

We are conducting an oral history interview with Colonel X.P. Cox. He was battalion commander of the 81<sup>st</sup> anti-tank battalion 101<sup>st</sup> Division during World War II. This interview is being conducted at the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division reunion in San Antonio, Texas the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2001. This interview is being conducted by Scott Schoner, John O' Brian and Steve Smith.

Sir if you could I would like you to tell us again about how you entered the Army.

Mr. Cox: I was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant from Texas A & M in June of 1937. In 1941 I had been promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the reserves after having served a term of duty at Camp Bliss; Fort Bullis here at San Antonio. I was called to active duty in June of 1941 and went on active duty to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division stationed here at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. In January of 1942 I was sent on a cadre to form the 82<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. We went to Fort Benning, Georgia where all the other officers of the division assembled; including General Bradley who was to be Assistant Division Commander. We stayed there for a month or so and then went to Camp Clayburne, Louisiana, formed the 82<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and trained until August; which after viewing with Sergeant York of the famed World War I division were told that the division was being split into the 101<sup>st</sup> and the 82<sup>nd</sup>. The 327<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was one of the units that went to the 101<sup>st</sup>. From that 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 327<sup>th</sup>, the 81<sup>st</sup> anti-aircraft battalion was formed; which was I guess the first anti-aircraft battalion in the Army. At that time I was battalion executive officer. LTC William C. Scoggins was Battalion Commander and we trained there for about a month and then we moved to Fort Bragg, North Carolina and the paratroopers joined us at that time from Fort Benning. All the troops that were there at Camp Clayburne were glider troops. They did not ask us if we wanted to be a glider man. I understood that all paratroopers were volunteer but the glider they considered it that if they could ask you to ride in a quarter ton or ton truck, they could ask you to ride in a glider. It was a little different. We then went to Fort Bragg, North Carolina where the paratroopers joined us and we trained in as a division taking in Tennessee maneuvers and many other operations there. We stayed in Fort Bragg until September of 1943 and were sent to England at that time on a ship. Our battalion was on the S.S. Samaria, a British ship. Our battalion was a work detail battalion on this ship. In other words we manned the submarine watch, anti-aircraft guns; Colonel Scoggins was the troop commander on the ship. As \_\_\_ officer I had full run of the ship, of course. Our crossing was uneventful because we had no submarine attacks. The only trouble that we ran into was our ship commander got a word down to quit making smoke one day; I don't know how to keep a ship to quit making smoke but it came down from a convoy commander. We were making too much smoke and it was a security breach. We landed at Liverpool, England the latter part of September. I don't remember the exact date. We then went by train down to Forkshire in Redding about 7 miles from Redding about 17 miles south of Oxford on the Tammes River at a little compound called Bazzleton Park. Bazzleton Park is a 600-acre area enclosed by brick and stone wall with a manor house on it that was built in 1776 by Sir Arthur Sykes, I believe. It was at that time owned by Mr. George Fernando who had bought the house back in the early twenties.

While we are on this time period here with your experiences as the battalion executive officer, anti-aircraft warfare, and anti-tank warfare were brand new items that the Army had to deal with.

Mr. Cox: Our training from the time that we were formed as a battalion; everything was new to us and to the Army too, I think. We were the anti-tank batteries; three of them: A, B and C. Each had eight 37mm anti-tank guns which is just kind of a pea shooter. I think we finally got the guns. At first we had more or less broomsticks. Anyway, each battery had 71 men and 3 officers. Later on we were changed from a 37mm to the American 57mm anti-tank gun which is a rather high velocity 3750 feet a second or something like that velocity gun. It was a very good gun. We did some firing with it here in the states and later in England. The 3 anti-aircraft batteries were equipped with 12 anti-aircraft 50 caliber air cooled machine guns on an M3 mount which is a mount that has a cradle in it. The mount stands up about 4 feet high and the gun sits atop of it with a cradle that you kind of lay back into it and angle it up and direct the gun. So there is 12 of those to the battery and it made 36 for the battalion 3 batteries. While we were at Fort Bragg we went down to Myrtle Beach and did quite a bit of firing at tow planes pulling a target behind it. If you want a very dull thing, ride that plane one afternoon while they are shooting at that target. I rode one time just to experience and it was very dull and boring. Our men became quite proficient in firing at those targets. In England and then doing this time too at Fort Bragg we got our glider training. It was quite a definite way to tie these guns down in a glider. I of course personally didn't have that much even as executive officer, I did not have hands on that much except seeing that they did it right and that it was very precise. The men became very proficient in time and to my knowledge and during our training operations and even in combat we never lost a gun by not being secured in a glider. In England we went down to Cornwall and \_\_\_ area and did firing with anti-tank guns and also anti-aircraft guns.

With these weapons and these types of units being brand new, who was responsible primarily for developing your tactics and doctrine?

Mr. Cox: We did it ourselves.

None of it was top driven?

Mr. Cox: We had to work it out ourselves. We had no, to my knowledge, we had no direction from anybody to what to do or how to do it.

You were simply given the mission and you had to figure it out for yourselves?

Mr. Cox: We just had to figure it out. Most of our enlisted men were second and third round draftees. They were all men much older than I was. Most of my officers were more or less seasoned; they weren't...most of them were ROTC I think and some of them were OCS; in other words a little bit more mature than we got later on. Towards the end of the war and after the end of the war I got officers in that I would not have made Corporals. In England of course at the beginning when we first made Airborne not knowing what they

were, we were all running around holding our arms out and saying we were Airborne. We didn't know what Airborne was. But we did get the idea that we had to be in better physical condition. So we started training even at Camp Clayburne on forced marches and fast marching and exercise a lot more than we had in the past. I know that one of the first or second 8 mile marches that we made after we became Airborne, I was straggling along behind the column. The battalion was on an 8 mile march and one of my officers, Lieutenant Patrick, trotted up to the head of the column and we just kept on going. We made 8 miles in 1 hour and 28 minutes with light packs and a hot day. We became pretty well-conditioned before we left there and up at Fort Bragg the same way and even in England. It was not anything out of the ordinary to have 2 or 3 eight mile marches and a 20 mile march in a week. We had quite a few 20 mile marches as well as short marches; plus other regular calisthenics and everything, every day. So we stressed physical training very, very strong as well as small unit training and individual training. Another part of our training was identification. We spent an awful lot of time on aircraft anti-tank identification. Right now I couldn't tell you one plane from another but everybody knew every German plane that was made and practically every tank that was made. We had a few tactical flights and gliders in England but it was hard. One time we went up Nottingham to fly out the next morning on exercise gliders and about 3 o'clock in the morning the Air Force officer came in and said, "I don't think we will be able to fly, the bird is walking." I look out on the runway and sure enough here are some big birds walking down; it was so foggy we couldn't see halfway across the runway. We didn't fly that mission but we did fly one or two missions in England. As I stated, Colonel Scoggins was our battalion commander and somewhere around the 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1944, we went over in September of 1943, and we trained and we worked hard and we were pretty much up to strength. There were maybe a few extra men and a few extra officers. Anyway around the 20<sup>th</sup> for some reason I went with him up to division headquarters which was in Newbury. We were about 15 miles from division headquarters. The 327<sup>th</sup> Infantry was in Redding at Brock barracks in Redding and we were in Bazzleton Park which was about 8 miles away. Fortunately there was very few American troops' right around us. We were pretty well isolated and we got along so well with the local people. One thing that made it much better was the owner of Bazzleton Park was a personal friend of the editor of the newspaper in my hometown of San Angelo, Texas. After about a week there he came in and wanted to know if anybody was from Texas and we got together and consequently we had a lot more privileges with Bazzleton Park. This manor was a 91 room house built in 1776. Much of the house was closed off and not used as far as \_\_\_\_\_. We got to open up part of it. The dining room was a replica of the Waldorf-Historia Hotel in New York City identical to that room. We got to open that room up and used it for Sunday afternoon tea dances or whatnot and recreation facilities. Going back to the war part, in March of 1943 I went up to division headquarters with Colonel Scoggins. I happened to be sitting on a G1's desk and looked down and saw an order that Scoggins was being transferred. About that time Colonel Miller, the Chief of Staff, came in and said, "Cox, I want to see you a minute." So I went in his office and he told me that Colonel Scoggins was being transferred because of night blindness. I didn't know that he had had any trouble. Apparently he couldn't see very well at night. He said, "You are going to take over command of battalion." Not only that but he said, "Come in here." We went in the next room and went through and passed a couple of mp's. He unlocked the door and there on

the wall was a curtain. He drew back the curtain and I guess it was about a 10 or 12 foot wall and about 20 feet wide. He brought back the curtain and there was the whole layout of the invasion. Colonel Miller explained the invasion and everything except the date. Anybody could have guessed pretty close to what the date was going to be due to it had to be the moon and the stars and the tides. We knew it was within a few days. Of course we couldn't tell anybody we knew that. He said, "Go in to London tomorrow and make arrangements for your anti-aircraft batteries to go down to I think South Hampton or maybe Plymouth because they would be going down by sea they will go down and start preparing to in down by sea. Your two batteries that will go out \_\_\_ will go in by glider. The other anti-tank battery will go to the coast and they will go in by sea. You and your headquarters group will go to\_\_\_, Wales. You will go in by ship to land D+1 because all my batteries, their missions were already assigned there. We always had an anti-tank and an anti-aircraft battery attached to one of their other regiments for their support." I had to do that. The next day I went into London; I don't remember now to what agency. I got all that worked out. Not being able to even discuss it with any of your officers or staff or anything...even though I had a good staff, I just couldn't do it. I didn't know what was going on myself. We got it all done and I took our headquarters staff left and a few clerks; we knew that we were coming back to England if we made it. We left our foot lockers and bed rolls and everything there in Bazzleton Park. The ship that I was on sailed out of \_\_\_\_, Wales I think on the 4<sup>th</sup>. I don't really remember what day we left \_\_\_\_\_. We were supposed to land on Utah Beach and unload on D+1. There was a whole bunch of units like my headquarters on this ship. I don't know who all; I don't remember. For some reason the ship went to Omaha Beach instead of Utah Beach. They found out that we were at the wrong place so they had to back out and go down to Utah. We lost our place on disembarking. So actually it was the third day before we got off ship. Of course I got antsy and not knowing what had happened to all my gliders and men that went in the three anti-aircraft batteries went in with the assault \_\_\_ engineers at H+15 minutes on Utah Beach. The two anti-aircraft batteries landed in the field there where General Patton was killed. I was very lucky that we loss no one I don't believe among the gliders. They were scattered some but they had a very good landing. I actually didn't get in until the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. Just after getting on shore that day a B-51 flew over the beach, went down and turned and came back and I think the 3<sup>rd</sup> time down it was shot down. There wasn't supposed to be any aircraft over the beach. Somehow or another we had heard that some American planes had been captured by the Germans. I don't know if one of my guns got him but I think it did. We thought so at the time. Everybody and all the ships and everybody were shooting at him. I think it was one of my guns that got the B-51. The pilot bailed out and they kept shooting at him. That was kind of a hard thing. We were trying to stop everybody but there was so much noise and no way to do it. But finally he went limp in his chute. He came down and I understand he only was glazed by the bullet on the side of the head and lived. He was lost and was trying to get his bearings so he said, but he shouldn't have been there. His plane barely missed our hospital tent there on the beach. That was my first really the first combat experience I saw after we got on the beach. That night there just out of \_\_\_\_\_ we had anti-personnel bombs dropped. An anti-aircraft battery stayed on the beach for about another 3 days and they were released to us and came up and joined us. We attached them to the regiment. I don't know whether the regiment want to acknowledge it or not but see the regiment only had

30 caliber air cooling machine guns. These 50's were well used. We supported the infantry with them. The fact is with the good supply sergeant and I have well a warrant officer we ended up with some well mount. These anti-aircraft mount were not suitable for most ground action. But we got ground mounts and we supported the other infantry troops throughout the war; usually one battery of anti-aircraft with them at one of the regiments. Usually I think the A battery and the D battery were with the 506<sup>th</sup> most of the time. B battery was with the 501<sup>st</sup> more times than not. We shifted around. As I told somebody yesterday I don't think there was ever a real scrimmage during any of the war that one of my units were not involved in because we were attached to them all of the time. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of July after the invasion we went back to England and joined back to where we started out at. In Normandy I think we had 13 or 15 killed. I don't know how many wounded but quite a few. We got back to England and got ready to and I'm sure you got it on record as to other missions that the division was supposed to go into France. One was cancelled early and then another one that I forget the code name for it but I know it was the end of a \_\_\_\_\_ Rabelais, France was dropped. I think that was one we went to the airport and it loitered our gliders before it was called off. I sure was glad because I sure had quite a mission on that. I was glad; I didn't know whether I was prepared for it or not. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of September our battalion, the three anti-tank batteries and headquarters went in by glider to Holland. We left England with 81 gliders we assembled in Zahn. I had 47 of them accounted for; 6 went down in a channel that I know of that were rescued and 12 I understand landed in Belgium. Six of them were taken up 5 or 6 thousand feet and went back to England. It liked to have froze those kids to death because on those gliders there was no insulation. It was just canvas. They were brought in at a later date. My S1, Captain McGraff, glider I understand did a complete loop and when it came out he just skidded on the ground. He was a little bit older than the rest of us. He really had a nervous breakdown after Holland. I thought he left in Holland but actually he left at Bastogne or before Bastogne. I lost track of him and didn't know of him until about 3 or 4 years ago. I found out that when he left us I thought he came home but he was given an assignment to Paris. He stayed there and didn't come home until 1946. He is still living in Redding, Pennsylvania. I talked to him a couple of weeks ago.

Sir, on the insertion into Holland you went in as a battalion?

Mr. Cox: No, the three anti-aircraft batteries came in by land. Just the three anti-tank batteries went in by Glider. The anti-aircraft batteries joined us by land.

Those that went in by glider did they go in serial with the regiment that they were supporting?

Mr. Cox: No, they went in as a unit all on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The paratroopers went in on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and we went on the 19<sup>th</sup>. We moved out and attached later on. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September at a little town of Veckel I was talking to General McAuliffe and their advance cp and a call came in that the road had been cut by Germans up on the north side of Veckel. I understood there was a tank up there and he turned to me and told me there was a tank up north of town. So I went outside the door and Captain Gaynard and two boys in a jeep pulling an anti-tank gun was in the road there right in front of the cp and I

jumped on the jeep and we rode through the town. Just as we got up to the edge of town the last house on the north side we unhooked the gun just as a German tank, a Mark IV I think, was approaching down the road towards us. I personally think the tanks turret was stuck because instead he had his gun turned around facing the tank started backing around just as he got kind of sideways with us. Corporal Rorky Roberts fired the gun and Gaynard was sighting in and Roberts pulled the gun and hit the tank on the track. It burst into flames and of course it was sitting on tarmac. It hadn't dug in. It bounced up about two feet high. I think it fractured Roberts' knee. Gaynard jumped over and fired two more rounds and the first one knocked (tape went blank)....France and to retrain and replenish our wounded and killed and get our vehicles up. There on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> we got notice of a disturbance. We didn't know where it was. I was called up to division headquarters and General McAuliffe briefed us that we were going to move out the second morning; 36 hours later, I guess. About 11 o'clock I went back to the barracks. We had been in a poker game. I left and a bunch of the officers and I were sitting there. Well most of our jeeps had their wheels off for a second maintenance because we had been up there in the woods so long and so many people were on leave. I said, "It's too late tonight to do anything. Let's wait until morning to get up and get everything ready." I went to bed and come to find out I got up the next morning and they didn't go to bed. We had champagne stacked up in the room around the old stove kind of like hardwood. They sat up and drank all the champagne I think. They started the next morning and got things ready and I got called back up to division headquarters about noon saying that, "we got to move out right now!" They didn't say where. I looked out the window and here went some of my jeeps. I excused myself from General McAuliffe and I said, "We are pulling out now so I am going to go join them." I got up and caught my jeep. We were in a column and of course the mp's were directing traffic and when the mp wasn't there, there was a little sign with a little kangaroos paw and that is what we followed. We didn't know where we were going. Of course it got dark so early. Anyway way after dark the road jammed. The people were coming away and we were going this way. It stopped and I got out. I think it was General Higgins that I ran into. He said, "Well we can't go any further the road is blocked, why don't you'll just pull off in the woods." So we did and spent the night there. The next morning we went into town and found out it was Bastogne. I found out the division was going to move into the barracks there, in the Belgium barracks. Three buildings down was vacant so I left one of the boys, an enlisted man, left him there to keep it. By that time it was mid-afternoon I guess. I went back out to where we were about 5 miles out of town on a hill there. We got out there and I said, "We are going to move into town in \_\_\_ barracks." My executive officer says, "My boys have been up all night and they have got everything dug in." Even though it was on a hill there was pretty good dirt there. They had all of our radio equipment dug in and every connection with it. In the meantime my supply officer; I had lost my warrant officer going into Holland. His glider crashed in Belgium and killed all of my supply people. They had changed the manifest; they weren't supposed to put them all in one glider. About 4, 5, or 6 of the supply unit was in the same glider and they were all killed; included this warrant officer, Malligen was his name. I had a new supply officer but on the way up there he had send us a supply depot back. The morning after we pulled off in the woods he sent a truck back. The truck got back in to us jus about the time we were moving into town full of supplies; mainly K-rations and some gasoline. My executive

officer said, "Let's not move tonight, we are all tired and have been up all night and all day. We are all dug in and everything." I said, "No somebody might get that barracks." So we went ahead and moved in and before midnight the medical company that was right next door to us in the woods was all captured. The circle was closed that night and that is how close we came from being captured too. So we moved into town and our headquarters set up there in the barracks; the third building down from the division cp. Bastogne in my opinion and this is certainly not official, if the Germans hadn't been as confused as we were, we would have been annihilated because they only hit us on one side of the perimeter at any one time. If they concentrated their attacks they could have got us; but they didn't because we moved people inside the circle. My anti-tank batteries and anti-aircraft batteries were changed from side to side every day or two. Then I think the 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>, the 23<sup>rd</sup> is when the skies opened up and we got some relief from air but we were attacked two or three nights there. We pulled our anti-aircraft guns in and around the city and I think we shot down two or three German planes there at Bastogne. That was really the only anti-aircraft work we done since down at Utah Beach.

You mentioned that night and that is a question that has been burning in my mind since I talked with you yesterday. Since there was so little German aircraft left and so little fuel left to fly the plane at this point in the war, how did you normally employ your anti-aircraft people?

Mr. Cox: They were up there with the infantry.

They were using the 50 cal's as anti-personnel?

Mr. Cox: 50 cal's a line of fire for the infantry. They didn't have anything but 30 calibers and that was not a very powerful gun. These 50's can pack a pretty good wallop. They strictly were infantry troops. We were never set up as anti-aircraft. We weren't needed. We were just strictly infantry. After Bastogne we went back to Mormalone down through \_\_\_\_\_ and Hagenau area and had very little combat; some but it was mostly occupation. There was some combat but not much; Back to Mormalone and then we took off from there and ended up down in Enzel just outside of Birtchesgarden, VE Day. Then we had an area of Tamsvig, Austria, it was occupation. That is southeast of Birtchesgarden. We had patrolled that area in occupation forces for about a month. Next was Czechoslovakia and Italy. Most of my people had enough points to come home. I did too but they didn't let me come. We went back to Augszair, France. After Bastogne we received the recoil (?) rifle which took the place of a bazooka. We had bazookas all along. But they were not very effective. This recoil rifle we never got to use it very much. As far as I know it never knocked out a tank with one. But we did fire some. After we got back to Augszair, France, which was 100 miles south of Paris, in the division we got replacements for men and officers. As I say I got some officers in that I don't think I would rank corporals earlier in the war. They were alright I guess. I was asked to conduct a school for other members of the ATO combat units in the use of the recoilest rifle. So I took a group of men and officers over to Vitel, France, which is a resort town in France. It had been a gambling center and had a bunch of nice hotels and casino buildings. There had been a division there just before I got there that was coming back to the states. They moved out

and we moved in I had about 20 men and officers I guess and we conducted either two or three weekly schools at each of the combat divisions and ETO sent in I think two enlisted men and an officer for each week to orient them with the recoilest rifle. It was quite a time we had there. We had these nice hotels set up. We met the troops when they came in. most of them had been on the front lines for some time. We had maid service in the room and had sheets and everything. In a restaurant down there we had table waitresses for the tables. I think they enjoyed it. I know I did. We had a real good school and finally the word came out that the division was not going to parade down 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and that the 82<sup>nd</sup> was coming. I was then released and I don't know whether they got another battalion commander or not. I was released and told I could come home. I came home with the 75<sup>th</sup> division. When I was called to duty in 1941 it was for a year and a day. One year and one day was what my orders called for. I stayed for 5 years. I had 28 months in grade as Lieutenant Colonel. In reserves it took 10 years to get it during which time I did not go to command general staff school. The unit at home, a couple of Lieutenant Colonel's that got out before I did went back on reserve status. As a reservist they outranked me. This unit didn't have a place for me so I went to meetings and all and got credit for retirement but I was not on a pay status. I didn't go to command general staff school because I had bought a ranch and the oil business was picking up a little and I didn't think I ought to be away from home and I just didn't go. Then in 1956 I was promoted to full Colonel. I went to Fort Bliss for 3 summers on active duty and got assigned for two weeks of active duty. It was the first active duty I have had since the war. I was deputy commander of a unit there. While I was there, the third year the G3 says, "There is an opening in the Pentagon in war plans for operations officer; war plans and planning. I applied for it and got it so for six summers from 1960-66 I spent two weeks in a war plans department of the Army in Washington. In June of 1967 I had thirty years in and I said goodbye. I did not have too many contacts after that except for in 1994 I was invited up to Campbell to a change of command for the 2/44 which took their history from ours. Colonel Kammiss was taking command of a battalion and he asked me to come up. We had been there before for a division reunion but I was up there for this. I wore my uniform.

Sir, you worked for General McAuliffe, would you say that he was your boss?

Mr. Cox: I was pretty much under artillery even though we were separate battalion of the division. At Bastogne, Taylor wasn't there it just happened that in Holland McAuliffe had this advanced cp when they told him about the tank business. We were just real good friends. They were two different types of people. McAuliffe was very easy going and layed back down there. Taylor was very intelligent and very demanding and you didn't mess with him. He fined Gaymard \$50.00 because one day in Holland he drove into a compound there around the school and one of the enlisted men didn't salute him; so he fined Gaymard \$50.00. That was Taylor. He was strict and he was good. I can't say enough about Taylor. He was gung-ho. In my opinion if he had been at Bastogne we would have been in trouble because he would have been attacking instead of defending. That is just my opinion of it. I don't mind expressing it. He was certainly very good to me and I enjoyed working with him and respected him. I think he was a great officer. But McAuliffe was just kind of layed back and you could just enjoy being with him. With Taylor I was really on my p's & q's trying to..He said he would always like to invite me

to his dinners or special functions because I didn't drink and that left more liquor for him. We got along fine and I knew him very well. I've got a picture of General Taylor and I when we came back from France on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July. He left the train but he was very cordial and I never had any problem whatsoever with him.

Going back to Bastogne I have a question about the elements about the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Armored Division that came through and of course they brought with them their self-propelled anti-tank guns?

Mr. Cox: Oh yeah, they sure were a help. Colonel Roberts I believe was the commander of that battalion. We were good friends with him and we just worked together very cooperative and very good; just like the 90mm anti-aircraft guns that was cut off in there. I forget the unit number but if we hadn't have had them we would have been in a lot of trouble.

Can you describe how they were deployed in Bastogne? Were they signed out to regiments or did you keep them in division?

Mr. Cox: No they worked as their own units. Now the tank guns, I did not command them too much. I think they worked pretty well on their own under Colonel Roberts. Now up in Holland at one time I had I think it was 1500 British troops assigned to me for operation on an island up there on the anti 40mm wolfers (?). I'm sure you have heard about bringing the paratroopers back across the river. Well for about 4 or 5 nights before they came back we fired wolfer tracers across the river just at random. On the night when they came back we focused them all onto one spot which was the assemble point for the British people to come to the boat landings. I've got a letter from General Sink that he wrote to somebody that explained that. He said that he didn't think I knew what was going on but I did. We were attacked to the British and the British turned around and attacked us 4 or 5 battalions of wolfers for operations purposes. It wasn't much to do. We were sitting there but that was just an odd part of it. In Bastogne I didn't direct any of either the anti-aircraft or anti-tanks even though I was supposed to be the anti-tank officer of the division. They pretty well operated on their own. There wasn't much to do. They were set up and everything. The anti-aircraft didn't move around very much. They were there and certainly lent a lot of support.

Continuing along those lines in Bastogne, sir, that was arguably one of the most difficult times the division experienced during the war. How did you and your subordinate officers keep you men motivated and focused on the objective?

Mr. Cox: We didn't have any trouble. The type of men that we had at that time, everybody just went right on. They had a job and they were just going to do their job. They had been trained in for two years. These replacements that we got in, we spread them around within the units with the older men that had been there and we had absolutely no trouble with keeping everybody willing to do their job. Of course everybody was scared and they were trying to do their job to keep alive. To me at

Bastogne the worst part was the weather. We lost more people from the elements than we did from fire in my opinion.

How positive was the interaction between the veterans and the replacements? The replacements came in untrained.

Mr. Cox: I had no particular problems that I know of. There was so many of them the \_\_\_ didn't even know them. Since the movie of "Saving Private Ryan" has come out, I imagine I have had somewhere between 20 to 30 inquiries about different people; a son or a daughter or a nephew or somebody writing something about somebody. Last week I got an email from a fellow, his wife was the niece of a man named Orth and wanted to know something about him. He passed away in 1988 and they didn't know anything in particular about it. Well my battalion history does not list his name anywhere. I don't remember him. So I went to Pete Pullis's book which is from Holland and found him. He was in B Battery; Gaynard's battery. He was out at Camp Claiborne somewhere. Apparently he was one of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> round draftees that came in when we formed the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Infantry Division. I gave them all the information I could get. Another one that I had was a niece I think or somebody's uncle or grandfather or somebody was in our unit. I chased it down. He was killed in Bastogne on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January or 4<sup>th</sup> and he had been with us three days. I found one man that remembered him. Its things like that that happens. I found out that so many people have not ever talked to their family about the war.

Sir, in the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division today, we have several separate battalions whose individual companies will be assigned to the different brigades and operate under brigade control as much as your batteries in World War II. What would be a piece of advice that you would give a battalion commander in charge of the unit that forms its company out?

Mr. Cox: Well first to make sure that the company commander is qualified and that he is willing to accept knowledge to command of the unit that he is going to be attached to and be sure that he communicates with them. Communication now is so much better than what we had. Our radios seldom worked and lines would get cut. You would have to be capable of working on your own individual units. For the battalion commander, he needs to really know the units that he is going to be attaching his people to and that they understand that his people are a different group but to recognize their ability and to use them as they should be used. So it's a matter of cooperation and communication I think is the biggest thing between he as a battalion commander and as the unit it is going to be attached to. I had a real good relation with all of our regimental commanders and unit battalion. Yule, Kinnard, Ballard, Harper and all of our regimental commanders, we were together long enough that we pretty much knew each other and what to expect. I don't think that my unit at many times were given credit by the unit they were attached to. They appreciated them but they didn't realize how much help they were giving them. Right now I bet that many of the men if you go ask them, "Did so and so of the 81<sup>st</sup>?" "Well who are the 81<sup>st</sup>?" They just didn't realize that they were being supported by an outside unit. That is just part of it. I think that if I was going to doing it now knowing what I know, I would stress more that the unit they were attached to was more receptive

and appreciate what they were doing for that unit. I've always felt that. But as far as being commander, you just know your own men and your own officers and still rely on them to do the best that they can. Of course we have got so much standard of higher intelligence in our people today than we had at that time. I imagine, I don't know but I think most of your enlisted men now are at least high school graduates and most of them college people; whereas most of ours were not. We had lots of men that could barely read or write. I got one boy that got to DSC; I put him in for Congressional. He got to DSC and he could barely read. He was from the hills of Tennessee or North Carolina, I forget which. I think it's a matter of training and being one of them. I never tried to ask anybody to do anything that I wouldn't try to do myself. I guess some of my closest friends were enlisted men and the closest people I was to.