

Interviewer: Could you start off by telling us your name:

Ogles: William Ogles is that all you need.

Interviewer: And where were you born?

Ogles: Born in Nashville 1915 February 21st.

Interviewer: And what branch of the service did you serve in?

Ogles: I was in the 3rd Army 10th Armored Infantry Battalion Half Tracks.

Interviewer: And what were your parents' names and their occupations?

Ogles: My daddy's name was Bishop Ogles and my mother's name was Judy Ogles. He worked for the Nashville Street Railway almost all of his life. The railroad company not the Railroad but the street car in Nashville. We lived in Nashville until I got married in 1936 then we moved with the family.

Interviewer: And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

Ogles: I have two sisters one of them is Frances Ogles and the other one is Minnie Ogles. Minnie has died recently and that's all the family we had was three of us.

Interviewer: What about during the great depression what did you was your family affected real heavily by the depression?

Ogles: No my dad had a good job he the superintendent he had a good job. He made \$50 a week a lot of money back then. We lived real good yeah I went to Cumberland High School graduated there played baseball and football regular every year all season long. Usually I when I was going to high school I worked at Waldron's Drug Company 8th and Broad in Nashville. Went to work at 6 worked to 12 every night. Rode the they called the line up at night the street cars and they'd come out into our section we was in north Nashville. And let's see that's the biggest history of it and in 19 dates are very vague with me right now honey opened a parking lot on 5th and Deaderick a car parking lot in 31. And I stayed there to 35 and I sold out to a company moved to Clarksville in 36 and then I started in the car business the salvage business sold auto parts 10th and Commerce right out here. So then they called me into the Army.

Interviewer: So you were drafted?

Ogles: Yeah drafted in 1944. I asked my wife something's before I left. She said the army March 20, 1944. And I took my physical at Camp Shelby Mississippi which is a one day trip. And then we got on the bus I was on the bus when we went to Camp Shelby see I've got a finger off that's a birthmark.

Interviewer: Yeah

Ogles: They started making bets on that that I wouldn't get drafted because of my finger. Everybody on the bus was making a dollar or two off of me. But anyway when I got there they had a big circle and doctors ran it didn't make any difference anymore see I use this finger anyway so it worked out. Anyway

they when I come back I went to Mineral Wells Texas Camp Walters for my training and I stayed three four months. Then we had about a ten or twelve day leave then I headed overseas.

Interviewer: And that was on ship?

Ogles: That was on a ship. I forget the port it was in North Carolina but I can't remember the port. Anyway the day we was leaving was a sad ole day you know it gets awfully sad leaving them places. I won't ever forget the first sergeant asked me as he went through he was head of the kitchen, what do you want for breakfast. I said I want two eggs over medium and some bacon and some biscuits he said you've got it boy so that was a very very good things for me that day I really enjoyed it. Then we got on the ship and we went we got off in across the English Channel went into France. Then we marched we marched I don't know how many days we went through little towns marching they'd always give us bread and a drink of wine or some what's that other kind? Any way they gave us plenty in one of these little towns they were very nice to us. And I was on the front line they call it three days on. Very hard up there from where we camped at you could see the sea out there which was about a mile on down. And we spent the night in fox holes water was all in them. They'd put branches of trees and all in there but it didn't I didn't stay there but two nights. And the next day the Germans began to throw shells in there where we were and they called it tree bursts. They hit on top of the trees came down and I was lying flat on my face down they was throwing shells everywhere and I was laying on the ground and one of them hit me in the leg. And I said I hollered as loud as I could it felt like a poker sticking all the way in it. This first sergeant said shut up you're going to scare everybody to death in there in the company. And I guess I did I don't know but anyway he put me on a jeep and carried me back to one station and they put sulfur on it at that time they put sulfur on it. And from there we went back to a big tent a huge tent and there was they sent them out to different places they sent me to Nancy France and then they operated on me again in Nancy France.

Interviewer: When you got hit how many days had you been out there?

Ogles: Three days.

Interviewer: Three days.

Ogles: One the line but back in France we was marching most of the time. And I stayed in the hospital in Nancy France I believe about three weeks and they operated again and they looked at it and shrap metal had got up against the bone and they called it poisonous shrap metal I don't know. Anyway my leg swelled up twice as large as it is now. And it stayed like that they sent me by the way I saw Patton come through that hospital just walking down the hall one day and I saw him.

Interviewer: Really

Ogles: Yeah that was kindly exciting for everybody there for him to come through. And we left there and they flew us over to England and I stayed there about four months.

Interviewer: In England?

Ogles: Uh huh in England.

Interviewer: Now were you on active duty or were you still

Ogles: Rehabilitation

Interviewer: Yeah

Ogles: And they operated on me again there. They operated on me three times I believe it was.

Interviewer: What were the hospitals like there or the medical facilities?

Ogles: They were like wards mostly except Nancy France. I forget the name of the hospital the 101st General or something like that. Big hospital in Nancy France big one by the way later on I went back to France and went by the hospital.

Interviewer: Really

Ogles: And I waded at it. That was about my experiences I stayed in England about three or four months. Then I went back to Nashville Thayer Hospital Thayer General Hospital they called it. A world of soldiers there world of soldiers thousands there. Anyway I stayed at that rehabilitation for about six months my leg just kept swelling getting worse finally it go to getting alright though.

Interviewer: At least they didn't have to amputate.

Ogles: Then they discharged me. Huh

Interviewer: They didn't have to amputate it.

Ogles: No no I'm in good shape I've got a leg.

Interviewer: You got discharged after that?

Ogles: I got discharged in let me see if I can tell you when. I discharged in November 45 by the way my salary was \$21 while I was in there and I did get one stripe.

Interviewer: Now did you get a Purple Heart?

Ogles: I got a Purple Heart.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Ogles: Yeah I got my admiral discharge at home framed up.

Interviewer: Neat

Ogles: Yes turned out alright. By the way Roosevelt had just died in November. That was a big loss I sure was crazy about him.

Interviewer: Oh yeah that's hard.

Ogles: By the way I still have shrap metal in my leg they call it 2 cubic centimeters now what that is I don't know something against the bone and they won't take it out.

Interviewer: Do you feel it every once in a while?

Ogles: In the winter time it really gets tough when it's cold and really hurts really hurts. But anyway I get along alright I walk I play golf four days a week. Yeah I don't have much trouble with anything like that. Let's see I can't think of anything you ask me any question you want to.

Interviewer: Alright well going back to since what was the time I'm trying to think when you went in and you were marching in France did you see a lot of action?

Ogles: No no not in France.

Interviewer: You didn't see action until you were on the front lines.

Ogles: Front line you know four or five or maybe ten miles you began to see things.

Interviewer: What was the battle then what was the situation I'm trying to think.

Ogles: Well it was just survival it was the Germans fighting us. Of course France wouldn't fight.

Interviewer: Okay well when you were in the hospital did you get to listen to the news and read the news?

Ogles: Yeah we get a little news on radio and singing we heard the Chinese no Japanese girl singing on there. But I wasn't in Japan of course she did a lot of singing and telling us to watch our self somebody was around the corner and was gonna get us. I don't remember everything in the world then we had some good girls signing Jan Howard did a lot of things she's too old you wouldn't remember her. All the old Frances I don't know what her name was Langford Frances Langford. I bet you've heard her sometime.

Interviewer: I think I've heard of her.

Ogles: Alright

Interviewer: Let's see well you were drafted so did you get to choose what task you wanted to do?

Ogles: No we had they had us all in a big auditorium at one time and give us a bunch of questions and asked what we wanted to do made out like. I told them I wanted to be a tail gunner on a plane. He said yeah that's what you'll get if that's what you want. You know where I ended up in the infantry. But anyway everybody was always nice to me I didn't have much trouble.

Interviewer: What was your first impression of your fellow recruits?

Ogles: They was all nice I didn't have any trouble with them. Some of them couldn't a few of them couldn't read or write I helped on I got to buddies with one fellow, by the way he turned out to be from over in Union City Tennessee. And he couldn't read or write and I did all of his letter writing to his wife

and his name was Owens NC Owens they called him. By the way he came through here about 10 years ago and visited me.

Interviewer: Really

Ogles: Uh huh

Interviewer: Isn't that something.

Ogles: But I used to go to Reel Foot Lake fishing and hunting all the time and I'd try to visit him when I did. He was really the closest one I ever got to in the Army. We marched all the time there wasn't no chance to see anybody or do anything. But my wife moved out there in (Mr. Ogles had to answer a call).

Interviewer: So well was that the first time away from home for a long distance?

Ogles: Yeah

Interviewer: You were married?

Ogles: Oh yeah I was married.

Interviewer: It must have been a little harder.

Ogles: I had a daughter born while I was overseas.

Interviewer: No way wow.

Ogles: Yeah she was born while I was overseas.

Interviewer: Did you get a lot of letter and pictures from your wife and family.

Ogles: Yeah very good and I had a few friends I got several letters from people. Of course one a day from your wife almost and

Interviewer: Were they ever censored?

Ogles: Huh?

Interviewer: Were they censored?

Ogles: Oh yeah they would censor them they read every letter that come out of there. I don't know how many people they had reading them but they were very very censored you couldn't put anything in there. Of course I didn't try but some of them tried you know they wanted the people to know where they was and all of that kind of stuff. Very sensitive

Interviewer: Wow

Ogles: By the way I was at the hospital in England when the Battle of the Bulge was going on.

Interviewer: Really

Ogles: That's when so many peoples feet was froze hands was froze. They sent them to that hospital a pitiful sight. You can't imagine a man that his foots froze off his hands froze off. Terrible terrible sight

Interviewer: You got to meet a lot of people in the hospital didn't you?

Ogles: Oh man every hospital you could find everywhere was full of them. I know very little about the Battle of the Bulge what I read in the paper and I saw these people come in there all of these soldiers come in there and it was a pitiful sight. I got acquainted pretty well with I think each ward had about 40 or 45 people in it they were just a straight ward with a cot in it a little bed. I got into the kitchen pretty good you know we had one big kitchen for everybody. I made me a buddy down there every night I'd get peanut butter and bread bring it up there we had a time up there in our ward you know. They kind of made me the head of it I don't know why but anyhow I looked after all of them. So we had a god time in our ward. Then the big bomb went off over there a whole whole place blew up over there with dynamite a great big place. It sure shook all of England that territory Darby England it was close to Darby England. And we thought the bomb was coming everybody was running getting under the bed running. It scared me to death I thought they were right on top of us after a few minutes it settled down. It shook everything in there just I know tore up a lot of things we never did see. But it was very very bad thing to happen over there but anyway it all got worked out.

Interviewer: Man before you went did you guys participate any things over here stateside any maneuvers in preparation for the war?

Ogles: No

Interviewer: What about your training was it do you think you were well prepared for what was ahead of you?

Ogles: I weighted about almost 200 pounds when I went in the Army. Down to 150 within two months stayed that way until I got out.

Interviewer: That was pretty hard training.

Ogles: I stayed that way until I got out and stayed that way about a year then I began to pick up you know and I've been heavy ever since then.

Interviewer: But you felt pretty prepared for the fight.

Ogles: I was prepared except the 25 mile walk we made the last night down in the bottom we called it Hell's Bottom. We walked 25 miles we were so tired and wore out thirsty they wouldn't give us any water. One little canteen of water was all we had man it was tough. Stayed down in Hell's Bottom for three months didn't shave didn't do anything just roughed it all out we really maneuvered down in there.

Interviewer: What kind of stuff did ya'll do while you were down in there?

Ogles: Oh we didn't do anything just march mostly that's about all we did.

Interviewer: Get your gear ready.

Ogles: Get your gear ready and they taught us a few things not much though. Taught you know to use a knife if you had to and how to use your gun by the way some training went in to using a carbide they called it a carbide. So we I used a carbide all the time.

Interviewer: What about the living conditions how good were those the camps?

Ogles: They was alright yeah they had good food they feed us good wasn't bad. They give us you slept on the ground of course but I got used to it.

Interviewer: You didn't have a tent then?

Ogles: Oh no not in Hell's Bottom we didn't have no that was three weeks. The wind was awfully strong and rough in Texas a lot of time. But we had some rough times down there.

Interviewer: What about in England was that nice?

Ogles: In England we just stayed in the ward wasn't nothing to that all the time.

Interviewer: And you marched a lot too then of course.

Ogles: No not in England I was in the hospital.

Interviewer: I mean in France.

Ogles: Oh yeah we got off I can't think of but we got off of the ship in France after we crossed the English Channel. We got off the ship in France and most of that was walking seemed to me it was about two weeks or three weeks from the front line. But we passed a lot of things a lot of those little towns I remember St. Lough for one thing that's about all I remember. Every building in it was torn down all through the city every one of them. We was riding in a truck by the way we did ride some in trucks yeah but not a whole lot.

Interviewer: So you never did change units you were in the same unit from when you started?

Ogles: Yeah I stayed in the infantry actually it was all infantry then they put us in a little company halftracks was one of them. I never used a halftrack I never used one because I got wounded right away.

Interviewer: Wow you were saved. Do you think you would have had to gone into the Battle of the Bulge? Did your unit go on to

Ogles: I think I would have been part of it I don't know I was see I was getting a little agie I was I believe 29 when I went in. I wasn't like some of young boys I believe I would have stayed and help up under it yeah I do. Unless I got frozen pretty bad.

Interviewer: That's so scary. Who was your commanding general?

Ogles: General Patton.

Interviewer: General Patton was your commanding general?

Ogles: Yeah he was 3rd Army.

What was your impression of the officers and NCOs?

Ogles: I had good NCOs and officers too. We never had trouble with any of them at all they was all very good.

Interviewer: What did you in your first experience in combat when you were in the foxhole what was your reaction to it and to others in your unit as far as you were being shot at or shooting back or having the Germans shoot at you.

Ogles: We were a company we was all together it was a company we didn't everybody was on their own you might say but it was in this big company. I don't remember how many was in the company we was with it wasn't too many though. I don't expect there was over a hundred in the company.

Interviewer: Did you feel a lot of fear you know because you were under fire.

Ogles: I'll tell you one thing that really bothered me was so many men shooting their foot off to get out of the Army. And I almost thought about it myself that was dreary bad ole thing over there and everybody wanted out of the Army and I don't blame them.

Tape ended