

Robert Hendon

Interviewer: Well like I said earlier I really appreciate this opportunity to do the interview. For the sake of the tape could you say your name?

Mr. Hendon: Robert Hendon

Interviewer: Okay and where were you born sir?

Mr. Hendon: Right here in this county at home. I was born down here at a place called Cherry Corner which is about four or five miles down 121.

Interviewer: A resident your whole life?

Mr. Hendon: However when I was about four years old my family moved to a farm about six miles east of Haden on the state line. And there's where I grew up attended grade school and later high school at Hayden if you've ever heard of a place called Hayden.

Interviewer: No I haven't I'm not too familiar with this side of Kentucky yet I married one of the girls around here so.

Mr. Hendon: They know about Hayden.

Interviewer: Yeh she could fill me in. What year were you born sir?

Mr. Hendon: I was born in 1921.

Interviewer: 1921 okay so that would have put you at 20 when

Mr. Hendon: I was 20.

Interviewer: Okay great. Do you have any recollections of the great depression?

Mr. Hendon: Oh yeh

Interviewer: How did the great depression affect you and your family in this area?

Mr. Hendon: Well actually the main things I remember about during the great depression was the family had a lot of financial difficulty during that time they of course we lived on a small farm where the family produced on the farm what they was living like food and things like that. And they grew some tobacco and tobacco was really about that only thing that you marketed off the farm at that time. But is was so prices of tobacco at that time was so low that you hardly got enough to pay your taxes let a long anything to live off of. Also during that period of the great depression we had two or three years of a severe nation wide drought there was also a drought here in this part of the country also. But living was kind of ruff I remember at one point my dad he had previously in his younger life been a school teacher and he was over an elementary school and he later was in WWI.

Interviewer: Oh wow what was his job description in WWI?

Mr. Hendon: In WWI? He was up here at Louisville at a place they call Camp Taylor. Jack Free Taylor the name of a camp here in Louisville and he was in a unit there that trained there and incidentally did not have to go overseas to fight. But while he was in Louisville he was a courier I guess you would call him he delivered persons messages what have you around the military post. And instead of being a courier on a horse which was of course a part of the military he was a courier on a motorcycle. So he had his military experience there they sent him to Madison, Wisconsin to the Harley Davidson Company to receive some maintenance training for motorcycles and things like that. Most of his time he spent at Camp Taylor. And during that period of time he and my mother were married and but he came back from at the end of WWI he came back and he and his brother opened up a I guess you would call it a shop mill where they ground grain for farmers and they also did blacksmithing work and things of that sort. But after soon begin to fade out as far as the horses and stuff. People were turning from horses and mules and buggies and things like that automobiles and so forth and so on. They were hardware their hardware began their blacksmithing began to fade so he quit that and went to farming during the decade of the 30s during the depression why thing were so ruff on the farm that he got a job here in Murray as a truck driver he had some training automobile maintenance and things of that sort so for a year or two to try to help the family keep going why he drove a truck for the public. It was a firm here in Murray had a truck service delivering stuff all over the country from town to town and he was a driver.

Interviewer: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Hendon: I have one brother about 18 months younger than I am.

Interviewer: So you're the oldest. Yeh I have a younger brother. Well so you finished high school then?

Mr. Hendon: Yeh I went to high school at Hayden and it was about 8 miles south of here on highway 641. It was a very typical crossroad country high school we had about 6 high schools in this county much like Hayden at that time. Several hundred just a few hundred students all together I think our graduating class only had about 30 to 50.

Interviewer: Wow my brothers had the same he went to a school that was the same.

Mr. Hendon: And usually the curriculum was so restricted and narrow that usually all of the boys in school took agriculture and English and history and mathematics and that was about it. When I graduated from high school in the spring of 1940 and before 1940 I came to Murray study which was Murray Teaching College or something at that time and I contacted a family and got me a job working for a lady who owned a dairy here at the edge of Murray by the name of Mrs. Pullman and she had a heard of about 25 or 30 cows and two other boys and I milked those cows bottled the milk and distributed to consumers here in Murray with a horse drawn milk delivery wagon. I didn't do much delivering the other boys did that but other than that I milked the cows and help feed and while we as we did that worked in early morning and late afternoon we went to school in the daytime. And I did that for one year then about in late spring of 41 well I went back to the family farm to help them cut tobacco or harvest tobacco during the summer and then the next fall in September whenever Murray States fall semester was getting ready to start I came back into town and was looking for some work I could do while I was in school. And I called on the what was then the National Hotel was a hotel down

town which was before the day of motels and things like that. This Hotel was a place where traveling salesmen and tourist and anyone else that was coming into town needed lodging that is where they would stay. They had a dining room it was a small crossroads country hotel and I approached those people about maybe working for them around the hotel and going to school in the daytime and they turned me down and I went home and about a day or two later they called me up and said if I'd get somebody to work with me they would turn the night clerks job over to two of us college students and let us work at night and go to school during the daytime. So they give us a room we could eat in the dinning room which was the place to eat in Murray at that time. So that's what I did the next year then the next summer is when I was drafted into the service.

Interviewer: Do you remember where you were on the 3rd of December 1941?

Mr. Hendon: I've answered that question a time or two in my period of time. It was a Sunday of course and I had a cousin living here in Murray that was visiting in the same neighborhood as my parents and I had hitched a ride with them to go home for Sunday for a Sunday visit with the family and while we were coming back into Murray they had the car radio on and we heard them announce about Pearl Harbor.

Interviewer: What was your initial reaction?

Mr. Hendon: Well I imagined right off that my life would be changed.

Interviewer: Before that time did you take seriously the threat of a Japanese invasion?

Mr. Hendon: Well yeh we there was a lot of discussion a lot of concern by everybody about war effort particularly in Europe I know that well as a matter of fact down here in Paris, Tennessee which is only about 20 miles from here they had already started up a camp there called Camp Tyson. Which was a place to train people in the use of a lot of these balloons that which were supposable to be sent over to England. We used them along the coast over there to prevent incoming German war planes from coming in striking with bombs and what have you.

Interviewer: Never heard of those.

Mr. Hendon: Balloons yeh they sent up balloons when pretty good height on cables and they I think they used them some. By the time they got trained and we got into war well the war was pretty much beyond balloons then and we were using aircraft and stuff like that. But what I was saying at the time I was working at the hotel we had we had soldiers from Camp Tyson who were visiting Murray especially on the weekends and they stayed around the hotel and some of them had enough money to rent a room and some of them didn't and those that didn't slept on the floor of the lobby and stuff like that. I was aware of the fact that there was a war going on and of course had an idea that when we got into it I'd be in it too. And we already at that time had a number of people volunteering for the service. I know several of the boys in my old neighborhood had already joined up so to speak and had been shipped to one of the camps in Mississippi I forget which one it was. But it was it was a thing that was on the minds

of people including myself. And of course the draft service was being initiated or preferred getting ready.

Interviewer: So you were actually drafted?

Mr. Hendon: I was actually drafted instead of volunteering in. I was the group that I was in was called up or drafted to go to the I guess the initiation center or examination center induction center in Jul of 1942. And of course they the group that was called up from this country at that time I don't know I'll say 50 or 60 people enough people that we all lined up on the step of the First Baptist Church out here and filled the whole steps of it see they took a picture of it and everything.

Interviewer: Do you know what was his name? Two of the individuals that I believe were in that his name escapes me.

Mr. Hendon: You think he might have been in the same group?

Interviewer: Yeh well he showed me a picture on the First Baptist steps.

Mr. Hendon: Well they did that for everybody that came up. And during that period of time or practically so every month groups was called up form this county and they filled the steps of First Baptist Church with the group. Of course later on as more and more people pulled into the service why the available draftees dropped off a number a bit but it was at the time I was drafted it was right in the busiest part of drafting.

Interviewer: So you said you were drafted July 1942 and your induction center

Mr. Hendon: Well we went to it was an examination center up near Evansville, Indiana then I think then everyone that was declared suitable to be drafted they administered the oath of induction or whatever you call it at that time send us back home. And then we were about two weeks later it seemed to me if I'm not mistaken about the 11th or 12th of August of that year when we reported for entrance in the service.

Interviewer: Where did you report to?

Mr. Hendon: Well we reported to Murray and they put us on a bus and sent us up to Camp Attaberry, Indiana. And that was the first day and first night in the military service.

Interviewer: Did they give you an IQ test there or?

Mr. Hendon: Well no not really not much it was a very casual one.

Interviewer: Did you have choice as to what kind of job you were going to do?

Mr. Hendon: Well at the time I went through I'm not real sure if this was the first interview I went to or the second one I was asked several times during the interview if I would be willing to go into the Air Force. And I don't know why I often looked back and thought in the short run that would have been the best but I said no I decided I would rather be on the ground than up in the air. So but they were at that

time trying to pull anybody and I think perhaps anybody that had any college education at that time they were pulling them into the Air Force. So I should no they didn't force me to go in that.

Interviewer: Where did you actually go to do your basic training?

Mr. Hendon: Okay this after we spent a couple of nights in Camp Attaberry, Indiana they put us on a train and didn't tell us where we were going or anything and they put us on a train and we started off and I guess a couple of days later we the train stopped out in the middle of no place. And there was a little 10 or 12 piece band on the side of the railroad track playing Deep in the Heart of Texas. Which was a common song in that day in time so we were being unloaded to I guess march over to a place called Camp Swift, Texas which is close to Austin, Texas. And it was we were the first groups that were in that camp t had just been built and a lot of the streets and parade ground were still sand and mud and things like that so. We went through our first basic training which was I guess three or four months something like that there at Camp Swift and I'm not sure I think probably we got maybe a weeks furlough to come home after that training. And then after that the unit was moved down to Fort Sam Houston which is at oh San Antonio, Texas. And what the Camp Swift lacked in the way of convenience and things for the serviceman Fort Sam Houston made up for it cause the city bus came right to the end of the company street and every time you got a pass off base well it wasn't a great hassle to get on a bus and go to town and things like that.

Interviewer: What was your first impression of basic training were you were you lonely being away from home?

Mr. Hendon: Well I guess the loneliest time I can remember and I guess somewhat of a cultural shock and everything was the first night I spend in Camp Attaberry, Indiana. Here was this big barracks full of people on cots I'm not even sure the cots had mattress on them but there you were a country boy pulled out away from home the largest group he'd ever been around was a family of about half a dozen people and here you are in a room full of total strangers. And you it was a new experience and something to get used to and I gradually though you began to accustom yourself to it. And basic training it was just pretty much more of the same you were put in a company and the basic training was put on by a cadre of people some from the some regular unit that was pulled out to be a training cadre and they really didn't know a whole lot about what they were doing either they just. We had to learn we were fed and fed pretty well we had physical training as far as calisthenics and marching and exercise and all that sort of thing and learning to weapons and I think the first if I'm not mistaken was the old WWI or maybe for that matter Civil War Springfield 03s. It was much later before we had the Zoran riffle which was about an 8 shot or a 10 shot repeater. A far cry from the sort of thing they have now.

Interviewer: Yeh came out with some good weapons at the end of WWI they are still around today they are still using the 50 cal just a primary weapon. I know they had the Louisiana maneuvers

Mr. Hendon: Well after we after we spend I guess three or four months maybe four months at San Antonio

Interviewer: I'm sorry I didn't ask you what was your special you were infantry correct.

Mr. Hendon: Yeh right.

Interviewer: And what unit what was your primary unit?

Mr. Hendon: It was my regiment was 379th Infantry. I was in Company I which is a rifle Company. And I was placed in an out of that company a rifle platoon. Each Company had three rifle platoon and one I guess you would call it a machine gun crew or something like that. My platoon had about 35 or 40 people in it.

Interviewer: That's a good size platoon.

Mr. Hendon: And of course we when we moved to Fort Sam Houston this was following basic training we spent I don't know a program there while we were there one week in Fort Sam we marched about 20 or 25 miles out with weapons out to about 25 miles to another camp that had tents and fairly decent living conditions and then after we spent a week there we took another about 20, 25 mile hike out to the boonies or out into the country and did another week of training out there where we lived in our pup tents and did field maneuvers and that sort of thing. And we did use of our weapons and rifle range and that sort of thing was part of basic and then we did some of that at Fort Sam also. We after we sent several months at Fort Sam then we went to Louisiana maneuvers. We were there that was the summer of 43 I guess we spent a month or six weeks in maneuvers down there. After maneuvers were over we moved into Camp Pope and spent several months at Camp Pope I don't know just exactly how many months but several. And during that period of time there the U.S. forces had been involved in experiences in North African and all that sort of thing. So I guess somebody thought we needed some desert training so they sent us out to a place called it was on the edges of the Mohave Desert in Southern California. Not far from a place called Needles, California or Indio, California I know out there we could look down the south and see a lake down there called the Salty Sea. And all we did there was just live out in the open desert country had a few maneuvers.

Interviewer: That's interesting you were involved with the whole maneuvers from start to finish the whole process. I haven't talked to anybody yet who was involved in maneuvers.

Mr. Hendon: Of course we did large unit maneuvers in other words where the division would be maneuvering against another division and things like that. Our first experience was in Louisiana.

Interviewer: Did you train as a did you go to basic training as a full unit already and then train together as a unit and then travel overseas or did you leap frog?

Mr. Hendon: We stayed as a unit all the way through. And that but the time we spend in Southern California on desert maneuvers I'm presuming now that I think back on it the allied forces were getting into Italy and placed like that. (The tape stopped and then started again at a later time). Maneuvers in Southern California then we moved to Indian Camp in Pennsylvania where they ran us through a brief a brief mountain maneuver sort of thing see we had had dessert maneuvers and everything else so they run us through the mountain while we was there. At the end of that period then they moved us to this was in the summer of 44 I guess they moved us to Camp Knob Standings which is outside of Boston. The

reason they moved us up there was they were getting ready to put us on the ship to go overseas so I guess it was August of the time when we shipped out of Boston.

Interviewer: So what did you ship out on what type of ship did you

Mr. Hendon: It was a pretty good sized ship but it wasn't a great elaborate like the Queen Elizabeth or the Queen Mary or anything. But it was a pretty hard ship I forget the name of it.

Interviewer: How many soldiers did it accommodate?

Mr. Hendon: Huh?

Interviewer: How many soldiers did it accommodate?

Mr. Hendon: Well it had at least half of our division.

Interviewer: So about eight or nine thousand?

Mr. Hendon: Yeh something like that. And we went to Liverpool, England and from there they shipped us across country to a military physicality close to South Hampton. And we stayed there about six weeks or something like that and then they shipped us across the channel and we went in on the Omaha but there was about a hundred days after D-Day that we went in on that famous bluff and we got an idea that it had been tuff going.

Interviewer: I just talked to a veteran who went in on Omaha third wave he was in the thick of it.

Mr. Hendon: As soon as we got in moved in to the Harde country there in Western France just about a mile or so in from Omaha that is when General Paton had broken through the defensive line there in Western France and had gotten near Mess, France and run out of supplies.

Interviewer: Is this near the police gap this is after the police after he tried to close the police gap?

Mr. Hendon: I'm not sure about that. But anyway one of the famous battles there in Western France that had already occurred by the time we got there was Saint Low where they had a lot of casualties and the Germans had a lot of casualties there at Saint Low. But anyway as soon as we got in there and Patton had stalled near that they put our unit in we just camped right there in the Harde country of Western France and they took everyone in our outfit that could drive a truck and that's when they organized the famous Red Ball Highway or what ever you want to call it you know.

Interviewer: I'm curious back up a second here what was your attitude going into the service in the military were you excited about this?

Mr. Hendon: Well I don't know whether excited is the right word, concerned yes. But now my feeling on it was I dreaded it I hated that it had to be I wanted to go my family wanted me to go and do my part it wasn't any matter of trying to avoid it or get out of it or anything. As a matter of fact I remember during the induction process or period I remember whenever we into the first examination of the induction process some of the boys that were turned down for physical reasons and that sort of thing they hated it

and people sort of chatted them about it not very kind in stuff like that. So there was a general feeling that

Interviewer: That you should be doing your part.

Mr. Hendon: Sure

Interviewer: Well your training that you received state side did you feel ready for combat?

Mr. Hendon: Well of course I didn't really know what combat would be like or what was needed for that matter but we felt like we was getting as good as what could be had as far as training.

Interviewer: Okay let's see you were talking about Patton let's get back on Patton's trail here.

Mr. Hendon: Well General he was whenever they took about six weeks they took all of these people and put them in trucks and drove and sent him supplies to near the mess area. Then they disbanded that Red Ball Express or whatever you want to call it and our truck driver came back and then they moved us the 95th infantry division up to the mess area and that's where we were in our first combat. And mess was near the old mansion the old Island and some a line of fortresses up there I guess that were either during or after WWI and of course the Germans had manned those places and expected them to be pretty tuff placed to get through. However mainly what the allies did during that period of time was just go around and they really weren't all that tuff anyway. But we did have some fighting.

Interviewer: What was going on in your mind?

Mr. Hendon: Well I'll tell you I've thought about this a lot. I had wondered all during training what it would be like whenever you get up close to the fighting and the thing to me was the most I don't know how to describe it. Whenever you get over there close enough to be within artillery range and especially close enough to be within small arms range way you've got a dread feeling that somebody might be looking down his sights at you right then ready to turn loose. And that makes life different you have a certain amount of dread or caution or what have you that it's a gut feeling that makes a difference. I don't know whether I'm describing it.

Interviewer: That's fine. How did your fellow soldiers respond?

Mr. Hendon: Well everybody pretty well felt the same way of course. But we knew that was part of it and the thing to try and do was to do what you had to do and try and survive and that's what I remember whenever we first moved into the mess area and hadn't much more than got our fox hole dug and pup tent up and that sort of thing. They came through pulling a person or two from every company to go to certain places General Patton was going to come to and make a speech well the person from our company that went to hear the General's speech came back and the thing that he remembered the General said was he thought soldiers should be like bird dogs they should have a few shots over them before they actually got into the fight see. Se we were back in a position there where the artillery was lubing over us and we could hear in a distance the noise of battle.

Interviewer: Well were you ever shot at?

Mr. Hendon: Oh crap about a month or six weeks I guess after we had arrived at mess and had a few scimmages there and taken over a few positions and we had been moving cautiously across country and taking villages and towns and the Germans retreated then we moved into a place near Saar River it was up river from Sararokun in a little town named Silargan, Saalautern on one side of the river and Sawargaon on the other and we moved into there and this is where we had our first real battle. I remember we moved in in the dark of night and at the time we were moving up there was a tremendous artillery mirage moving up and I take it or I took it at that time that our own artillery was laying pretty much a mirage on the Germans and that was the first time I had ever been that close to that much artillery and I thought the world was going to be torn apart. I mean you would be standing around and the ground under you would be trembling and all that stuff. And then about daylight that morning we crosses a bridge crosses the Saar River which was just a little river probably not a whole lot bigger than Tars River down here but anyway we crossed that and as we got across the bridge into a little open part area and as or company was going down the side of this area the Germans swarmed in the machine guns and things like that opened up on us and during that day we our company had a lot of casualties as a matter of fact I was the only platoon sargent out of the company that lived through the day the rest of them got killed in that one particular scimmage.

Interviewer: Wow and this was where?

Mr. Hendon: In Saalautern I think. And when we finally some of our men not all of them by a long shot some of us got across this open space into the row of houses that was along one side of it and we spent the we spent that night there in that first house we occupied. Then the next day we began to move into some street fighting where actually what it amount to was going from house to house taking over position. I don't have much memory now I don't have much memory of what happened the next two weeks. But about a couple of weeks after that which was on December the 13th no December the 14th I'm sorry December 14th which incidentally was my mother's birthday after having been through several days of fighting we were in our platoon was placed in a reserved position and we were supposed to keep an alert for any German movement to our right and I had all of my platoon down in this basement of this warehouse and I had an observation post established up in the upper room where they could look down at the territory. And I had gone up there to see how the operating post people were making it and knew that there were some mortar had been falling but not anything big enough to penetrate several floor where the warehouse we was in. And this warehouse we was in was a long narrow building that was built on railroad tracks and inside wall of this long narrow building was a hall and at the end of that hallway was a toilet and that toilet had a little narrow window in it. The last thing I remember is standing in that toilet looking out this little narrow window and an 88 shell hit the building right close to where I was and of course tore up everything and I don't know if shrap metal or what have you cut my shoulder off including my arm and one of the men in my platoon sent word down to the platoon that somebody had been wounded up there a couple of the boys came up and dug me out and got me on the way toward the company aid station. And I guess within a matter of a very few minutes not more than five minutes after they got me out a bullet shell came in right in the same position and finished the job as far as tearing up the place. I can remember the first time I had any element of consciousness was

when I was move through the company headquarters I remember hearing the voice of some person I don't know if it was the company commander or somebody in the company headquarters I remember recognizing his voice. And then of course I didn't remember anything else until I was wounded about noon on the 14th and I remember about midnight that night somebody woke me up and asked me if I had been put to sleep with ether. I didn't know whether I had or not and that's probably the answer I gave him but anyway what they were doing I guess I recall later they were getting ready to do surgery. And I remember also at that time I remember they woke me up and wanted to know if I had been put to sleep with ether and I remember at that same time a Chaplin came along and asked me if I wanted him to pray. And I remember I told him I thought that would be a good idea. And then the next morning I don't know how gruesome you want to get on this sort of thing the next morning I began to arouse up and wake up and heard I guess what I took to be a doctor come through of course wounded laying everywhere in the facility. He asked the nurse if that guy that got his arm blowed off last night was still living and she said yes she thought so and he came over and talked to me and about the only thing he said that I remember now was he said that the aggressive surgery of the surgery the night before saved my life. Now I don't know what he meant by that but I have an idea he meant they went in and tied off arteries and things like that to keep me from bleeding to death. And at the same time also he told the nurse to give me a shot and what the shot was or what it was for I don't know and then something happened that I haven't been real proud of ever since. But anyway she came the nurse came over or a nurse came over and was giving me a shot and she asked me which arm I wanted it in and I guess smarted off and said well I don't guess I have much of a choice and I could see the hurt go over her face and I always felt real bad about that because that's a but then for a day or two in this field hospital about the only thing they did was keep me sedated and cleaned up. And I remember especially that grit and gravel and shrapnel and all that that was coming out of my body everywhere and you could hardly touch me without something that sort of stuff. Then on December 16th which was two days later I was in a field hospital near Thinville and that December 16th is the day of the Battle of the Bulge started. And what had happened they moved wounded from the area to a field hospital in Thinville and they were getting ready to fly wounded from there into England to a hospital. But the weather turned bad and they couldn't fly the Battle of the Bulge started they became concerned or alarmed that our position there would be overrun by the Germans. So the put us on a train and moved wounded they moved me and other wounded I suppose also to Paris, France. And so I spent the Christmas holidays in an American owned fairly newly built hospital in Paris, France. I was put in a room with a young air force officer I forget what he was a lieutenant or something who happened to be a dentist incidentally that had fallen somewhere and broke an ankle he wasn't terrible wounded or anything like that but he saw to it that I got everything I wanted he was a very generous young man.

Interviewer: How what would you say about the medical treatment that you received?

Mr. Hendon: Great well let me go ahead after about December 1st or 2nd then we did finally get moved or was flown from Paris, France over to England and was put in a hospital there not too far from the London area I didn't know anything about that but as I moved from the airport to the hospital we were inside the ambulance that's all you saw of it. But about the only medical treatment that I received while I was wounded there they had sulfur drugs and they gave us sulfur. Penicillin hadn't been invited then

and then later I was wounded I had one continuous wound from right here up to my neck. And may not all of that side was a single wound but most of it was there might have been a place or two where skin was still attached. But what they did mainly with me throughout that period of time I was in England they kept me wrapped in saline solution in other words gauze bandages soaked in salt water and they just kept me wrapped in it. In a few hours they'd unwrap them and put a new bunch on that went on for a good while and then sometime I guess around the later part of January maybe first of February or maybe a little earlier than that there was an area here where my shoulder had been that there was not enough skin to close over and close up the wound so they took a skin graft from my leg here and moved it up there and patched the wound with the skin graft. And luckily it took there was a tiny place or two maybe that didn't and finally had to grow in but I had a little trouble with what was called, I don't know what the medical term is, but they called it proud flesh where they had to trim off some of the flesh growth there. They were real attentive and I think the doctors knew what they were doing and the orderlies and other people. I remember some of the soldiers that used to wrap and unwrap me in these saline solutions they were kind and attentive and all that stuff.

Interviewer: Well what about the enemy what about your exposure to the enemy to the Germans

Mr. Hendon: Not much

Interviewer: Mot much?

Mr. Hendon: That's kind of an amazing thing. Now we did there was a time or two when we was just as near as anything of course the soldiers had been captured and moved off and we'd moved into the houses of some people there and we told them we wanted to sleep in their houses there instead of out in the open and they either left or went down in the basement and we took over the mail floor and stuff like that. But as far as in my case now that is all I can tell you but in my case I had very little direct person to person exposure to German soldiers. There was a time or two whenever we took a prisoner or something like that.

Interviewer: So you spend over all your time in the military you spend a few years state side and then

Mr. Hendon: A very short time over there. As a matter of fact I didn't go overseas until August it was probably October late September or October before I even got up in fighting position and then I got my tail shot off on December 14th so I had very little exposure.

Interviewer: So what rank did you actually make it up to?

Mr. Hendon: I was a platoon Sargent.

Interviewer: Sargent Frits Class?

Mr. Hendon: No well I forget what it was I had the three stripes above and two below whatever that was.

Interviewer: Sargent First Class. Well that's

Mr. Hendon: Then about later part of February or March they put us on a ship and sent us back to the states. I came back on the Queen Elizabeth. Which was had been converted into a hospital ship or whatever you want to call it. And then of all things they sent me back out to Texas to a hospital in Temple, Texas. I spent three or four months out there and while I was out there they made a prostheses which is an artificial shoulder which holds your clothes out and keeps to protect the wounded area from sensitivity and I was discharged and sent back home.

Interviewer: So the military has paid for your schooling?

Mr. Hendon: Well after the war after I was discharged well I had the GI bill and went to the University of Kentucky for a couple of years and finished my degree came back here to Murray to teach and then I went back to UK during the summer for two or three or four summers and got a second degree. I had GI bill left but I decided I didn't want to go any further.

Interviewer: Now you let me know if this is intrusive.

Mr. Hendon: Do what?

Interviewer: You'll let me know if this is intrusive and you don't want to answer. Were you ever bitter?

Mr. Hendon: What?

Interviewer: Were you ever bitter about what happened?

Mr. Hendon: No I can't say that. I was at first a little bit sensitive about the empty sleeve and stuff like that but as far as bitterness no. And when I was discharged from the service well I was granted what they called the Veterans Administration disability compensation which generally you might call it a pension but it's really not. It's a payment supposable that would compensate you from the inconvenience of not having another arm. And I think really it was very liberal and had been very liberal all these years.

Interviewer: I left the military under 30 percent disability from running I hurt my knees and they have taken excellent care of me.

Mr. Hendon: I've been treated very well over these years.

Interviewer: Well I have to know for myself this is something for me though the tape is about to stop anyway but for me this is a personal question I just I'd like to know with everything that you have seen over your lifetime not only in the army in military but just in life in general all of the experience that you have had what would you say to someone like me that's really important in life?

Mr. Hendon: Well that's a pretty good question really but I think you you need to make a difference and do what you have to do and do your part I think really. I think when my dad for example brought me to the time to be inducted he told me a story of...(tape ended)