

Interviewer: Colonel Patton if you don't mind

Patton: Major

Interviewer: Oh excuse me Major Patton. Dr. Browder had put it down for me I apologize. For the record what is your full name and where and when were you born?

Patton: My name is James H Patton Jr. I was born in Dubois Pennsylvania small town in Pennsylvania.

Interviewer: What year were you born sir?

Patton: Nineteen twenty. They declared WWII was declared on my 21st birthday the 8th of December. They attacked Pearl Harbor on the 7th declared war the next day on my 21st birthday.

Interviewer: Who were your parents?

Patton: My father of course was James H Patton Sr. and he was in the automobile business in Dubois Pennsylvania. He was also connected with B&O Railroad and when B&O Railroad began to close down when they created diesel engines they stopped making steam engines which they were doing in Dubois he left the railroad and went into the automobile business and stayed in the automobile business the rest of his life.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Patton: I have no brothers or sisters natural but my parents adopted two girls one four years younger than me and one four years older so I really had two sisters. I was an only child with two sisters.

Interviewer: How did it feel to be the brother in the middle?

Patton: Well helpful I think. I was about eight years old when they adopted the younger one four years old and I was about ten years old when they adopted the girl that was older. So it was I'm happy for them they were fine people and I enjoy well they're gone now but I enjoyed them for many years.

Interviewer: And your mother was a homemaker?

Patton: Oh yes well she did some she had been a secretary before they got married. And she did secretarial work for the Presbyterian Church but that was kind of a labor of love I don't think they paid her much.

Interviewer: What are your recollections of the depression?

Patton: Well we did better than most. We the old Patton homestead was still going my father's brother was running it. And they had cattle and pigs and gardens and all that sort of thing so we didn't suffer much. The automobile business pretty much shut down but of course I was young and not paying too much attention to the economy. But my family didn't suffer very much. I know we had there was coal mine on the old homestead that they had leased to someone. And my father kept the rights to get so much coal from that thing. And he got a dump truck and hauled coal for several years to people for several years to people who couldn't afford to pay for it. I for years after if we needed a plumber or a

carpenter or most anything else it was always somebody who was glad that my father helped during the war and was glad to come out and do this and that. My father was an unusual man.

Interviewer: Sounds like he was a good man. What was your early education like?

Patton: Well I went to I graduated from high school at Dubois of course and I had principal appointment to Annapolis. And I hadn't taken enough math in high school having not planned to go to Annapolis. And so they got me a scholarship at _____ Naval Academy and I went there for a year and decided that I wanted no part of the military. So I came home and told my father I wanted to go to college I wanted to be a football coach I didn't want to be a sailor. He was very disappointed but I went to Long Haven State Teachers College which was a physical ed. college. Gave up my principal appointment and my alternate made it I'm very happy to say.

Interviewer: What was it about the school you went to that made you realize this ain't for me?

Patton: Well it was a prep school and we had I went there as a I was already graduated from high school so I went there as a and the first year you were a cleave and then the second three months the first three months you were a cleave and then the second three months you were an upper you were a youngster I guess they called it. Then the last three months you were an upperclassman. But when you first got there you had these little pink shaven kids coming up getting all over you for not having a button buttoned and it was just that kind of discipline I think just set me off. And I was I considered myself a pretty good athlete and here I am with all these little kids telling me what I can and what I can't do. At that stage in my life it just didn't fit. Now when I did get in the service some damn fool started the war and I got in the service I stayed in for 20 years and loved it.

Interviewer: Well prior to Pearl Harbor what were your feelings or what was society's feelings about Hitler and Germany? What he was doing in Europe running over Czechoslovakia and what Tajo was doing in Japan and what he was doing in the South Pacific. Do you recall?

Patton: I recall it very well and I was among those that felt he had to be stopped. And I left school in the middle of my junior year and joined the army as a private last class. So I was one that helped save the world from a democracy.

Interviewer: Do you recall where you were when you got the news about Pearl Harbor?

Patton: Where was I when I got the news about Pearl Harbor I don't remember? I was at school I was in Lock Haven I know that but just where I was at the moment my memory doesn't serve me that well.

Interviewer: What were your feelings when you heard that?

Patton: I wanted to go I waited until midterms were over and left school and joined the army.

Interviewer: Did you listen to Roosevelt's infamous speech the day after on the 8th?

Patton: I sure did.

Interviewer: What's your opinion of Roosevelt and his handlings prior to Pearl Harbor on the international scene?

Patton: Well I always thought that he was getting us ready for war weather we knew it or not by building up industries and so forth to support the British the allies. He knew he was getting us ready for war that's I thought about it and I thought it was a very intelligent move.

Interviewer: Tell me about a little bit about your volunteer for the military. Did you go through a draft center? Did you have to take the IQ test or?

Patton: I took the IQ test I went to Camp New Cumberland. Camp New Cumberland had just doubled the size of their camp.

Interviewer: Where's Camp New Cumberland?

Patton: That's in Pennsylvania near Harrisburg. And they didn't have an NCO for each barracks and I had a leg up since I had been to military school and knew how to drill all that sort of thing. And I found myself a private in the army three days in charge of barracks. There was a Captain Middleton in WWII retread I guess you would say who talked me into staying there said he could make me a corporal. In those days company commands could make corporals and I agreed but then I had signed up for airborne when I enlisted I signed up for parachute things. And then I was called on by personnel and told that that had my priority that I would have to ask for a waiver. Then I decided I wanted to do that I wanted to be a parachutist so off I went to basic training.

Interviewer: How much did you know about parachuting?

Patton: Nothing nothing at all I really wanted to get in the air core I wanted to fly. But the air core was closed for a short time because they didn't have any place to put recruits. They were building airbases to receive recruits. And of course I was having getting some stress from my father who didn't want me to do this wanted me to finish school. So I felt I had to go now so the recruiting officer in Dubious sent me down to Altoona Pennsylvania a bigger town and a bigger recruiting office to see if I could get in the air core there. They were on the second floor of the post office and there was a big landing the stairs went up into segments and there was a big landing there with bulletins boards with pictures of paratroops on it. I said well if I can't fly I might jump out

Interviewer: So you were really just kind of intrigued by the idea?

Patton: Yea so I jumped out of airplanes.

Interviewer: Where did you go to jump school?

Patton: Benning first I went to Camp Croft to basic training and then from Camp Croft at Camp Croft the decided I should go to officers candidate school. And before you could qualify you had to complete a NCO school at Camp Croft and I did that. And then I went to officer's candidate school and then I went to parachute infantry school those classes were at Fort Benning too. And then I went to parachute school then I went to demolition school then I went to the 501st parachute regiment as a regimental demolitions officer.

Interviewer: What was the training like at basic for you knowing that you were going into the parachute infantry?

Patton: Well it wasn't as difficult for me as it was for a lot because I had been I had that year in military school. And I got to be in that as you know they put those things on with corporal stripes and I got to be a squad leader and all that sort of thing. That year of military training made basic training easier for me than it was for a lot of people. Of course we had some there that had been in service before and had two or three year hitch but were not in the infantry so they had to take basic training with the infantry. But they had some military experience and they were in the same category I was had to ____ basic training.

Interviewer: What was the living conditions like at basic?

Patton: Oh it wasn't bad it was a barracks you just had a whole bunch of bunks that were what about 45 people to a barracks something like that two floors. Had your bunk and your space and a place to hang a few of your things in a foot locker at the foot of your bed and it was community living.

Interviewer: What did the training encompass as far as small arms, DNC?

Patton: Well you spent time on the range you learned you had obstacle courses a lot of it was physical training you had obstacle courses. You learned how to march you learned how to handle arms all the basic things all the things a soldier needs to learn. I think one of the things that they were teaching was discipline. A lot of kids coming in out of high school didn't know too much about disciplines. Of course I had a leg up there too having been to a military school. And I did pretty well on the IQ test, put those things together I was picked to go to ICS.

Interviewer: What was ICS like back then?

Patton: Well you got into it and you it was a bit like basic training except a lot more technical now you were learning tactics and you also spent time on the range. I think probably the biggest addition was learning military tactics military infantry tactics.

Interviewer: Did you feel prepared physically for jump school by the time you got

Patton: I think right off the football field I was in good shape.

Interviewer: So you had no problem with it?

Patton: No problem with the physical part.

Interviewer: Okay well after jump school you said you went to the 501st as a demo officer were you regimental?

Patton: Regimental Headquarters Company

Interviewer: Demo Officer

Patton: Demolitions officer

Interviewer: Now where was that where was the 501st section at?

Patton: Dacula Georgia the 506th had preceded us there they were about half way through their training. All the calvary in the 501 at Dacula were already jumpers. And then the recruits came in and they took their basic training that I had at Camp Croft. We gave them at Dacula then after basic training we took the whole regiment to Fort Benning and put them through jump school.

Interviewer: Where did you go from there?

Patton: From Dacula when we finished there we went to Camp McCall which is in North Carolina near Fort Bragg. And we continued our training had to make night jumps I think they were preparing us for a night jump. And of course we had with my demolition platoon we had a lot of demolition problems and took people around hydroelectric plants and coal fired electric plants and so forth to teach people how to blow them up. How to put them out of order if you wanted to continue to use them later or how to put them out of order forever. The same with bridge all that sort of thing with the demolitions that was our training how you blow things up.

Interviewer: How large were your maneuvers and your training? Now did you do it on the platoon level company level regiment or did it go all the way up to maybe even core level?

Patton: All the way up we went on maneuvers in Tennessee where it was army wide.

Interviewer: Okay

Patton: And all kinds of training I say good training too in the 501 we had an excellent commanding officer Colonel Johnson. The 501 I think when they went overseas were very well trained and continued to train.

Interviewer: Well tell me a little about your trip from the states to England.

Patton: We went up to Fort Miles in Boston where we parted from a week to ten days a good time there. Then the whole regiment the 501 got on the WG Gulpers liberty ship went across the North Atlantic. And the North Atlantic was in January as a matter of fact we left Fort Campbell on New Year's Eve. And it was like going across the North Atlantic in a tub fortunately or maybe unfortunately maybe I don't suffer from motion sickness never had. So I got officer of the day almost every day because I was the only one well enough to go down in the hole to check the troops. Everybody else was too sick half the crew was sick.

Interviewer: Just because of the rough seas?

Patton: Very rough seas.

Interviewer: Did you get to go over in a convoy?

Patton: Yes big convoy.

Interviewer: Did y'all lose any ships to German U-boats?

Patton: Yes we did not that I saw but I understand later that we lost a couple.

Interviewer: were they troop transports were they freight or?

Patton: There was two transports that got I don't know if they lost all the people but they sank two ships. I didn't know that until much later they were out of sight of us. We heard at night we heard some gunfire but we never were close enough to see it.

Interviewer: Where about in England did you land?

Patton: We landed in Scotland and then we went by train and truck to well the regiment was slit I went to New Berry and we had camp on Lady Craven A's estate. Craven A is a popular cigarette in England and the 501 headquarters and the first battalion the first battalion or second battalion first battalion were in New Berry then the other two battalions the second battalion and the third battalion were in another location.

Interviewer: What was your take on the environment there I mean the scenery the people?

Patton: It was beautiful and the English people were fine. They thought that the Americans were over decorated, over sexed, and over there. But

Interviewer: Well did you get much free time or were you pretty much just training training training?

Patton: we got some free time we had some weekends off.

Interviewer: What did y'all do?

Patton: You'd get a hard week of training and then they'd turn loose on the weekends. I got to London several times when we were there.

Interviewer: What did you do while you were in London?

Patton: Oh mostly sightseeing the theater and good restaurants good food was important. We went to a few night clubs of course I'd say mostly sightseeing. And the last the first time I was in no I guess it was the last time I was in London was the last major _____. I was in an apartment in London with some friends when a bomb landed in oh what's the name of the place oh anyway close to Nicebury blew the windows out of the apartment. And fortunately we were at the window and when the glass blew it didn't hit us there were some stuck in the wall in the back of us but nothing there were three of us and not any of us were hurt. One thing about the English people I noticed when the elevator was jarred out of place we had to walk down four flights but by the time we got down there and out in the street the British Merchants were out there sweeping up glass like it happened last week.

Interviewer: Do you think you being there for that you kind of appreciated the will of the English people?

Patton: Oh yes

Interviewer: What they had gone through?

Patton: Oh my yes. Yes the English people were certainly fine people and took that war in stride like I wouldn't have expected until I got to witness it.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you did do some pretty tough training while you were in England.

Patton: Oh yea

Interviewer: Was it anything different or specialized that you hadn't done when you were back in the states?

Patton: Well the only thing that we emphasized night jumping a good bit and we emphasized night operations a good bit more than we had before. Now when I was at demolish school we had a couple night jumps but at Camp McCall we couldn't do too much at all we were training troops there. But we had pretty rigorous training all kinds of training night training all kinds of attacks all kinds of they didn't know exactly what our mission was going to be. So I think we were pretty getting pretty well our training was pretty well rounded.

Interviewer: What different kinds of small arms were you trained on specifically?

Patton: Well the 45, a carbeam, and an M1 and I carried I don't think I was ever on range with one but I carried a submachine gun. I had a 45 and a submachine gun.

Interviewer: The submachine gun was it one of the grease guns?

Patton: No I had a regular Browning.

Interviewer: Browning, well tell me a little bit about a month out from the actual invasion. Were y'all on call a lot? Were they having to line you up and get you ready like you were fixing to go and then call it off?

Patton: No we it got called off but just for a day or two we didn't go back we stayed in the compound the next day.

Interviewer: What was going on in your mind at the time?

Patton: Oh you're apprehensive of course and you know you're gonna get shot at in anger and that's something you think of. But in the air borne I think you have a great deal more confidence in the people around you then other types of units. You know that every single man there has the nerve to jump out of airplane. And I'm sure you could go to a lot of military units and find people that wouldn't do that. So that's a confidence builder all the time we were in combat in the 501 I never saw, I think there were some, but I never saw a case of combat fatigue. I never saw men back down I know it happened I heard about it. It was infrequent enough that I never saw it.

Interviewer: Do you think that's credit to the training and men?

Patton: I think its credit to the training of parachute people. Now we always had a little joke going between glider people and parachutist until Normandy. Then we saw what those guys went through on those gliders that ended. We gained a great deal of respect for those glider men.

Interviewer: What was your relationship with your platoon sergeant like?

Patton: Bruce Cook he was a friend of mine until he died.

Interviewer: Were you pretty close were you in you know time and time again I've been told okay you're fixing to be a second lieutenant first thing first you find out if you've got a good platoon sergeant if you've got a good one you listen.

Patton: That's right

Interviewer: Was that the case with you?

Patton: Yea that and the first sergeant too. Our first sergeant at the time Sinai Margo is still a good friend of mine. He lives up in Connecticut and he comes to all the reunions. He's the parliamentarian for our governors and he took me to raise.

Interviewer: Would it be fair to say he probably taught you ninety percent of your job?

Patton: Well no not ninety percent it just so happened he was a demolitionist too. But no he didn't he taught me how to behave as an officer. When I first got there for a very short period of time I was the company commander people were just coming and I got there early. And at that time whoever was senior could have been the communications officer and the demolitions officer was also the headquarters company commander. And out ranked the communications officer by three or four days so I became the company commander. And the coincidence of that I would get a call from headquarters and Sinai would pick up the other telephone and tell me what to say.

Interviewer: As long as he didn't steer you wrong it sounded like he was

Patton: No he didn't steer me wrong he had been a first sergeant he had been there before. You know at that time when you went to parachute school you took a break you weren't parachute higher than a corporal or something like that. But as soon as they got the 501 they brought him back up to a first sergeant.

Interviewer: Well tell me a little about the evening when y'all were boarding the planes getting ready for the jump.

Patton: Well that's a high I don't know how to explain that exactly.

Interviewer: Well what did it seem like all of the guys were doing?

Patton: Well you're so busy really we had the responsibility of getting all the people in your plane and the equipment in your plane and the bundles under your plane and all the things you have to do. You're so busy that you really don't sit down and worry about it much. The first time you really get comprehensive about what you're about to get into is once you're in the airplane and you're on in the air and you're on the way there. Then you've got nothing to do but sit there and wait and that's when you do the most thinking about it. But then I was thinking about what am I gonna do when I hit the ground how am I gonna get these people together. Our mission was to go to _____ and I'm going through my mind all this training that I had how I'm supposed to get to _____ and if it

was prepared for demolition to make sure it was deactivated. With the base of the Normandy peninsula was inundated and there were only a four bridges there and Germans were gonna keep that inundated so if the invasion should come there we couldn't get off.

Interviewer: Right

Patton: But we were gonna use that in reverse, we were gonna keep it inundated so they couldn't get on. And so it was the demolitions job to get down there and make sure it wasn't prepared where they could blow it up ____ blow it up to dam and run the water out. But as you know you probably heard we never assembled as far in my concept of the first night in Normandy was small groups of American's fighting small groups of Germans. We just jumped all over them.

Interviewer: Is that due to the flack?

Patton: Yea the flack and those pilots were just as new as we were. And the flack came up almost like water hose that you could see. My plane was hit it sounded like rain on a tin roof. And the right engine the plane was on fire and we only had one person hit in the airplane though Sergeant Fukalidge got a bullet right in his leg. But with all that flack it didn't get into the fuselage up there it was on the wings and we could hear it. About three weeks after we were in Normandy I accompanied then Major Bernard now retired Lieutenant General Bernard down to get the body of one of his classmates at West Point Colonel Carroll who was our first battalion commander got killed in Normandy. We went down to pick up his body and I saw just about a hundred yards back from where he was it was an airplane there with just the tail sticking up it was all burned up. And that was my airplane I could tell by the ____ number on the tape. So I went over and looked at it and there were still three people in it I got out I was the last one out. Colonel Johnson believed that the jump master went first you had no more control of his stick so he thought the jump master should go last and I bought that so I jumped out last. And my chute opened and I hit the ground almost simultaneously and the crew chief with a free chute got out after I did. He joined us on the ground there.

Interviewer: Mercy so you said pretty much at the same time your chute opened up you hit the ground.

Patton: Yea

Interviewer: Do you recall approximately what was the altitude that you were at?

Patton: I would guess three hundred feet something like that.

Interviewer: Well did you have a problem with everybody that was in your stick?

Patton: Oh yes yes I was the first hour I had about four or five people Fukalidge being one of them with a bad leg and he walked all night on that leg too we bandaged it up tight. By morning we had about nine people then we come upon a when it was daylight we came upon a little French compound a barn and a couple houses and a wall around it. And Sergeant Fukalidge was very happy about that a very pretty little French girl took him over. And then more people began and in the first movement in the morning hours there we probably got together 40 or 50 people a conglomerate from all kinds of units.

Interviewer: Guys from the 82nd.

Patton: About six or seven, no we didn't have any from the 82nd in that group no. But we had them from all companies all of our people I think we had some people from the 502nd I believe it was that joined us. Then we formed a group and went Larboard Cam Locks. We got shelled a little bit from across the river from the Carentan side of the river as we approached Larboard Cam Locks but I don't think we lost anybody. Then we got down to Larboard Cam Locks and Colonel Johnson was there so we formed a defensive position around the locks. Had some Germans attack us and captured most of them and put them in a barn there. And then their German guns shelled the barn we had quite a problem got several people killed then and had quite a problem with them. They wanted to get out of the barn of course we couldn't let them out of the barn because we couldn't control them and their own artillery killed a whole bunch of them and some of our people. Our ____ was killed there several people it was kind of a bad show there for a little while. But everything the company began to form got together and we went on to Carentan then we attacked Carentan that was quite a battle too.

Interviewer: What was your first impression of combat actual?

Patton: Well it's I don't know how do you explain that I don't know. You're senses are about as high as they can get. You know that there's enemy on the ground that want you dead and you know you have to the only way you have to protect yourself. But we had clickers you probably heard about those and one of my very first experiences before I met anybody except I think there was a cow I passed. I heard some voices on the other side of the hedgerow and they didn't sound like English and so I went click click and I didn't get any answer. So I sprayed that hedgerow with my Browning and then I got the heck out of there because I didn't know how many people were there and I was by myself.

Interviewer: Didn't want to stick around to find out.

Patton: I didn't want to find out.

Interviewer: I can understand that.

Patton: Nobody chased me so I guess I made out alright. Then very shortly after that I ran into a couple of the demolition people that jumped somewhere in that area.

Interviewer: Flood of relief come over you when you finally found some people?

Patton: Oh yea sure it's nice to have somebody with you. It's nice not to be alone in those situations.

Interviewer: Well after Carentan what did the 501st where did they head?

Patton: After Carentan we went back to protect Sugar and we stayed there for I don't know a couple weeks ten days something like that then we went back to England. After Carentan our combat was finished. We went back and regrouped and then our next mission of course was Market Garden in Holland.

Interviewer: Did they give you enough time to lick your wounds though in England?

Patton: Oh yea we got replacements and got reequipped and took some more training and then off into that was the end of the battle of course we were under the British there. And I was the my demolition people when we jumped in we were dumped near Veckle Holland. And there were four bridges in

Veckle two railroad bridges and two demolition bridges and the demolitions were briefed to individual don't assemble with anybody individually go to your bridge. And again we wanted to make sure that it wasn't prepared for demolition if it was deactivated because we had to keep those bridges open because the British were going to be there with their tanks in four hours. So it was a must to get their in a big hurry and we did it and we did it successfully. But the British didn't get there for four days. And we were having quite a problem before they got there that's what happened to the British first. They were the furthest on the other side of the river Harman and they didn't get up there for a couple weeks. And they lost half that division before they ever got there. In my opinion we needed General Patton instead of General Montgomery.

Interviewer: I think that's fair to say I don't think you would be quite wrong with that. What were the Dutch like?

Patton: Wonderful people wonderful people they still are and so appreciative to be relieved from the German people. They hated their occupation.

Interviewer: Do you remember seeing the orange flags and the orange being put outside the windows?

Patton: Oh yea we saw those Veckle when we first got there. The movie Band of Brothers was of course and they have to be as creative as they can to put down the British since it was made with and a lot of British actors were in that thing. But they had different tanks coming through ironing them right form the get go which wasn't so they didn't get there for a while. But that's neither here nor there I shouldn't put down the British either. They lost about one person out of every family by the time we got there. I think they were a little over cautious. It was one a place in Holland a brickery factory where they made bricks the Germans occupied it and was on our side of the river and the British were opposing them. And they had a barmiest as their everyday about four o'clock the British would stop everybody would stop and they would have their tea. And the Germans would come over to get their wounded and so forth and the weak. The way this happened we went up and occupied them during the night and got in with the British. Then we stayed with the British all the next day then the next night the British left. So the Germans wouldn't know there was a change. And during that day we noticed that when they took the break for the tea and so forth the Germans were bringing over a whole lot more people than they took back they were making replacements. And the British told us that they attacked several times with a platoon and each time they had a lot of casualties and weren't able to get them out of there. So the 501 attacked I think with a battalion that's three companies and we took it in that first day and lost nobody captured all the Germans that were in there.

Interviewer: Did you get to speak to any of the Germans that were POWs?

Patton: Several times yea

Interviewer: What was your impression of them?

Patton: Oh they were well the first that I saw were professional soldiers there was no doubt about it. They handled themselves professionally and they wouldn't say anything but their name and serial number just like we would. Later on you began to get kids and old men.

Interviewer: ____ Check

Patton: Yea but not so in Normandy and not so in the beginning of Holland.

Interviewer: Now y'all didn't run into any SS in Holland did you I can't remember?

Patton: I don't think so the Wilmonk.

Interviewer: Well after Market Garden where did they send the 501st?

Patton: Well then we went back to France. And well before as a matter of fact we were getting replacement and got equipment and before we were refurbished the Bulge happened. That was kind of an interesting experience for me E Company. And the 501 was selected to lead the division to Bastogne and the 2nd battalion was selected to lead 501. And E Company was selected lead the 2nd battalion. So there we are right on in the beginning. Our battalion commander was Coronel Sammy Homan and he was ___ got the lead truck and he would pass every once in a while make sure we were going the right direction. We got there got there the next day and got on the back of those trucks and started immediately set up a perimeter around Bastogne. Because our commanders knew that was a key place that had to be held and they sent the 502, 501, 327 all out different directions. And they managed that thing with task forces if the Germans would attack one side of that perimeter, pretty heavy attack, they would gather up all the reserve people from all the other sides form a task force and go over there and fight. I think if the Germans would have known if they would have attacked two or three places at the same time and they had the people to do it they might have cracked that thing. They seemed to want to concentrate penetrate one place at a time then we were able to

Interviewer: Fin them off

Patton: And we lost a lot of people there too. But actually in my company we lost more after we left Bastogne. We were going to Foy and on ahead of Patton's tanks we had we lost more I think in the 501. I wouldn't be surprised if the 101st didn't lose more people after immediately following Bastogne than they did during Bastogne.

Interviewer: Really

Patton: Yea there was some very tough fighting when we started pushing the Germans away started to push them back.

Interviewer: Do you think that was the Germans buckling down knowing you were fixing to come into Germany?

Patton: Yea its defense is always better than offense because you're dug in and can defend yourself where the attackers are on the move. But that was kind of a hard way to go that was tough fighting. I know I lost more people in my company there than we did during the war in Bastogne. Well we killed we did away with a lot of Germans too well we won the war so that goes without saying.

Interviewer: Oh yea well I mean at what point in time did you notice though the Germans they're broke?

Patton: When we went after when we were finished with that operation we were sent down to the Motor River in Alsace. There was intelligence reports that Germans were having another build up in that area. So they sent down a ___ in case there was to be something which didn't happen. It was not a bad

trip the only problem we had there that I had there was that they wanted General Patton wanted information and he wanted patrols back there all the time. So we had to send patrols out every night and the first thing they said that all the patrols had to be officer led. So my company was in reserve and there were only two officers so every other night one of us had to go on patrol. So that was kind of hard for a week or ten days. Then it came down that no officer was allowed to go on a patrol it all had to be NCO led. I suppose they lost some officers I don't know and they were ____ I guess about that time. But we did it successfully I didn't have any problem with my patrols we brought back prisoners two or three times. And that was kind of a headache that was after the Battle D thing happened where they butchered a bunch of prisoners. And you had a hard time keeping your people from retaliating they wanted to kill all the prisoners. General Patton is saying I want prisoners and your people are saying we're not taking them. And so you almost get down to the point if you shoot him I'll shoot you to get them to take prisoners.

Interviewer: Did you ever have to see that command and control tactic have to take place?

Patton: No I just heard about it. I didn't have that problem.

Interviewer: Well where did you venture from there?

Patton: Then we went to Birches Garden. Got sent to that then my company went down to a little town called Mark House in Austria and we were on occupation duty there occupying the little town. And they were having problems there they had girls that had befriended Nazi troopers when they were there and some of them with babies. And some of the people didn't want to feed them wanted to cut them off and we were furnishing the food most of it. So we had to get into the food distribution business to make sure that these women and their kids got fed. And there was some of the head shaving and going down the road naked and so forth. We kind of broke that up in our little town too.

Interviewer: Was it the native Austrians didn't care for the Nazis?

Patton: No apparently not apparently not because they certainly were against their own people that had fraternized with the Nazis.

Interviewer: I've heard instances of that in Holland. That's the first I've heard in Austria.

Patton: It wasn't that bad and it was a smaller town and we were able to control it. In Paris and bigger places of course they had bigger problems. The Pergermeister reported to me every morning we sat down and talked about the day's problems and so forth. He was very cooperative he didn't fight us and he had been in the German army too. The first time I saw him he was wearing a German uniform. And I told him only my people could wear uniforms get your people out of uniforms you're civilians now.

Interviewer: Well it was safety for him too though as you said your own guys. Well I mean you're there on occupation duty how often did the guys get passes to go have a beer have a steak or have run into a girl.

Patton: While we were there we didn't have any. While we were there there wasn't any places to go. They enjoyed it though because they had their own food and most of them would get together in little common places and they'd have a cook. One of the Australian people they would hire them as a cook

and they'd furnish the k-rations and c-rations that we had and some of these cooks did great work with that stuff.

Interviewer: How long were you there?

Patton: Oh I think three to four weeks not more than a month before we were recalled. And then the 501 went to Barrington well we went to another German place first I can't think of the name of it now. It was a German camp which we occupied when we came back from Birches Garden. And then from there they took the high pointers the 501 went to Barrington France and the low pointers went to the 82nd. And the deactivated the 101st deactivated the 501 then we joined the 17th they were coming back. And we joined them and came back on the I forgot the name of the ship now nice big ship better than what we went over there on.

Interviewer: Did you go back across the North Atlantic?

Patton: Yes but it was in the summer time no we left Mersey well we went back to Boston so yes it was the North Atlantic. But it was a different time of the year I know it was summertime because it was warm and the sun was shining.

Interviewer: While you were over there did you ever have to see or be around the concentration camps?

Patton: No never got close to one of those. I know people that did and I heard all about them. And when I got to the 82nd I heard about one too that the 82nd had taken over there were some pictures and a couple of the officers calls we got stories about that. But I never saw them in person. I'm just as glad I didn't have to carry that memory around.

Interviewer: One of those nightmares. Were you ever wounded?

Patton: Yea I caught a little piece of shrap metal and I got knocked out I got too close to an oil ship and I got a little piece of shrap metal in my elbow and I get back out on the road then I was knocked out for a while. Nothing serious I got over it.

Interviewer: Medical treatment pretty good though?

Patton: Oh yea I had no problem at all. They took the little piece of shrap metal out of my elbow and put bandage on it made me stick around a while make sure that my that the concussion I had, I guess I had a concussion, make sure that wasn't gonna give me any more problems. When I appeared to be normal they let me go. I got a Purple Heart but then that's you don't feel you earned it you know when you get a minor injury you get a Purple Heart. Then you see somebody get a Purple Heart got both legs blown off they deserved.

Interviewer: Sir I appreciate you doing the interview with me.

