

Interviewer: Could you say again what unit you served in?

Gower: Beg your pardon.

Interviewer: What unit you served in?

Gower: Served in the 1st infantry divisions 26th infantry regiment 1st battalion headquarters. And I started off with the 30 caliber machine guns 50 caliber machine guns then when we went into combat and the invasion of Oran and Algeria we was in a tank and anti-weapons if you want me to go into kind of scale what kind of war that was I'll be glad to at any time.

Interviewer: Okay going back a little bit when did you realize you would be drafted?

Gower: I wasn't drafted I was regular army.

Interviewer: You enlisted sorry about that. When you enlisted where did you go for basic training?

Gower: I never had basic training. At that time you didn't go into basic training. I went in in 1940 in March 1940. They shoot you right into after you got into where they swear you in the recruiter station where they swear you in then they ship they ask you what do you want to go into. In fact I told them one thing and they put me in the infantry but it was alright. And they shipped me to the 1st infantry division was out of first army and out of New York north east. And they was on maneuvers in Fort Benning Georgia. So shipped me right to Fort Benning and when I got to Fort Benning they said what company do you want to go in? They gave me choices in the company and I said I want to go in heavy weaponry P Company 1st battalion. And so what they done then they give you about kept you with some of the noncommissioned officers and I guess they had two or three days training on how to march and how to you know procedures. But as far as any basic training the company you was in give you what little training you got and most of that was from just falling in with the rest of them regular experience.

Interviewer: Did you think you got good training in maneuvers? Were you well prepared well trained?

Gower: Yea we got good training. You probably don't realize it but in that time in 1940 when I went in the service let me back up a little. When I went in the service we had about out company about 25 people. Which normal company at that time was 245, 250 people there was about 25 people in a company and that was all. And then that was back before the jeeps and we didn't have any transportation mass transportation didn't get the bus. And that was back when they still had a horse calvary of course I wasn't in that but we took maneuvers with the horse calvary and stuff like that. And very few supplies the main thing we was doing at Fort Benning was building more walls at Fort Benning clearing gravel and stuff there for expansion. We stayed there I stayed down there for about a month then we went back to our home base, I never had been there because I got shipped there first, which was Plattsburg barracks in Plattsburg New York. That's upstate New York about 20 miles from the Canadian border about 60 miles from Montreal. And really that's where we stayed there about a year. And then as WWII got close together they brought the whole division together at Air Pennsylvania not Pennsylvania Massachusetts. And there was time slips by you and you forget right sometime on the spur of the minute all of the details. But we stayed there and that's where we got some pretty extensive training. And then we went over to South Louisiana shipped all the way down there for Louisiana maneuvers. And stayed down there for a while and went to Florida on maneuvers and we was back in Georgia on maneuvers when WWII broke out. And so then we as soon as it broke out the day it broke

out I happened to be in the hospital at the time I got stung by a scorpion and they put me in the hospital. And when I got back to my unit, they threw us all out of the hospital that could go out, they had my stuff packed on the jeep ready to go to New York and I just got there in time to go back up there. We Indian Town Gap in Pennsylvania is where we stayed for a while and that's where we organized to get ready to ship out to go to over in Scotland over there. Then England trained there in England for a while then we headed out to wherever that was after Algeria.

Interviewer: So you guys departed from New York?

Gower: Beg your pardon.

Interviewer: Departed to Europe from New York?

Gower: Yea we departed from New York.

Interviewer: What year was that 41, 42

Gower: No that was in I guess it was in 41.

Interviewer: Forty one

Gower: Yea

Interviewer: Do you know how long it took to get across the ocean.

Gower: Five days I think it was. We was on the Queen Mary when we went across. We didn't have an escort but the Queen Mary was pretty fast and I guess didn't need it. Probably had submarine escorts but we didn't have any.

Interviewer: Was your whole division on there or?

Gower: Yea

Interviewer: How were the living conditions on the boat going over?

Gower: Unless you got special duty it wasn't very good. You stayed below 12 hours then above 12 hours. When you was below you would sleep and when you was above you done whatever. But if you had some kind of special duty like kitchen duty or cleaning up duty you didn't have to do that so. Conditions was pretty good then we went into Glasgow Scotland.

Interviewer: So you arrived at Glasgow?

Gower: Yea we went right on the edge of it. They had another name for the port but I really can't recall it right off. But it was really Glasgow.

Interviewer: And then how long did you stay in Scotland?

Gower: We shipped right on down to England about 40 miles out of London.

Interviewer: When the next day?

Gower: Yea and at that time it was a Stone Village kind of like apartments and they evacuated all the civilians out of it. We lived in their houses there and then they took some of us I don't know how they selected them but I was one of them. And they shipped us back to Scotland to take commander training and that was tough training they had there. And we stayed up there at a little town called Inverarie which is nothing but a lake a beer joint and a couple dozen houses. It was out in the wilderness really. And we stayed up there for probably two months I'm not sure the exact time. Then they shipped us back to our units after we got the special training. And then we was back there sometime the later part of August we shipped out to make the invasion in the Mediterranean area and my group that invaded we got the City of Oran or Oran and it was

Interviewer: Which city I'm sorry?

Gower: Huh

Interviewer: Which city you invaded?

Gower: The port of Oran city of Oran at Northern Africa near Algeria. It's a large city but we hit the outside of the city and there was some fighting going on there but it wasn't no heavy fighting. Right in there I wasn't in the port the port had a little more heavier fighting. We was outside of the city but it was some fighting there but not much. We got our ship we was all got hit by artillery but it got hit right after we got off so I don't think it did much damage. And then we stayed around there after the French gave it up we stayed around there a couple weeks. And then we headed east all the way across Algeria which was a large pretty large country all desert most of it once you got 10 or 12 miles away from the Gulf of Mexico I mean the Mediterranean it was desert. Beautiful country along the coast but then we made contact we was in a British command then and it was a good thing we were I think. We fought under British command all through that and Montgomery to me I think was one of the best generals in the whole war. In fact I had a colonel from here ask me who I thought the best general was in WWII and I told him Montgomery. And he didn't really agree with that because he was a ___ colonel. He was him and Alexander if we hadn't been under them I'm not trying to take no discredit away from the American generals. But if you stop to think the British had been fighting for a long time they knew what they was doing. We go in there with a green bunch of senior officers and they didn't know. That's the reason the British was Montgomery was such a good general they had been fighting for what three or four years. And we go in there with brand new officers and they wanted to take over and they didn't have the expert teachers.

Interviewer: So who was your commanding general?

Gower: Huh

Interviewer: Who was your commanding general?

Gower: Well I had two or three Allen was but the one I liked the best regimental Teddy Roosevelt Jr. And I'm sure the army was altogether different than it is now. And you get to know you get to know like Teddy Roosevelt Jr. he come in he ate in our company all the time. He would sit down there and eat with us and talk just like you and I are talking. And he was a good general and then Allen we had Allen he was a good general. And the last one I had was Patton and I didn't like him at all very few did. And he

was an ego maniac is really what he was I guess in some cases you need one of them but he stayed in more trouble than the enlisted men did. And nobody liked him that fought with him. And I remember talking to I was with a group a small group Montgomery and Patton and Roosevelt Teddy Roosevelt Jr. We was all looking at a place where we was fixing to attack and Montgomery told them you can't do it there ain't no way said you're gonna lose more people because out front it was dead land everywhere. There was a wheat field there and the dead was laying all over that wheat field. Montgomery had tried it and he was with a tank outfit he we went in there and they tore them all to pieces. And Patton said well I can do it Montgomery wouldn't let him do it because he was supreme commander. But anyway it was every war is different you fight in and that's the only one I know anything about. When we went in there from Algeria I mean Oran beyond Algeria I've got some maps here somewhere but I couldn't put my hand on one of them now if I had to. We fought more like a patrol I had a section is what I had it was two squads and we had 50 caliber machine guns and 30 caliber machine guns mounted on the jeeps we had. And we'd patrol maybe 50 miles day, night whatever and along that 50 miles we might find a patch of German soldiers a patch of Italian soldiers. And that country over there out that time through the edge of the desert wasn't nothing but dirt rock roads. And so we'd go through there they wouldn't be expecting us and we'd just open fire on the machine guns and drive right through them. They couldn't do nothing because we hit them so quick we was out of sight. We done that for a good while several weeks and then we get on up in beyond in the edge of ___ up in that we had a lot of fighting pretty strong fighting up there. But there was nothing but desert and rocks and they call their mountains the mountains wasn't but about 6 or 700 feet tall. They was just rocky hills is what we would call them around here but there was pretty good fighting going on up there for a while. But you don't read much about it in the American History here it was all in being under the English command all that history went to England. Because like I said there was always a conflict between the Americans and the American Generals and the British Generals. Americans had to take over and now they British think that's the best thing they could have done. But every war is different and that one is well outdated I'm sure.

Interviewer: What kind of equipment and arms did you guys use?

Gower: I was armed with a 45 automatic and a Thompson machine gun. Now we were what they called then my special unit was what they called shock troops. We fought along usually beside the rank of the rangers and that kind of work. And what we done basically the Germans and Italians were holding these woods over here. We would hit them real hard at first and a lot of times they would tell us no guns we couldn't no shots fired. We'd go in there with knives and fists or knives or whatever it took. We'd take the ground and weave back out because we were strictly shark troop we'd take the ground and weave back out and here come the first unit in there to hold it. I always liked that I'd rather go in there and take it and hold it for a counter attack. That was basically what we done unless we hit a row of hills or something like that. But it another thing I don't really understand this you probably do. I was overseas for five years that's how long I was over there and for two years my people didn't know where I was. Not at all they might have had a general idea where I was. But I've got letters here now where I'd write home and they were cut all to pieces you couldn't even read them. But anyway you didn't the only way you come out of WWII out of the units I was in, I was in combat unit all the time until I got in such bad shape I couldn't be. You got shot up so bad you couldn't do nothing or got killed that was all. There wasn't no such thing as rotating back and some people had been over there longer than I had but I was over there more than most of them was. Now when I got out of combat the last combat I had was the invasion of Sicily and that's when our ship got bombed and I was in pretty bad shape after that. They shipped me back to Oran in North Africa that was our home base and if anything happened I wanted to be back in Oran. And I went well the first I was let me back up before then I got shot in Kasserine Pass. We were in Kasserine Pass when the Germans were taking it. Now they got criticized let me back up

from that they got a lot for letting Brittan and German break through the Kasserine Pass well now I don't know I've got my own reason for knowing why it happened why we didn't hold. Because the day before we was falling back we was falling back from the front because they had done hit us pretty hard and we was gonna fall back regroup from now to Kasserine Pass. Now Kasserine Pass you've probably heard of it I don't know it was a pass going through the mountains or through the hills less I'd say a little over half a mile wide. And you had hill son both sides of it. And it had a dry river bed a road and a railroad line running to it. And it was narrow enough where in the morning when we was right on the front we had a good position with our jeeps and we had 37 millimeter antitank gun and 50 caliber machine gun and 30s. And we dug in right on the ridge far enough out where wasn't nothing right out in front of us but just land. And I looked I had a friend of mine was a real close friend of mine was up about 100 yards from the place I was and I told the guy I was going up there to see him for a while. And I went up there to see him and all at once we looked down about oh a half a mile or more down that valley which was still small. And a hay stack was on fire and we knew then that something was coming but until that time we didn't know any Germans were anywhere around us. They hit us with everything they could just strafed us. I told him I said I've got to get back to my gunning place. So I got back before I got down there here come airplanes over staffing us. And all at once here they come with tanks flame throwers on them tanks and everything else. And they run over us and we stayed in gunnery places there well we stayed in a fox hole really is what it was behind the gunnery place so they couldn't see us but they could see the gun they melted them guns down. And they run over us and they had their radio blocked counter signs they had everything blocked radios blocked. They blocked them with our own counter signs and they come at us by the hundreds. And what they'd do they had their what we call potato mashers they were hand grenades is what they was. They had a stick on them about that long and them son of a bucks would come at us like this and when they got shot they went down like this and they'd just run over us. And I got shot getting out of there but it took me five days to get back to my outfit. Well it took me longer than that to get back to my outfit to get back to friendly territory took me five days. They sent me back to Oran then in a hospital and one officer that was from Clarksville there I knew that was in that outfit there he come through there one morning in that hospital and he asked me said are you in any shape to go back said I we need you to go back. I said I've got a truckload of gasoline and you can drive it back for me we had to drive about 600 miles. So we did and I went back I went back to the outfit. I drove up there I wasn't the only one there was some other trucks too I drove up there and took that load of gasoline right directly to my company I found out where it was. And I got back in combat again and then got hit again so every time I'd get back bounce back I wasn't hit bad enough where I couldn't go back in it but I was hit pretty good. And what really put me out when that ship hit in Sicily and I never did go back. Then instead of coming home they reassigned me to a military police outfit which was doing guard work in the port of Oran. Well they called it a ZI Company Zone Interior Company they was all ex-combat people that something happened to shot up or hurt. And so we wasn't supposed to go back into combat but I can't give you the date on it probably six or eight months or something I stayed there six months anyway. They decided they needed this company to go to Northern Italy go back in the combat zone. Every one of us had disabilities or was combat wounded. So they shipped us back to Northern Italy we done MP duty up there. What we was doing we was doing guard duty and road duties and stuff like that. We wasn't right on the front line probably five miles off the front which was pretty safe there. Then at that time they covered they had a rotation plan where they would rotate you back home. And the rotation plan give you you got so many points for being wounded and you got so many points for each time you was wounded. And you got so many points for each month you was over there and any kind of decoration you got you got points for it. Well the first shipment back to the states the war was still fighting in Europe the first shipment back to the United States they had 54 people coming back. So out of out of all out of that 54 I was about middle ways down because I have been over there for a long time and I had a lot of points. So I made the first shipment out of Europe

when they started rotating them back and it was they had news people all the way back and I rode into Camp Attaberry up in Indiana I believe in five days after I left out of Northern Italy I was discharged out of the army. They asked me to, it was a publicity thing, they said because they knew I was disabled and they said well if you go on and take your discharge I was regular army and probably if I wasn't in such bad shape I would have stayed in. So they said we'll notify veterans administration and you report to them and I've been on disability ever since. I draw 30 percent disability which is not a whole lot but I never did try to get it raised or anything. In fact I went over there about a month ago I got a we used to have a priority card where we could go walk right in. Well I've got a new card but it's not a priority I guess the only thing it's got on it it says combat wounded. So I said well I want to get an appointment to see a doctor. I got a hearing problem where I got my ears busted in combat I thought they might give me a hearing aid to help it some. That was last month I've got an appointment to go to the doctor over there September the 12th. I've got to wait that long but it doesn't matter.

Interviewer: Were you promoted during your time in service sir?

Gower: Huh

Interviewer: Were you promoted during your time in service?

Gower: Yea I was promoted from private to sergeant. At that time when you were in combat it was very few promotions. You might act as a company commander but they made field commissions occasionally but not very often not in my outfit. Some outfits they did my outfit went overseas all of those guys were regular army. Anyway I went overseas as a sergeant and stayed over there as a sergeant.

Interviewer: Did you capture any POWs did your outfit ever capture any POWs?

Gower: Yea we captured them.

Interviewer: What was your impression of the Germans and the Italians? Were you impressed with their qualities?

Gower: Well yea in most cases the Germans were this way the Italians were the same way. The Italians do any really hard quite the Italians were this way if they had the upper hand on you they'd fight you all day long. But once you got to getting the advantage of them they wanted to come in and be comrade this comrade and all that. They always had a relative in New York or Chicago or something like that they didn't want to fight. But the Germans were a little bit different. But we found out this we always fought a pretty clean fight if you call it clean fight I mean we didn't mistreat any prisoners now that's not saying if they got a chance to get away we did I got away one time I got caught and got away. But they were you had to respect them we had dirty tricks we'd pull on them I guess everybody does but we didn't mistreat them. In fact I remember one time I we got a captured a guy and we kept a lot probably were the United States. It wasn't for us to say whether they were citizens but they were in the German army. One guy I remember very well I was interrogating him because I was a senior noncommissioned officer then and we captured a few of them. And he was a pretty smart guy you could tell he was better than average I'd say. And he could speak good English as good as you or I could and we was trying to get him to do something for us call some of his friends there. Well we tried to get him to do that but we had a dirty trick we'd pull on him and he had a watch and the watch was kind of, I've got another story I'm gonna tell you about a watch a little bit later. And he had a watch a pretty nice watch and I told one of the guys said take that watch we need that watch. Oh he begged for us not to take the watch his mother

had given it to him and all of that. I said alright we're not gonna take your watch then we didn't take the watch but I said somebody down the lines gonna get that watch if you keep wearing it, it was a nice watch I remember that. But we didn't take it but what we done, you might not like it, but we tried everything we could. So we got through trying to get all the information we could out of him and we sent him around the side of the ___ there I told one of the guards to take him on the other side of the hill. He gets on back on the other side of the hill he fires his gun. So the other guys out front they thought well they've done killed him. So they wanted to talk a little bit more then you could get a little more out of them but we never did do nothing like that. We'd scare them if we could but. We had a, don't let this happen to you, we was in combat and we was fighting in the daytime and we had these maracas that was off of the French a French maraca. And we called them goons most of them was above six foot tall and they were they carried their food with them. Of course you couldn't do this now I know but back then they carried their goats and their chickens and everything else and they'd keep them in the company compound. And you might not be two or three hundred yards from the enemy but they didn't care. They'd rather do daylight raids than anything and they'd go out they'd get a hand grenade or something stuck in them they'd sit down on a box of rations and they didn't have no medical people. They'd let one of them other members pick that damn stuff out of them without any anesthetics or nothing they was tough. But we had a young lieutenant come over there as a replacement and I had a watch and he didn't have one. So he asked me said can you get me a watch said I need one and he did need it and I said yea I'll get you one. So I called this goon I said next time you go out on a raid bring him back a watch. And of course he did you'll never know how he done it. He went out that day on a day light raid he brought back a watch and give to this guy wrapped up in a piece of old burlap. And in that burlap was a guy's arm where he cut it off and the watch was still on it. He showed it to that young guy who hadn't been over there two or three days and he passed out. I'll never forget that and this boy I talked to him last night which was my driver through all of that and we talked about that last night. I'm going up to see him we talk about once a week. There's two of them one of them lives in Maryland and one of them lives in Westchester Pennsylvania he just moved there from Oklahoma City. I'm going up there in just a few weeks we get together a couple times a year. So he moved up from Oklahoma City to Westchester got a place up there. I haven't been up there because he just got up there last month.

Interviewer: How was the medical treatment you received for your combat injuries?

Gower: What?

Interviewer: The medical treatment you received how was it?

Gower: Now or then?

Interviewer: No then when you got injured and they pulled you back?

Gower: Oh it was alright I was in I never did get until I got on that ship that's the worst sick I ever got. I've got some others which was well I don't know I've been in a French hospital. I've got some minor injuries I call them minor but I guess now a days you'd call them critical. The worst one I ever got well I got shot through the leg right here which it didn't break a bone so it wasn't bad but you know you couldn't hardly hop around on it for a few days. Then I got hit in the head I got a piece of metal stuck in my head right there and another piece right here. But I don't guess it done any brain damage I don't really think it got that hard but I tried to pull it out and I couldn't get it out it was about as long as your finger. I had to go they put me in the hospital for that I got both ear drums busted at the same time. That's the most painful thing that ever happened but I got good treatment over there in the hospital.

Interviewer: Did you get any medals for your injuries?

Gower: Yea I got a Purple Heart.

Interviewer: You got a Purple Heart?

Gower: Yea

Interviewer: And what was the purple for which injury do you remember? Was it for Kasserine Pass?

Gower: No I don't believe it was. You get one medal and then you get a cluster. I don't remember whether I got it at Kasserine Pass or not it's been a while ago. I got caught at Kasserine Pass then got away. That's when I got shot in the leg and five of us together and to make a long story short they put one guard on us to take us back and we jumped the guard and got him. It took me five days to get back and when I got back I was in bad physical shape mental and physical probably because any noise they were shooting the machine gun so much you could hear them shooting at you so any somebody could start talking to you and you'd think it was a burst of machine guns. You are in pretty bad shape physically when you get that way because you and another little ole place up there we'd get in them cactus fields and you'd get cactus fever. And of course being in a heavy weapons company there were machine guns drilling all day long. I don't know whether you've had any training or not but when a bullet passes over you if you're in a foxhole or your down low it passes over you about that high. It sounds like a fire cracker going off it doesn't sound like what's what it sounds like a popping noise I guess it's breaking the sound barrier is what it's doing. And you take that day after day or week after week or something like that will rattle your brains anyway. That's the reason they usually let you fall back after about two weeks a week or something some times depending on how bad it was.

Interviewer: Did you have any friends that were wounded or killed?

Gower: Oh yea

Interviewer: Did you

Gower: You know that kind of I think about that now here we are fighting a war they said they make a big deal out of well anybody getting killed I understand that's bad business for the family. We'd get 200 killed a day we'd get 5 or 600 hundred killed. We got wiped out there many times the later part of it. But it wasn't nothing to know a whole heck of a lot getting killed. But I don't know how many of our unit got wiped out had to be replaced so much but there was always about a half a dozen boys that hung around. Looked like they had a blessing over them they couldn't get knocked out.

Interviewer: After you got through after Kasserine Pass you got sent back for medical treatment right?

Gower: After Kasserine Pass I stayed in the hospital I don't' remember how many days probably about a week. And that's when I told you that officer came in there and said if you're able to get out of here let's get out because I want you to drive the truck back to the company for me. Then I got up put my clothes on didn't tell anybody and left with him. And that was probably not over two weeks in there I don't know.

Interviewer; then you guys went to Sicily?

Gower: Well we went on back in combat and after Kasserine Pass we took it back over and when that was when we got everything taken over got all the Germans run them out and captured we went back to Algeria. The city of Algeria and that's where we rested up for a few weeks back there and we had it pretty well made there. And then I remember we left out of Tunisia going into Sicily and I remember when we it was 120 degrees there in the daytime and all you could do was lay around in those olive grove and try to stay cool. And when the ships come in there they assigned us to a ship that thing was number 313 I thought what a heck of a number that is you know. And that's the one that got bombed a bomb come down the four elevator shafts and we was on the ramp ready to go off. If that ramp door hadn't been down the three of us never would have survived. But about all I seen in Sicily was a ___ got hit and that first aid station you used to see them down there and they'd all left in about one night. And a friend of mine in Pennsylvania now that I talk to weekly we were driving he said I scared him to death he said I knew what you'd do he said I was over there hollering and going on and moaning and the enemy wasn't over 100 yards away and you rolled over and told me if I didn't shut up that noise that I would blow your brains out and I was scared you would do it and I shut up. But it was always some comedy side to everything but when you combat is not easy there's nothing it's tough. I really don't see the point with the army when they are nothing but old army then they got a guy sent over there for six months knowing he's going to come back home after six months. He ain't worth a darn I don't think because we never expected to come back you know. Well deep down you might think you might make it but shoot your odds of coming back from WWII or a combat zone it's might near impossible. So but you have your ups and downs. And when that, I don't know why this is, to me it was when I seen that officer that wanted me to take that truck back to the company for him I knew I was ready to go. I didn't have to go but I was ready to go. It's something I guess that draws you back when you know you've got other people up there you know and need your help. That's the only thing I know it is. But I came over when I was in the port of Oran I told you I got in the MP they come up there one day and told us to get our gear together and get I believe five men. So I got five men that report right under me and said report to pier so and so down there to report to the ship commander for further orders that was all we had. And so we go down there he told us to take our weapons with us we go down there and report to that captain of that ship we find out that he has oh I believe there were three prisoners on there that where you have to escort back to the United States. But we come into Charleston South Carolina and we was on a hospital ship. As soon as we come into Charleston South Carolina why I had to call in when we got 12 hours out of port it was my instructions to call in and talk to somebody the port commander let them know what we had. By the time I got to the Red Cross the guy said there are not supposed to be armed guards on those ships. They raised hell and I was what we done we just walked off we wouldn't listen to them because hell we was taking order it wasn't our faulty. But anyway this is kind of a comedy humor part of it. So I go in take them all in go see the port commander well coming out of a combat area you know how all this saluting and all that kind of stuff your very casual down here you're on a first name basis you either call them major or colonel or captain or whatever they are. And so I went in to see the port commander, I get a kick out of this sometime, and this officer standing out front he said do you have an appointment to see him? And I said I guess so I've got some papers here to see him. Well does he know you're coming? I said no I don't think he knows I'm coming but I've got some orders to see him. Well you can't see him. So anyway the major heard him and I never knew if he peaked out there to see me or if he knew my voice but he said John what the hell are you doing here he said come on back here. Well that kind of shocked the guy out front but this guy had been in combat with me for several months. And he said I told him what I did I said I've got some orders here I'm supposed to turn over to you. He looked at them said man these orders here are so lose you could stay over here six months and never go back over there. But I expect you better go back I said yea. He said when have you been home I said I haven't been home in five years, my home was here out in the country. And he said you want to go home for a week or two? I said yea it would be nice so he said I'm gonna send you down to my company

to one of my companies and I'll call down there and if you don't get everything you want you come back to me. So he gave me a ride got somebody to take me down there and said I'm gonna give you a jeep and you can go all over Charleston South Carolina you use it as long as you're here. Well I went in to see his company commander that's who I was supposed to go see. Well I forgot about all the everything you had to do the curtsey and everything else. Coming out of combat had been gone for been over there for about well been over three for three years. And so when I was talking to the company commander I just sat down on the corner of his desk. Well he come unglued then he come all apart so me and him got in an argument didn't get in no argument I just said hell I don't have to take this damn crap. We got into it and I walked out well what I done I got back in the jeep to go back and see my friend who was over him the commanding officer. He called that guy up, I don't know what he told him, he told me to go back over there he said he's got a change of attitude now. I go back over there and that guys said don't ever do me that way get out of here I don't' ever want to see you no more. So we had quite a time all of us we had a jeep we went all over Charleston and every time we run the MPs would pick us up because we was in at that time you had OD combat fighting OD we didn't have khakis or nothing like these guys back here were dressed up in khakis. And they'd get us out of uniform we'd have to call the major to get us out. SO finally I got out of there I come home I rode on a train I had a Thompson machine gun and a 45 all the way from here to Charleston South Carolina. So when I got here I used my daddy's car and I had to take it in and get it services so I put this Thompson machine gun behind the backseat and the 45 behind the backseat. Well I don't' know why but in that damn garage in the Chevrolet dealership somebody stole that gun that Thompson machine gun and that 45. And I was leaving the next day after that so I told my daddy to go down to the police headquarters and report it stolen in case something came up. But then you didn't have to worry about that when I come out of my outfit it was no issue to me or nothing it was just your side are that you got. They don't keep a record of the serial numbers or nothing for them. So I went back to Newport News got on a ship my orders was to report to the ship commander there I got on the ship went back to Oran North Africa. They radioed in to my company at that time I was still there in that MP and my company used to have an old steam boat we'd go out to meet convoys to go through certain things. They picked me up and the convoy kept on going and dropped me off there. Then a short time after that they decided they were going to send us into Northern Italy so we went up there. That was about it but anyway if I hadn't got shot up so bad I'd have probably stayed in the army made a career out of it. I didn't dislike the army like a lot of people. I was going to Austin Peay for a while after I got out and that was before the Korean War and I was offered a chance to get back in the army then. But I had to waive my disability and I didn't want to do it. I wasn't too anxious to get back in at that time. And that was the end of my combat and I went to work for the Federal Government there for a while. Well I went to work out at Fort Campbell for a while with small arms out there and I didn't care about that. I didn't stay I quit then I went to work for the Federal Government and they sent me to school. They sent me to the University of Oklahoma I went there for two years and I retired from the Federal Government and then went to work for the State of Tennessee. I was in feed management I managed feed for the Federal Government then I went to the State of Tennessee and I managed their feed for seven and a half years. Now I'm just taking it easy I'm getting too old to do anything lucky to be here.

Interviewer: Alright thanks Mr. Gower.

Tape ended