

Jones: Ready?

Interviewer: I'm ready

Jones: I'm Kenneth Jones. I was born in Scottsdale in 1922 March the 14th. I dwelled in that area for some length of time and we moved to Sparta Tennessee 1942. The war broke out in 1941 in the Philippines and I went to Fort Oberthrope in October 22, 1942. I was interviewed there and was tested and was accepted with a GI haircut and I looked pretty. I stayed there at Fort Oberthrope for a few days. I can go back then and tell you a lot about my family but the time won't let us do that. But anyhow we went from there to the army. I went down there and I passed and I was trying to ship out to Attaberry Indiana to enter into the division. That was the 83rd infantry division at Camp Attaberry Indiana. I was sent in I believe I was in regiment number 32 company number 2 platoon number 2 squad number 2. We trained there and got through basic training and they handpicked some boys and sent a bunch out of state and sent some boys to some camp in Mississippi I don't remember the name of it now. But anyhow they went ahead overseas. We stayed there and trained another group of people and so when the time came we shipped out. I don't know exactly the time but it was late in 43 when we shipped out. They shipped us out from there to Camp Attaberry to what is Camp Chance New Jersey. And that was in April when we landed there we was waiting for transportation to go overseas to fight the war. Snowing in April in Camp Chance New Jersey we got on the ferry and went out on the ocean a way and got on the boat USS Lejeune. And we headed Liverpool England as we taxied oh I don't know how many miles it was outside of Liverpool the German planes got on us. And so they beat them out whooped them out. I don't know how many they killed or whatever but anyhow they cleaned them out. We unloaded there at Liverpool sometime it took us about 18 days to go over and that was a good trip believe me. I was an old ship that the British had used in WWI.

Interviewer: Wow

Jones: It was so ragged and they put us on the train and there wasn't nothing to it but eight people. Four sitting here four over here no bathrooms or no nothing. The Red Cross gave us donuts and coffee and there we got on a little train. Somehow or another we hadn't washed our cups good enough our canteen cups and we didn't have no bathrooms. You asked for all of it I'm going to give it all to you. We got on that train and we started down I believe it was War England the place a little town called War and we didn't have no bathrooms and we tried to get that train to stop where we could use the bathroom. And helmets and canteen cups were going out the window you never saw anything like it in your whole life. Finally we stopped and the old engine was stalled on the train for a long time. Well so much for that, we got started and went into War England went over in a cow pasture. The cows had been in there that day so it wasn't real nice. We fixed our place and pitched our pup tents. So we stayed there some length of time so they shipped us out of this little town on down to close to the English Chanel at an old camp. Looked like it had been there for four hundred years muddy around there boxes in the bed in there didn't have no mattress on it. It was just the awfulest sight you ever saw in your life. But anyhow after we had been there let's see wait a minute and I'll tell you the name of the place we went to Omaha Beach in France in Omaha. But that's where they were going to strike at. Well we heard that day we didn't think anything was going to happen that night but it did I thought the war was coming to an end. So we stayed just a few days on I believe it was three or four days before we went in. And there was still a battle there bad battle guns just going everywhere. Well we landed in an LST ship we sailed on up in there so far we couldn't go no further because of the flat bottom. We had to get in 12 man boats and go through the bend. And we got up to the bend and pieces of bodies was everywhere head, arms, teeth whatever you couldn't hardly walk. Had to wade in water about knee deep and walk around all of

those shot up bodies. We got up there we finally pulled up and fought our way down there a little ways to the 82nd air borne. They was flying down we went down there and took off they was Germans they landed in the trees the wind got up they landed in trees and they just shot them in trees. They were just hanging there everywhere you look you'd find somebody in a tree. So we stayed there with them I believe the 137th and our company and there weren't but about 86 air bornes left so we slept over. The next morning at daylight we took them dudes. We went in there I don't know how many we got but anyhow they shot them tanks all night long them big guns they thinned them out with that. The next morning we cut out I don't know how far we pushed in I would be safe in saying maybe 10 kilometers and we marred down there. Then the following next day we were supposed to make a big line well some of the boys found a big jug of Koniak or something it was alcohol if you please is what it was. And they drank some of that a bunch of them had hangovers and wasn't decent for battle. But anyhow it was done scheduled to go we were done scheduled to go. Well alright I was the first guy down me and Oakley Moore we went in first to see what's out there and get killed and call back and tell them I was there. But anyhow we started pushing on we didn't find the Camp in Burma and Lieutenant Wright they followed us as far as they could. And they landed in hedge rows you probably don't know what a hedge row is. It was a pile of dirt up so high then they had some kind of plants on top of it. But Officer Captain Cramer got killed he was the first person I seen that got killed. But brother lieutenant I told him said if you get killed before I do I want your bird gun. That's the last thing I ever so he got the bird gun. They were supposed to push off in fifteen minutes and they were fifteen minutes late. And we laid down all the men I laid down on the ground with one of the mortar shells that fell on me around me but never did hit me and played dead for seven hours.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness

Jones: Germans walked around me I was afraid to breath I heard everything they was saying but I don't know what it was something. And then finally the tanks come by then the dead was laying everywhere and there was a hedgerow there and an old road place where there used to be a road down under maybe four feet five feet something like that. And after I heard the American boys you talk about somebody shouting happy I was shouting happy because I laid there for seven hours no water no nothing. Cause they was all around me see if I would have said something somebody would have heard me and if I would have wiggled they'd sure know I was alive. They thought I was dead I didn't even have blood on me. But anyhow I held on so long there with the dead and wounded that big ole hedgerow but I got to the headquarters on top of the hill I don't know how long I was there. We got up there so here they come counter fighting the Germans counter fighting so then Pete Blousy me and Pete Blousy was fighting together we was in the same squad he's a Russian an American Russian. And so he got up on that back down there up that hill and the German army had a BAR if that means anything to you. And Blousy had his gun and they got up there and boy he blowed them down like blackbirds. I don't know how many and so we had the back up from air they were traveling down behind a little rural and finally got reinforcement and we gave them a run for their money. The next day we had to get a new lieutenant to my squad and we was making a drive and we were crawling up a little ravine something like a little ditch the squad was because we were going over there to get a mortars nest we called it. Anyhow there was little mortars that were falling everywhere we was trying to crawl through there. I was in front I still was the scout and got up there so far then that little ditch give out. This lieutenant told me this little bitty smoke house a horse stable a little house of some kind over there and the Germans were shooting across there with the straits of bullets way high. And so this lieutenant just had been one day there never been in battle and he told me to go across over there and throw some hand grenades in that little house and wipe that nest out. I said alright if you go with me we'll go no no you go I said you hide and watch me go. Let me tell you something I wouldn't ever call him lieutenant because he done

had me mad I'd probably done something else. But anyhow and no how I told him I wouldn't go I said now I'm gonna tell you them chaser bullets up there are bad they were shooting them high to let you come on through and they had machine guns below there that would just cut you into. So that's how the Germans had me red bullets out there chase they was red you could see them but you know still. So we got out I wasn't going to go in anyhow the next day become July the 4th no become July the 25th. I'm telling you that the air was full of airplanes you couldn't see nothing but big planes as high as they could fly big old bombers. They were just all up there British and American we were all on there. Well there we was they opened fire on us there where we was at with mortar shells and artillery shells and everything else. And finally they pulled out and I was in a fox hole, that's a little hole dug in the ground, I was in a fox hole and so I couldn't get out because machines were shooting over my head and I knowed it. I knew right then I was in combat several days I knew where that gun was at, at least I thought I did. Anyhow directly here come one of those ole shells I was in there and blowed me plum out of that cotton picking hole. I was in there blood everywhere blowed my riffle all to pieces. I had a pistol on my side had that left and I headed out trying to catch up with the group and the lieutenant said no you're not going. You're going back to see the medics I said I'm going up there ain't nothing back there for me. I pulled up my leg blood everywhere it had done began to get stiff. He said well if you've just got to go I'll send the medics with you. He did so we cut out got over to a little blacktop road and horses' wagons trucks and everything in the world. The best part I remember of it when we first got on the little road there was a 42 Ford at that time Ford had a plant in Germany built Fords. And had it out there so we walked by there and I saw a dead German in there. I'll never forget as long as I live what he, I said why in the devil don't you get up you can't win a war sitting behind a steering wheel I said listen. We kept going on and on and on there was burnt and oh I can't tell you how it was it was just a mess. Night come we was up on the little old road and all of the outfit had done gone you could hear them see boom boom boom boom these things going over there. Little ole fighter planes coming over casing and so we seen a big building down on our right we went down there and it was a wine house where they made wine and sider. And I went up there and asked this ole family could we stay all night there they didn't want us to stay see they said there's Germans all around there. I said I'm around here too I said I guess I'm the only one they said there's more than you and the medic. Anyhow she give us a little ole room to spend the night. We got in this little ole room and up in the night something began to bump in the door trying to get in on us. And I know it would be the best to stay quiet if he stuck his head in they'd blow it off but he never did come in. We stayed there so long I got tired of hearing that mess well we went over to the wine cellar. The wine cellar not the cellar but the wine house it was longer than this off the road and they was laying breast to breast Germans, Frenchmen, Belgium in that building on pallets the houses had done been blown up. Him and I we laid down there for a while the next morning we got up and thought man we're getting hungry nothing to eat we couldn't find no dead boys had nothing on them. Before that if we found them dead when they got killed we could get their rations see. It was a ten in one ration and had a k-ration with a big chocolate bar. And all we had to do was get it out of their purse I mean their belt they had it in their belt and so we'd get that but we didn't have none. We got up there hit the road again trying to catch up with them we were walking. Here come a convoy of ammunition and they were GI people and we tried to flag them down and they wouldn't do it. Wasn't supposed to we wasn't supposed to be out there either went on down looked off down to the right and there was an old farm house. I finally let's go down there and see if them people will let us have something to eat. We went down there and they was cooking making a stew outside there were just whole storms of people where they had been victims of the war see. And they was cooking something to eat and went up there and I spoke to this little French maid she said the officer is upstairs. I said the shit you say he said there was two, two officers up there. I said go tell them to come down I want to see them. They did they come down there with their guns up. I said lay your guns down we'll take them and we'll get a bowl of stew. They did and of course I couldn't speak a word of German the old French lady was trying to speak to me.

They had deserted the army is what they had done and they was hiding out. Well we stayed down there a while and they couldn't they didn't want to stay all night. Here we go over the hills again come to the town now we're getting closer that music sure sounds good them big ole guns we thought we were going to catch them see. Well we couldn't do it I went down there and I asked this lady could we spend the night in her house or anywhere we could sleep we was hungry and needed something to eat. We got a bowl of that stew but oh my God you ought to try a bite of it. Anyhow no how I went down and asked here could we spend the night she said we could. Said she had a little bed upstairs some of the prettiest linen you ever saw in your life. It was white and the bed wasn't big enough we were both supposed to sleep on but we had to sleep with our clothes on. We were dirty and bloody and everything else. Well went to bed went a sight to see and pow here come the shells in that house and pow. Had a slate building if you know what a slate building is had little sheets of some kind of rock. Anyhow went all over our face and knocked the top out of the building and didn't hurt us. So we went down there she met us at the bottom stairway and said go down in the cellar and stay down there. We took a blanket down there and slept down there that night. The next day the next day as luck would have it we caught them. And you talk about being happy we was happy well I got wounded the next day again. And so they took me back to the hospital I was in a big ole field hospital. I'm telling you the gun men turned the bombs a loose over that hospital that night and buzzing all the time it would drive you crazy as a dead loon. There was a lieutenant in there and I asked him I said what outfit you from? And he told me I don't remember what it was it was something wasn't infantry. And I'll tell you what us do let's go to your outfit. A truck come along there carrying it was truck with the supplies on it I said these trucks will be along after while let's slip in behind the last truck and hold on to it and ride up there. But they didn't have nothing but blackout lights little bitty lights and they wouldn't shine on you now very bright. We got up there and held on there I had a leg hurting so bad I don't know what was wrong with him I knew but I forgot. We rode down to the next morning up there and found our chickens. Boy you talk about happy people man they had the big ole gas burner out there eggs on there turning over big bunch of bacon and stuff. And so we sure had us a good breakfast that morning they was 35 Germans over there somewhere they sent me after. I was the only one volunteered to go get them. I went over there and they'd done had their guns packed they blowed them into pieces. And so they wanted to carry them back to the headquarters or back to the camp and so we didn't have time for that told them to stay here somebody would come by and get them I knew wasn't nobody going to come. But I wanted them you know to be happy there. Well we went on and was there with our outfit a little while we headed out again didn't get captured the way you thought we got cut into the German line. We stayed back there two weeks with no food green apples, sugar beets, and milk from an old crippled cow where it had been shot. So one day we found a little smoke coming up down there we traveled at nighttime trying to get back we saw this smoke down. I said Pete let's slip down there the best we can and see what's going on. Well the Germans seen us coming and they left out they had a Frenchman watching for them and he told them we were coming and they had a bunch of I believe it was turkey mean in there boiling. We stayed there eat a bunch of that stuff made us sick it probably had more in there than that. We went on and on and on with us cut off we started off. Pete and I finally made it back to our outfit. But it was a hard hard hard job and I'll tell you little more I'm going to skip a few lines.

Interviewer: Alright

Jones: And so this time I got wounded and they put me I was there for two weeks I didn't know I was in the world. And sent me back to England Birmingham England where the big hospital back there. And so they sent me to the general hospital sent me there. There wasn't that much wrong with me I think she got a card that I was missing in action then. Is that right hon?

Woman in the background: Yeah

Jones: And so I was missing in action two weeks but they got back out there got that straightened out and she got the right one. We stayed up there awhile and they sent me down to this field hospital I stayed down there a long time I don't know how long it was I guess maybe a month two months. And somebody talked me into the notion of going to town that night I don't know if it was a holiday if it was Christmas or what it was. So I it wasn't too hard to talk me into the notion to going got on the bicycle we rode over on a bicycle for two rode it down there got down there doing something I shouldn't do and the GI brought me back the MP put me in the rehabilitation camp. Stayed there two week and sent me to Glasgow Scotland with 22 men to pick up some ton trucks and grader blades. Well I started with 22 trucks got there with 18 these boys the steering wheel was on the wrong side they couldn't hardly drive them. And of course we got down to the English Chanel and went up on the other side and started up the bank and it was slick. The boys was trying to shift them to go up the bank instead of getting hold of the gearshift they got hold of the dump and dumped them blades all down the road.

Interviewer: Oh my

Jones: So I went up there there was a bunch of Italians prisoners up there I got them to _____. Let's stop it right there.

Interviewer: Are you tired now?

Jones: You come back next week and we'll start from the grader blades. That's why I've seen so much. I might be feeling a little better the next day I can go over some of these things I made a mistake on and tell you some more.

Interviewer: Okay

Jones: Yeah and this read up and you and _____ got me a picture I believe.

Interviewer: Yeah we did.

Jones: On the Rhine River?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Jones: Up above War Germany?

Interviewer: Uh huh

Jones: Now I was in War Germany oh let's stop there War Germany for a long time. The town was flat then.

Interviewer: That's amazing?

Jones: Huh

Interviewer: That's neat.

Jones: Yeah when we crossed the river down we were going down there one time with some maps and turned and went into I believe it was Heidelberg and eat supper up there one night. And I was stealing some onions from this man and he told me if you will come to my porch I'll give you some good dry onion. I said uh oh he wants to get me. I said you bring them here then we will have some good dry onions. And he was American German.

Interviewer: Wow

Jones: Come back next week you know.

Interviewer: Alright okay