the next I would say eight months at the hospital I finally and that was about my unit had left for England although they were down they had received a lot of casualties at Anzio the 82nd and the 504 moved on well the 82nd moved before we did the 504 and one artillery unit was the only elements at Anzio from the 82nd most of the division had already left for England out of Naples. So when Anzio was finished and of course I was in the hospital the 504 finally joined the 82nd in England but they got there too late to make the Normandy jump so I didn't have enough me to be effective. So I stayed in Italy and I got managed to get the fellow to reassigned me back to the field hospital so I made a complete circle because when a newer unit leaves when you're in the hospital in Italy when you got out of the hospital they put you not back to your unit but they put you in a replacement depot. And they send you to any unit that needed men because most of the reinforcements were going to England to get ready for Normandy invasion and very few men were coming into Italy and we took a beating in Italy. We averaged 5,000 men every week either wounded or killed and so I got sent back to the 35th field hospital as a medic. And I stayed with them another six months and they were in on the Adriatic side of Italy in support of a British unit. And I stayed with them about six months and then I think it was early 45 they sent me into an infantry I took infantry training for two weeks at I forgot the name of the place now in Italy. Then they sent me to Northern Italy joined a I was attached to well I joined the 12th 51st combat signal unit and I learned how to code and decode. And so I was sent up into the mountains as special force or special group and we were attached to the 2nd SAS which was British unit Special Forces type. And I did the coding and decoding form there in intelligence that's where I worked until the war was over. I was up in Northern Italy finally got up to the Tress up in the north eastern part of Italy right by Yugoslavia where we met the Russians there. And then the war ended there and that's my World War II experience. So I had both medical and infantry training. Came back in August of 45 on points and was put on convalescent leave and finally discharged in November of 45 was put on 90 day convalescent leave. Hepatitis and jaundice really hit me hard I

think I weighed about 110 pounds when I came home. Still couldn't eat too much maybe some soup but anyway that's my story and went back to get my diploma and they told me I had to attend high school for six I think it was six months in order for me to get my high school diploma. And I was bound and determined to get a diploma so I that's where I met my wife she was a senior and but I went back I stayed out seven months. I went back I re-enlisted in the United States Army and went back to my old airborne unit the 504. And at Fort Bragg North Carolina I served I served in the 504 from 46 till 51. I ended up as battalion sergeant major the 3rd battalion and I was received a direct commission as a second lieutenant. I was that with that unit and then I served with the 4th infantry division in Germany and the 7th division in Korea and then got reassigned well I'd spent some time as an infantry instructor at Fort Benning taught platoon company in attack and defense. Then was reassigned to the 101st airborne division here at Fort Campbell. I was a captain and I was assigned to the 501st in those days it was the battle group 501st and I took command of mortar battle I switched from infantry to artillery because when I was at Fort Benning I was a reserve I had a reserve commission and at Fort Benning they called us in and they told us we had to there were too many officers in the infantry. We had a choice either switch to artillery or armor or leave the service so I chose artillery so that's why I ended up commanding mortar battery of the 501st. And I did that for 3 years a little over 3 years and then I was re-assigned to G3 of the 101st and I worked in the G3 section until I retired in 1963. I retired in the grade of captain my 20 years was up. I did spend 7 years with the Tennessee Defense Force here in Clarksville and also in Nashville. Other than that that's the end of my military service. Any other questions?

Interviewer: Well yes going back to North Africa and Sicily and Italy did you develop any strong feelings or opinions for the movers and shakers the people tend to identify with that theatre of the war Montgomery and General Patton?

Mann: Well I thought there was a lot of friction between well maybe not friction we didn't get along with the British too well. I thought as an enlisted man in World War II I thought the British looked down on us. And I remember when we were attached to that 2nd SAS they referred to us as the colonials. And when we did when we did have a meal with them we were always last in line. Other than that we were treated fairly. I thought the to me I thought the British were a little more brutish brutal than we are when it comes to being humane about prisoners and the civilian population. I thought as an American maybe I'm biased I thought the Americans treated the German prisoners and the civilians the Italians a lot better than the British did. But that's my own opinion.

Interviewer: What did they tend to do differently you think?

Mann: I think in language and actions they would kick people and they would be mean to kinds and I think they average American didn't like that. Now I can't recall anytime the 30 months I was overseas I never did one time see an American mistreat a child especially or a civilian you know. And so that was my impression now I liked the in North Africa a chance to get close to some Scottish a Scottish unit it might have been Black Watch. I thought they were a little more congenial towards Americans I thought the Scotts were.

Interviewer: What did you feel that the were you surprised at how the Italians for the most part kind of surrendered didn't put up too much of a fight?

Mann: They just didn't have the enthusiasm for fighting especially against Americans. There's I guess there was a close association with Italy and the United States. I guess maybe because of the immigration there was a big difference between a German and an Italian. Of course the Germans I considered well

I'm German too but I considered them pretty arrogant for the most part. I'll say one thing there was a big big difference between the German and the North Africa the Africa core as compared to the German that we faced say in Northern Italy. In North Africa the African core was made up of German soldiers that had long military experience they seemed to be more respectful not mean. Didn't run into any SS in the Africa core I noticed in Italy especially up in Northern Italy towards the last towards 45 towards the end of the war I thought the I know the SS was mean a mean bunch of devils and they would as soon as kill you as look at you and that the young German soldier was more apt to shoot you if you tried to surrender was more apt to shoot you. More careless in their military ways as compared to the old German soldier of North Africa I thought there was a big difference.

Interviewer: Do you mind if I turn some lights on it's a little but dark in here.

Mann: Yeah it's getting.

Interviewer: I was hoping that sun would come back out.

Mann: I forgot to put a bulb in that one.

Interviewer: Oh that's okay that should be oh yeah that's a lot better. Let's see were you ever able to keep track of what was happening on the other side of the world in the Pacific Theatre when you were over in Africa and Italy did you hear any news about

Mann: No absolutely none of course all of our mail is censored. And let's see what else oh we listened to Axis Sally that's the only time we would hear Glenn Miller or Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman music the big bands she would constantly play that. And of course her acts of your loved one misses you you know and wish you were back home and don't you feel homesick and all of this. She was good. Yeah we used to laugh.

Interviewer: When did you hear about the victory in Europe when Hitler finally killed himself and the German army?

Mann: We didn't hear that we heard that the well of course the German army surrendered in Northern Italy I forgot what group it was. And I think the fighting went on in Germany itself for maybe another week we finally got the word that they had surrendered. Didn't know anything about Hitler until after I got back to the states on our way back to the states they announced that well we knew that they had dropped the bomb on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. And then we got the word I guess we were about a day out away from New York when we got the word that Japan had surrendered. And man we celebrated you know of course we had no alcohol but we were young and screaming you know. Guys were throwing their weapons overboard they finally announced no more weapons overboard you know. I saw duffle bags I mean whatever they could get ahold of being thrown overboard. Typical American you know.

Interviewer: How often were you able to stay in contact with your folks back home?

Mann: we wrote v-mail and that's about it. I was lucky to get maybe a letter a month that was about it. So I didn't hear too much I don't know about the rest of the world the guys in Europe England might have gotten mail a lot better than we did. I didn't get a shower unit until let's see I got there in 43 sometime the later part of 44. I got to use a shower other than in the hospital didn't have a shower in

the hospital took a bath in the bathtub because it was a converted hotel the hospital was in Naples. But late 44 we got a shower unit came up I never heard of a shower unit. So you drop all of your cloths you put all of your boots in one pile your gear in another pile your hum and stuff you kept all your underwear in one pile the other your pants and shirts all in different piles. And they give you a little bar of soap and you walk in you've got one minute so they turn the water on and then they turn it off and you soap all the way down make sure you got your whole body wet. Soap down okay I'm gonna turn the water one for one minute get your soap off. They shut it off you know whether you had it off or not and out you go give you towel you'd dry off. Then they'd issue you your new uniform underwear you got three sets of underwear three sets of socks a new uniform and then you picked up your weapon and you helmet and off you go. And within ten minutes the whole unit got showered and at least we had plenty of wine to drink in Italy. Yeah we used ___ of wine whether they liked it or not. Sometimes if we found a big wine barrel they had these huge barrels of wine and if they didn't have a spicket on there you couldn't get the wine out we'd shoot a couple of holes in there you know. Take our steel helmet fill it up with the wine. Let's see what else gas masks I need to tell you this. When I landed in North Africa the first thing I did was throw away my gas mask I kept the container. It was a good container to keep candy in there or anything else a little extra food if you had it or cigarettes or whatever. And so I never did have a gas mask after that happened. So somewhere there in North Africa there must be a bunch of gas masks in the sand. I remember one time we were not allowed to have any open fires so anyway we got in back of this hill well it was there's mountains in North Africa and it was a little hilly most of the time. But we got in back of this one hill and we shot this old goat belonged to some Arab. We called them Arabs in those days. So anyway we got this goat and said let's barbeque him on an open fire you know. We cleaned him out and took the skin off him we ran I forgot what it was I don't know if it was a wooden pole or a metal pole or whatever. Anyway we ran it all the way through him and we got him up there on an open fire and we worked on that goat all night and the next day. We had this German Sheppard dog that belonged to the German army and we inherited him he was left behind or he wondered over. Anyway he decided to join our unit and he was our pet you know real nice dog. And so we figured that goat should be finished by now so we chopped off a hunk of meat off that goat and we gave it to the dog you know. And that dog chewed on it and chewed on it and he could never that meat was like a piece of rubber. So we got mad we shoved that goat burned it up in the fire didn't have not one piece of meat off of that goat. We cursed that old goat out you know that's some of the funny things. You know you have to have a lot of humor you've gotta have it you've got to be able to laugh you know get off the frustration stress I guess combat stress. But we had this fellow can I use a curse word?

Interviewer: Yes that would be fine.

Mann: We had this fellow his famous saying was he would repeat this constantly was oh piss on it you know. So after a couple of months of this one day he was sitting there and he had his M1 rifle propped up there on the side of a hill. And he kind of dozed off you know and we grabbed his weapon and we all pissed on it. He woke up you know and one of the guys held him down you know he never said it again. That's a little humor. Another thing is you get the after you're in combat for say six months or so maybe a year you get hardened to combat. Not only do you get a little careless at times but we'd go through these small villages in Italy and they were heavily bombed you know I mean they were just torn up. And if you found one window still intact you'd shoot it out. There was no such thing as something being real nice and not damaged that's the point you got to which is rough. But I remember a guy says oh that glass that pane of glass it's got to go so they would shoot a hole through it or knock it out you know.

Interviewer: Looking back on it did you feel that your training the training that you received before the war was it adequate for what you faced during the war?

Mann: Yeah well we still hated discipline you know and griped and mounded and complained which is the American way anyway you know. But when you get down to the nitty gritty strict discipline pays off because when the shooting starts and the artillery shells and the mortars and everything else going on and it gets real noisy and frustrating. And you know you've got to be able to react without thinking about it and so I maintain that you've got to have discipline. And it might be rough and harsh in the beginning especially during the basic training but it pays off and if you don't have that you're not gonna make it. Either that you're not gonna make it or you're not gonna help your buddy. You've got to be able to react and react correctly or its you're finished. And so you know I don't know how the training is now a days. I feel for the guys going to Iraq I really do because I think it's the worst nastiest kind of combat you can get involved with. Your enemy it doesn't wear a uniform in World War II you knew exactly where your enemy was he was in the front of you and he wore a uniform and you could recognize him. And there was no guessing in World War II no guessing in Korea. Korea was a little different and of course I don't know about Vietnam I was already retired.

Interviewer: Did you ever have the opportunity to meet or work with any Russian troops?

Mann: Yeah we met the Russians in Trieste they when we first met they didn't trust us and we didn't trust them. I guess we didn't understand each other really besides the language barrier. I wasn't until after maybe a couple of weeks then we got to know them and started exchanging cigarettes well we exchanged cigarettes for vodka. And they didn't have access to cigarettes at all and we didn't have nay access to vodka. Anyway we finally got together and partied and I thought they were down to earth went through a lot the Russian. Had quite a few women in that unit and they were all snipers the women were snipers in the Russian army and they were real good tough, hard. But we didn't have any problems with them trouble no fighting or anything like that. I'll tell you talking about Korea I was associated with the well the Turkish brigade was right next to us. And we got together with the Turkish officers at the time and most of them had gone through Oxford in England they spoke the King 's English it was our surprise. But they we really got along with the Turkish for some reason or other and we did a lot of association with them. So for all of the foreigners that we met that I met for my military experience I would say the Turkish were probably the best lot. Alright

Interviewer: I did want to ask you when do you remember hearing about the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Mann: we heard that let's see I was up in Fort Leghorn up in the north western part of Italy ready to ship out back to the states. And I think we heard yeah we heard the news that the bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. We never heard about the atomic bomb until then and we didn't realize really realize what was going on until we got back to the states read about it and saw pictures you know. Imagine a whole city going up in smoke in one shot we were used to seeing in Europe destroyed you know from bombing but nothing like that.

Interviewer: You felt Truman made the right decision by doing that?

Mann: Oh I think so I think we probably would have lost a million men invading Japan at the time because they would not give up they were not the surrendering type. Yeah we would have lost a lot of men in the invasion of Japan. I think he made a wise decision.

Interviewer: The last question that I have is looking back on your time in World War II and when you were actually going through it did you ever really grasp the abnormity and the size of that situation that

it was truly that it was the largest conflict of that kind that mankind had been through and that it was a global conflict. How did that feel for you to be a part of that did you really grasp that at the time or did it several years after for you to.

Mann I think it took several years we I guess they call us the forgotten front you know in World War II in the Italian Campaign. I thought we were sort of isolated from the rest of the conflict. Took us almost two years to go up Italy and a lot of things happened during those two year 21 months it took to go up Italy. A lot of things happened throughout the world and we didn't well every once in a while we'd get the newspaper. Was it Army Times I believe yeah Army Times but not too many I think they would have maybe one maybe five copies per unit and we'd pass it around you know read it from front page to back page because we had no very seldom got anything to read you know until that thing was worn out. Because I don't think the people the folks back home were allowed to send us any material. We'd never get it they'd sensor it throw it away probably because I know they censored the mail coming in. They'd open it up look it over you know that's the way it was in those days. So we didn't hear anything until we actually got back to the states. Okay

Interviewer: Well if you don't have anything else to add and you may do so if you do. But I have no more questions.

Mann: Well I just want to say that I've gone to several reunions back at Fort Bragg. I don't think I'll make any more I went to my youngest son took me to Fort Bragg here oh about four or five years ago and we went to a reunion. And they asked all the World War II veterans to please stand and only 11 of us stood up. And I didn't recognize anybody and I felt real lonely and I got sort of got the blues. So I told my son I'm not gonna make any more reunions. Now I belong to the 101st Associate I'm a life member. I'm a life member of the 82nd also and I usually make the reunions of the 101st. I wasn't with them in World War II and I wasn't with them in Vietnam because I had already retired but I actually feel closer to the 101st than I do to the 82nd because all the fellows that I knew have passed away. And the fellows I knew from the 101st are still around for the most part some of them have passed away. So I don't do any 82nd reunions anymore. That's all I've got to say.

Interviewer: Alright well I thank you very much on behalf of Austin Peay and the Kiwanis Club I thank you very much for participating in this.

Mann: Alright