

John Schafer

Interviewer: I am Thomas Edward with Austin Peay State University and I am here today with John Schafer a veteran of WWII with the 101st Airborne in the prestigious 907 glider field artillery and we are going to be discussing his recollections of the depression and some other questions along that era and more specifically his engagements and his recollections of WWII and his personal experiences. We're gonna spend a lot of time talking on that but I want to ask you first when you were born and where?

Mr. Schafer: Cleveland, Ohio 1922 you need the date? August 18

Interviewer: August 18 that would make you a Leo.

Mr. Schafer: I'm a Leo my favorite color is orange.

Interviewer: What did your dad do for work?

Mr. Schafer: My dad was self employed seasonal in the spring he sold annuals perennials then in the we had a load during the summer and then in the fall he would sell grapes, tomatoes, potatoes and when that season ended and it was Christmas time which he looked forward to immensely Christmas trees. He was self employed until the war in 1941 I believe or 42 he went to work for America ship building as a security guard.

Interviewer: He was in seasonal you mentioned he was selling flowers and vegetables and things the land that he was doing this on did he own the land or was he a tenant?

Mr. Schafer: No he was a tenant he leased it off of his brother-in-law it was like an open air market. And he leased that off of his brother in law.

Interviewer: After I'll move up a little bit after 29 the stock market of course crashed and shortly thereafter the depression set in there full force do you have any recollections of it?

Mr. Schafer: The one that sticks in my mind most my mother worked for Shoes Chocolate which was a big well known brand at that time and we lived at West 89th and Loraine Street she worked at Shoes Chocolate which was down town Cleveland. I want to say it's probably about 6 miles one way and un be known to me until I got older and my dad told me she would walk home from work okay because she didn't want to spend the car fare. I think the fare at that time was either 3 cents or a nickel to ride the trolley to come home. Now that's the impression I got from my dad he didn't tell me this until I got into my teens. Yeh they would put paper you've heard the story they would put paper in the bottom of their shoes because they couldn't afford to get them resoled. Other than that I didn't know there was a depression.

Interviewer: You didn't see any bread lines or soup kitchens?

Mr. Schafer: Yes I did because there was a bank right across the street from us okay Cleveland Trust. And every morning I couldn't figure out why these people were lined up it was right in the corner and the

line would wrap around the corner and up the street. They were there every morning hoping the banks would open up the door and they could get some of their money out. Didn't happen.

Interviewer: And you were going to school at this time I imagine?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh I went I graduate from high school in 1941.

Interviewer: 1941 did you have any plans to go to college?

Mr. Schafer: No sir

Interviewer: Later on as the depression was going on and you were starting to get older were you aware or did you listen to many of the Fireside Chats?

Mr. Schafer: Oh yeh the popular figure besides Roosevelt was Father Cartland he was up in Michigan. But he was that was almost religious on Sundays you had to get by the radio alright and if you didn't have one your relatives would come over and sit with you and listen to Father Cartland go off on his deep end so to speak. Kind of a radical for that time.

Interviewer: So you're at a high school and its 41 December 7th we have Pearl Harbor do you remember your reaction?

Mr. Schafer: Oh I remember where I was I was over at my buddy's we were watching or not watching TV it wasn't in yet we were listening to a football game Sunday afternoon my recollection when the report came over the radio. The one Jack Thomas my one buddy that was there he went down the next morning and enlisted in the Navy. Pete Nelson who was also there he went down the next morning and enlisted and they turned him down he never did get into the service. Yours truly I'm a coward if you want to use that I thought they are going to come get me, they did I got drafted in 42 two weeks before Christmas. And I came out discharged three weeks short of three years in 45.

Interviewer: When you were drafted how did you react?

Mr. Schafer: Gun hoe

Interviewer: You were ready?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh I was ready as a matter of fact I went to Camp Harry, Ohio if I can relate this story and there must be 400 people who got drafted all came in on the same train. At the end of the week 10 days there was only about 60 of us left in this one barracks we can't figure out what we're doing here everyone else has left. We all volunteered to go to jump school at Camp Blaney, Florida because it was warm down there and we were in Camp Harry, Ohio and it is colder than you know what. So we all are looking at each other did you yeh, we would up down at Fort Brag in the Airborne. At that time basis training was 13 weeks. We went in on a Monday I believe it was a Sunday Monday morning was the start of our basic that following Saturday was the end of our basic. Cause the 327th was out in the field I believe it was and when they came back they needed their barracks back so we had to vacate and when

we vacated they assigned us to our regular outfit at that time. So I really was lucky I had one week basic.

Interviewer: One week of basic training?

Mr. Schafer: There was a catch that first Friday after we got down there we went 25 miles out on an overnight 25 miles out camped overnight had to shave in the morning and shave put a blade in it not just run the razor you know put a blade in it and we came back the next day 25 miles. We covered 50 miles in two days.

Interviewer: That's what we call it a cram course.

Mr. Schafer: That's a cram course I done a lot of running when I was younger so basically I was fit for that but we were lucky one week basic and we went into our regular outfit.

Interviewer: Were the other members of your group as lucky? How did they

Mr. Schafer: Oh there was some people that didn't make it they dropped by the way side what they would do then is bring what we call the meat wagon all right up and they would put these fellows in and they would tell you they were going back to basic. All they did was take them up to the head of the column drop them off and then they would wait there until you came by your particular unit came by and then they would fall in. There was no free ride.

Interviewer: How did your parents react to you being drafted?

Mr. Schafer: I really can't tell you I don't know. They came down twice to visit me and ride a bus from Cleveland to Fort Brag. I figured that would tell the story to come that far on a bus you must think something.

Interviewer: There you go. Did you have a steady girlfriend or were you married?

Mr. Schafer: No sir no

Interviewer: So you weren't leaving a heart throb behind?

Mr. Schafer: No I met my wife, you met her, the day before I left for camp and she worked at that same place I did so that's how I knew her. She came down to see us off at the train station and I didn't see her again for a little over three years.

Interviewer: What did you do for work?

Mr. Schafer: I was a lithographer. I was a helper at the time but when I came back

Interviewer: Does that have to do with stones?

Mr. Schafer: You well it used to be things evolved while we were gone with technology and that you print off of a cylinder a zinc plate okay. I worked on it my fulltime job as I worked on it and got

promoted was a Harris 5276 engine sheet fed alright. Today you got to be agile and you have to be young because I believe it's a young mans game. Wet presses they are running 30,000 an hour where we were lucky to get five so.

Interviewer: So you go to a weeks training

Mr. Schafer: A weeks training

Interviewer: Condensed training in Fort Brag and where did you go after that?

Mr. Schafer: Fort Brag we shipped out we went on maneuvers as a matter of fact right before spryer we were down in Springfield, Tennessee.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh we spent a couple of weeks down there.

Interviewer: Do you remember of it was summer?

Mr. Schafer: It was in May I had gone home on furlough I was going to get 30 days wrong I get a telegram I'm home 10 days I get a telegram to report back because they are going on maneuvers so that shot that down. I had to report back to Fort Brag and then we went down to Springfield and had our maneuvers I guess for about two weeks war games.

Interviewer: What was that like?

Mr. Schafer: Well I didn't know there was that much rock in Tennessee we tried to take the guns in, impossible so we had to start picking rock out to build a para pit supposable for protection from incoming ammo.

Interviewer: What were the major weapons? There was the M1 of course

Mr. Schafer: The M1 we had a 75 pack what they called it a pack hawser and when we got overseas we had carbines with a folding stock. The M1 we qualified that's why they brought us there to Springfield to qualify at Fort Campbell with the M1s. I think I told you by 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock in the morning they had the mosquitoes down there as big as your thumb nail. But that's changed but that's what we did qualify with the M1 and then went back to Springfield.

Interviewer: And after Springfield you were in Springfield?

Mr. Schafer: About two weeks.

Interviewer: Where did you go after that?

Mr. Schafer: Oh the next adventure would be we shipped out for Europe in September I think it was. Yeh we left right around Labor Day in September of it would be 43.

Interviewer: So up to the point you were shipping out in 43 correct me if I'm wrong but you had basically three weeks of training?

Mr. Schafer: Well don't misconstrued every day was dry runs we'd go out in what we call area X and go through our gun maneuvers and gunnery and that was day in and day out then there was over nights. Yeh I only had one week of basic but the rest of it was ongoing continuing all that time.

Interviewer: Did you when you received word that you would be going overseas at that point when your training came to an end did you feel well trained did you feel undertrained or did you not even consider.

Mr. Schafer: Oh no you felt that you had it together yeh. You were capable you were looking forward to seeing something because you tired of going out in area X and digging holes. Pretty soon you have to start finding a place where you haven't been digging alright so you're anxious to get going.

Interviewer: When did had you up to this point had any training in a glider?

Mr. Schafer: No well let's see we had they took us up three times.

Interviewer: Three times and did you land as well in the glider?

Mr. Schafer: Well back stateside you would land on the airport. As a matter of fact they didn't have gliders on maneuvers we went in and faked it used GNCs as gliders because they didn't have gliders enough of them and they didn't want to risk tearing them up down in the fields down there here in Tennessee. So they took us in in GMCs and that took the place of the glider. It I think we had to do three flights they took us up three times. Alright and that was the first time a really got an experience to find out how fast 90 miles an hour is.

Interviewer: Was this your first time in an airplane?

Mr. Schafer: First time city boy I mean I've been to the airport watched the planes come in but ever up in the air. And I'm sitting between the pilot and the co-pilot right and while the co-pilot was one of your unit it could be your sargent could be you staff he sits there in case this guy has a heart attack on his left he's supposed to take over right. Thank God the pilot never had a heart attack or epilepsy fit. But anyway he says read the odometer and give me an air speed I said what's that for sir he said I have to come in at least 90 miles an hour or this things gonna nose over okay and I said okay. And here comes this concrete runway I want to tell you 90 miles an hour that's fast. But those basic I was told were pilots that washed out of fighter school that were going to be pilots and I was told that basically they were washed out didn't make it and they give them the option of flying as crazy as they were their your glider pilots.

Interviewer: You were kind of co-pilot.

Mr. Schafer: Co-pilot of the it used to be if there was none come in there he was the co-pilot. PFCs and just a private didn't get up there.

Interviewer: So it's 43 and you're going overseas?

Mr. Schafer: Overseas

Interviewer: Where did you embark from?

Mr. Schafer: We shipped out of Camp Shank, New York.

Interviewer: What kind of boat was it was it a military vessel was it a commercial liner?

Mr. Schafer: Oh you want to hear about this?

Interviewer: Oh please

Mr. Schafer: HMS Draft neighbor English it was horrible it was horrible. They had an Indian crew okay and before I forget we used to go down to the mess and you had two big containers alright one for the late wood and one for the dry material one morning we went down to get the oatmeal and one of the men found some fish bones in it and started to complain to the captain and the captain says hey man your getting protein shut up eat it. But it was a very it was a turbine operated ship. Long story cause we left out right around Labor Day guess when we got to England, six weeks later I believe it was when we got to England. We spent three weeks yeh three weeks up at Saint Johns Newhall.

Interviewer: Saint Johns okay.

Mr. Schafer: Yeh we couldn't get out every time we'd go out they figured they'd repaired the hole where the leak was would leak again and short out the turbines' so we'd come back into harbor we spent I believe it was three weeks up there. We got off the boat twice to go to Camp Fort Pepperell up in the hills.

Interviewer: You must have been on the boat with Mr. Folsom.

Mr. Schafer: Oh I probably was

Interviewer: Yeh you probably didn't even know it but I spoke with him yesterday and he said the same thing Indian crew got detoured up in Saint Johns there was a ground or something there was damage to the hull had to repair it a couple of times.

Mr. Schafer: We were out there by ourselves we just one destroyer escort okay that's protection f there would have been a sub in the area because we were left back the rest of the convoy goes on.

Interviewer: Were you worried yourself personally about the subs?

Mr. Schafer: No I don't think so I figured they are not going to get through that maze and the ship that finally took us over alright was in the original convoy we started out with. Okay the SS John Erickson and that crew thought they were going to get shore leave when they got back to the states they got a coded message pick up troops Saint Johns they had to make a turn around we went down to Halifax did he tell you went down to Halifax and resupplied the ship because on the assembly ship they had their rations and their soft drinks they didn't have any sugar to speak of everything was either bland or dull so when

we got down to Halifax they wanted to resupply. They said you put on Pepsi Cola, Coca Cola, Nabisco wafers after that stent on that strap there I wouldn't get orange marmalade for ten years.

Interviewer: Did you get sea sick at all crossing?

Mr. Schafer: I was fortunate I got a little qeezee but I never what do you want to call it up chuck. Anything like that about the third day I was fine.

Interviewer: Did any of the others get sick?

Mr. Schafer: Some of the men never left the head. But we had men lying on the floor they couldn't we had to have people bring food to them what food there was on this thing. That's why I ate orange marmalade that's all I ate. I wouldn't touch the food. But yeh they were paid in the companion way they were so weak some of them couldn't get their head up it was that bad.

Interviewer: Where did you sleep?

Mr. Schafer: One night we would sleep below deck the next night you would sleep on deck it was enclosed in the front the bow of the ship it was enclosed all of the way around. But one night on deck and the next night down in the hole.

Interviewer: So after you leave Nova Scotia you eventually get to England did you go to Liverpool?

Mr. Schafer: Yes sir.

Interviewer: Okay what if any was your reaction did you have a striking reaction to seeing England or?

Mr. Schafer: It's pretty hard to you were curious to things that you might have read in a book but just curious as to how the people are and the towns and basically where is the nearest pub. Are we going to be close or out in the middle of nowhere? We went to Bradford Farms Bantam House was the officers bay wake okay and we were down at Bradford Farms. Let's see B Battery we were like L shaped right a long side of the road and then Baker Battery was behind us.

Interviewer: How did the civilians treat you? Let's split it up how did the women treat you or is it different from the men?

Mr. Schafer: Well there was no men there to speak of all it was the women that hadn't seen their husbands you know they had been down in what Africa they hadn't seen their husbands in a long time and I know if I get into detail the GIs looked pretty good. They had cigarettes they could get stuff out of the kitchen like canned peaches and I' sure that lots of stuff went off the shelf and into somebody's lauder at home.

Interviewer: So there is possible something to the British saying that the problem with the Americans is that they are over paid over sexed and over here?

Mr. Schafer: That's right well you know the British airline is BOAC right stands for bring over American cash. But you leave a pack of cigarettes went into a we had a bar or a pub up I London we used to get up

there and we sort of made that our home they treated us a little bit like family if they ran out of scotch you had to start drinking gin but they would always keep back a bottle of scotch if you want they'd throw it all out to the regulars but when you got there they could find a bottle of Johnny Walker Red or Black Label they could always come up with that. So we had our Pensberry Park I won't forget the name of that that was our home away from home so to speak in London.

Interviewer: So overall would you say that civilians got along pretty well for the most part?

Mr. Schafer: Oh yeh only don't leave a pack of cigarettes at that time on the table I don't know if anybody told you but if you had to go to the men's room you always had one of your party at the table because if the both of you had to go when you come back everyone in the room was smoking your brand. Right you're going where in the hell did that pack of cigarettes go because you couldn't draw on an English cigarette they are packed so tight you would do this.

Interviewer: Is that right turn you inside out.

Mr. Schafer: Turn you inside out. Funny

Interviewer: So your there I know during the day you were still undergoing some training quit extensively and your in pubs in your leisure time seeing England. When June 5th the night of June 5th roles around you finally get word that you're going.

Mr. Schafer: We went to a Washing area before that they sent us to Whales and it had been raining it was miserable and I guess well it was cold in Whales and that was nothing but black mud where we were. Thank God they finally they had sent us to the wrong marching area they pulled us out of there and they sent us to they made a movie in that area How Green was my Valley they sent us down there it was like going from hell to heaven. I mean there was grass there was solid footing and that's where we were shipped out of Washtoning area.

Interviewer: And up to this point had you had more experience in a glider?

Mr. Schafer: Let me think I don't think so not that I can recollect. Oh I take that back they took us down I think it might have been a fake that they were making an invasion. We went down around Borardmif in England and we had like maneuvers we would have in the states and they took us we would have a load in Horsa glider that's the British version. And they took us up and they flew that that was scary I like the CG4 better it didn't look that great but it was a lot more comfortable. Horsa you needed an airstrip to land it in it was that big. Yeh we were up one time that I recollect.

Interviewer: Once you on June 5th you the moment you realized you were going and your crocking the channel and you know what your going to be doing how did you respond to that how did you feel about that were you what I'm trying to get at were you very anxious to go were you hesitant?

Mr. Schafer: No I think you wanted to go you were tired of the preliminaries let's put what we've been doing all this time for ten months put it to come use because it's starting to be repetitious and let's get it on. Basically as a matter of fact they took all of the noncoms and officers they had this ship that went

down took them down in the hole and I guess they had maps they had sand tables down I never saw that part of it they gave it to the noncoms that part of it and they'd come up and they had all of the information. So yeh you were anxious what's it look like where are we going our story I mean we went in at 9 o'clock in the morning glider trainer gliders guess what we go in on a ship I'm sorry a ship

Interviewer: Was it a big LCT?

Mr. Schafer: No the original ship it was a trooper transport that went and picked us up the John Erickson the one there I'm sorry the Susan B Anthony.

Interviewer: The Susan B Anthony.

Mr. Schafer: And the times vary I read two conflicting stories about this supposable we were there on the 7th as a matter of fact I have always been under the impression we were there on D-Day the 6th. We weren't supposed to land until the following day the 7th but due to the fact that the ship hit two mines and went down we've got to go somewhere and knew any places on the shore. So we went in at Omaha.

Interviewer: Where were you on the ship when you hit the mines?

Mr. Schafer: Down in one of the words I can't remember down in the compartment I was I remember I was eating an apple and talking to Sargent Webber. And the lights went out all of the bunks went up and when you push up you could release them and they would drop down and make room right all at once went up and the came down flat against the wall. Where are we at the lights were out something's wrong here. So I believe it was Sargent Hypes said everybody top side don't worry about gear top side up in the bow okay. So we went up topside and the ship is leaning you're look around and the British Navy were wonderful they know what they're doing their doing the signal code and the captain I understand the one of that fixed the Susan B Anthony the British told him you've got a big hole there man a gaping hole. We're going to come along side and take troops on and get them off and that's what they did. A destroyer escort then a destroyer and then they would put up like an LCI Landing Craft I believe it's Infantry or tank they'd ditch on that then they had us sit out there and we had to wait I believe it was 2 o'clock in the afternoon before the tide came in so they could go in and drop us off.

Interviewer: I want to back up for just a second and ask you something about that. Did they ever give you an explanation as to why you weren't going in on a glider?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh the idea was I missed not telling you that they wanted to save one battalion of artillery to support the infantry. I believe the 377th had A Battery Baker and C and they had four guns in each one so they had a total of 12 guns or I should say 75 pack Howitzer. When they landed after the Debacko all of the equipment that went up they were supposed to be able to pick it up assembled the gun and put it together they would do it by hand the paratroopers would the first artillery by hand go into gun position to support the infantry and come out with one 75 pack. So they said at that time headquarters was thinking we will send a battalion in by sea so they got some artillery to support the infantry that's why we went in by sea.

Interviewer: Okay so it's about 2 o'clock not and your headed towards Utah Beach?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh no Omaha

Interviewer: Omaha Beach

Mr. Schafer: Yeh Omaha

Interviewer: What did of course the first wave had come earlier of the of the infantry. What did it look like as you were approaching the beach? Were they shelling over your head?

Mr. Schafer: Well the name of the battle ship I believe was the USS Texas and they were shelling lobbing shells in God knows where I don't know how far that guns shot 10, 15 miles they were lobbing shells and a American thunder boat came across chasing a Jerry I was like watching a movie actually when we were sitting out there waiting to get in. All of this is going on and taking troops in and bringing the wounded out on the docks okay we got on the beach of course medics there.

Interviewer: Did you get on the beach through Hogonsburg or did you just come right up on the beach?

Mr. Schafer: No we had to wade they gave us life preservers to put around your

Interviewer: Was it May West is that what they called it?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh well they had capsules they were supposed to inflate, wrong. Jumped off it's a good thing it wasn't over your head because you had all of your we didn't have any of gear all we had was our helmets. Everything we left went down in Davey Joe's locker.

Interviewer: So you went on Omaha Beach without a riffle?

Mr. Schafer: With out any just a helmet we looked like Mirrors Mirada's. Alright we looked like we had been there the night before and we hadn't seen I hadn't seen a German yet. Seen a lot of American's that were injured. We got on the beach we spent the first night on the beach.

Interviewer: Were you taking fire when you were walking on the beach?

Mr. Schafer: Well we weren't taking they had it pretty well neutralized by the time we got on I don't remember any fire. But at night artillery fire would start coming in. Day time the guys didn't show their face because we had air superiority alright and at night though they would start their artillery and we dug in on the beach spent the first night there. Then we moved out we'd go in and rendezvous get our equipment now we were picking up M1s mess kits canteens off the wounded that were coming in to the aid station. Right so we could resupply ourselves that's how we got resupplied. That was a hell of thing to do but go in there and wait for some wounded guy to come in and if he's got any gear at all I'll take it because you're not going to be using it for awhile. We were in there on the beach the first night it was the second night they put us Frank Parsentka and myself on the corner we were going to wait for our guns were supposed to come up the road. When they get here you joint them to the next intersection right and then you jump into the last jeep and you'd move on. We were there all night never saw our battalion guns. Come to find out they were up at Utah Beach they had the wrong

information. So they were up at Utah and they were supposed to be at Omaha unloading. It took two days before we got out Hawsers.

Interviewer: But when you finally have your equipment who did you link up with?

Mr. Schafer: I know you're a small element and your only concerned about yourself and this 502 says your firing sporadically and you don't know who you support I think the only one who would know would be the FO. Because they are up there with the troops. So it we fired one day they gave us a fire mission three rounds a minute for 15 minutes that is when they were pushing to take Carrington. And at the end of fifteen minutes they said keep firing we fired a total of 45 minutes. Three rounds a minute 45 minutes multiply that times 12 guns. And that was the only time I saw what artillery fire could do we moved up oh I'd say about four hours later you couldn't walk across the fields that you wouldn't step in a hole. We in other words a step there a yard three feet three feet three feet there was a hole you just went across that field and laid down a carpet of fire.

Interviewer: You r fist complete day and night in France were you digging fox holes?

Mr. Schafer: Well I took over a fox hole that another fellow and I we took over a fox hole that the infantry had dug previous so we didn't have to do any digging okay. It was like moving into an already furnish apartment it was there. The infantry had moved on.

Interviewer: What was your impression of France? I'm assuming you hadn't seen France up to this point.

Mr. Schafer: No I hadn't seen France. My impression let's see your so busy doing what you have to do. Basically I hate to say this but dirty. I don't blame the people but the circumstances dirty. They welcomed you with open arms of course but your moving hello how are you their waving a coniac at you and then schnapps my first impressions were not that great.

Interviewer: You spent some time in France and you were recalled back to England to prepare for Operation Market Garden?

Mr. Shafer: Yeh we spent we went up to Carrington for R&R up to Carrington short brief perennial but we went there for R&R then we came back we took our first shower. Now there's an experience you've been in your uniforms for I don't know how long you was in your not worried about changing clothes. And somewhere I don't know where it was we was in France they had gotten kitchens or showers established and took us down there and issued us all new clothing. Okay ODs or fatigues and they had this big humongous tent set up that were showers for the troops. I'll tell you what I never had a bath that felt so good believe me. That was like cleaning yourself up putting on a new set of clothes now you were ready again.

Interviewer: Did you get to see the Port in Sharberg?

Mr. Schafer: No some of the fellows did they went up there and bought caches of liquor and cognac and all that stuff. But no most of the private unless you pushed or weaseled your way you didn't get up to see Sharberg the Port of.

Interviewer: And when you were called back to England I assume you didn't know why?

Mr. Schafer: Oh yeh you're going back again you knew you were going back to your base we went back to Bradford Farms right. We came in at that time when we came back we came in at South Hampton. And the thing that I remember coming back I don't know whether they were saluting us okay as returning troops you know heroes or whatever. But there was a couple of British ships that we had to pass as we came into port and they were all on board okay at Parade Rest and it looked like they were welcoming us home. It was pretty the whole ship from stem to stern it was all sailors and they were all in their fine bib and tuck and it was pretty.

Interviewer: So then your back in England and do you happen to remember about when that was?

Mr. Schafer: Hard to say we came back sometime in late June early July early July.

Interviewer: Okay and then of course Market Garden was September 17

Mr. Schafer: September 16

Interviewer: September 16 okay while you were back in England did you go through any training that you thought was a bit different?

Mr. Schafer: No

Interviewer: Okay

Mr. Schafer: Not really thanks to Patton I'll say this for the man I think he saved a lot of lives because we went to the air port previous to going to Market Garden. And they set up sand tables alright and you would go in and they would brief you said this is your drop zone this is what it's going to look like you will drop here you will assemble and you will move on to your target. Well we sat on that airport for about a week or longer because every time Patton moved out they didn't have any communications with him. They didn't know where he was alright so every time he would break silence they would find out that he already went through that town three times we had sand tables got briefed and three times we didn't go anywhere we just sat there. I think the 68th was the original drop and the weather was go bad they turned us back that's what happened. We came back and we lost nine men at the airport and then previous because they weren't looking for us to come back and there was no let down procedure coming into the airport so it was every man for himself. And we lost nine I think they were the only ones that were killed at that time all the rest the Baker Battery and Headquarters came out unscaved but we lost nine men. That's scurry when your officer comes up and he says we're going to have right on the tarmac we're going to have roll call. You know we seen the guys go down who's missing? They had a roll call and there was no answer when they got to McFadden, Jessie Elroy alright these were fellows you went in with that was the bad part. Then we set there a week ten days before we were able to get in.

Interviewer: When did you discover that you were going to be under Montgomery and how did you feel about that?

Mr. Schafer: I never did well after reading books and that cause when your there all you get is bits and pieces and when you come back you can put all of that together. One thing I like Patton we'd get through spread out create havoc the British always wanted to tidy up. They would stop at 10 o'clock in the morning for tea stop at 2 o'clock in the afternoon for tea you know I mean are we fighting a war here or what are we doing? But it was important to them I guess ten & two I don't care what's going on tea time. So no I respected the soldier the 101 and or the British Airborne. We seen them come out alright we had to pull off the road as a matter of fact when we were at Halan. They pulled us off to the side and the British 1st Airborne came out. They got them together proud I got goose bumps these guys come out and they were in step guide on coming down the road after all they had been trough they tidied up the formation came down the road proud as peacocks. It was good I wish I would have had a camera okay all I got it is up here.

Interviewer: When you were eventually when you went back in you were dropped outside of Arno?

Mr. Schafer: Vago is the name of the town I remember. Vago there was another town that was off the path a lot of them got dropped never made it to the drop zone. They either got flack or had to bail out cut the glider loose from the C47 and get down in a hurry. Then Den Donin at the time Ben Bushda they called it because nobody could pronounce it name about this long in Holland. We went in Vackel.

Interviewer: Oh I have to ask you was this your first actual trip down into combat in a glider?

Mr. Schafer: In a glider first time.

Interviewer: What did you have with you the standard carry what 13 guys there bouts?

Mr. Schafer: Well with us you had two gliders to tow the guns. One took the jeep then you had the driver and you had another man sitting next to him I'll say myself in the back you had cans of gasoline and behind that you had shells alright 75 or 105 when we went into Holland 105 shells back everything you could put in there and carry. And then the other glider

Interviewer: You'd have the howitzers?

Mr. Schafer: We'd have the howitzer so when you go in there you were supposed to get in the same area and this jeep comes over and hooks up the howitzers you jump on ride the hood or whatever and you go to your assembly area.

Interviewer: How well did that work out?

Mr. Schafer: Not too well not too well you know the pilot that first thing he wants to do it get down in a hurry. And the man we had I would I had his name he did a beautiful job I mean it was like he parked it at the airport.

Interviewer: Is that right

Mr. Schafer: Oh yeh he cut loose and he gains altitude right he gets up and he starts looking around and I said man there's a real nice patch it's long brawn he's not going to that one he sat it down in a field and

put it in the corner alright like this. Your supposed to land so the nose is down your you got the jeep hooked up when the jeep starts out it pulls the nose up and then it latches at the top and the jeep keeps on going. Wrong we had to get out run around to the tail and there was a hole in the tail area, when I think about it it is scary now, put this galvanized pipe through the hole and you had two we'll say two by fours with holes in it on one end. And you would prop the tail up put these two by fours in on either side and push the tail up. Then you would get the nose down and the jeep could drive out. You following? I mean a real operation right yeh it was all manual and when we hit the ground the Dutch Underground came out they had orange arm badges there was a whole there were older men there, there were youngsters, there were women they came out whatever you needed it's done tell them alright. They came out and they helped up get the tail up so we could get the jeep out.

Interviewer: What was your mission?

Mr. Schafer: The mission was to hold what they called Hell's Highway open.

Interviewer: Hell's Highway

Mr. Schafer: Yeh so that the British what the 30th triple X could get up the road with there tanks and relieve the British Garson.

Interviewer: And you waited a long time.

Mr. Schafer: We waited a long time but we flew in we seen Lories as far as your eye could see along side of the road. Now how did they do that there supposed to be way on down the road. They weren't moving at all they were up there and we got to a certain part and we left the British tanks and Lories back here there's something wrong. Well we're supposed to hold the road open maybe that's what they're waiting for right, a week later no. That was out mission but you're there hold this part of the road open I don't know what the 82nd is doing I don't know what the 502 is doing what's their job what area?

Interviewer: One of the things that seems to be a recurring thing when talking to WWII veterans that you develop almost tunnel vision you are so focused on what you're doing and what you're doing from minute to minute at times that you're really not and of course you don't have access to the big picture you don't as you mentioned you weren't even really aware that you were under Montgomery.

Mr. Schafer: Well you would become aware of it it took time because now you would start getting British rations.

Interviewer: Did they differ tremendously?

Mr. Schafer: Oh tremendously you don't want that.

Interviewer: They didn't have sugar either?

Mr. Schafer: No I mean the only thing good about the rations was the tea alright. Well they were under siege for how many were they at war before we got involved. Yeh their rations were terrible the

cigarettes throw them away who needs them. Our C-rations and K-rations were far above and beyond anything they had. Yeh that would that time you would recognize oh we must be under the British fort headquarters or some dam thing. What are we doing but you never knew until it trickled down that way.

Interviewer: Once you realized and the men around you realized that Operation Market Garden did not go according to plan and Montgomery's idea to push through to the Mur and bypass the Siegfried line, which made a lot of sense. Once you found out all of that didn't work of course it's like 20/20 now military historians are debating whether or not that was a good idea Market Garden or whether or not the resources should have been diverted to Patton of course he was out of fuel. Were you aware of this at the time did the men around you seem angry about the whole Operation Market Garden or did that come later?

Mr. Schafer: What happened we spent 72 days up there right and what are we doing here? We're out there and they call we used to fire what we call harassing fire we would pull one gun out of the battery and there would probably be you got your gun all lined up what do they call it your deflections you got the sight all set not they pull you out and you've got to go through this whole routine in some cabbage patch let's put it away from the rest of the battery. Because they don't want if they fire the Germans pick it up they'll start bringing fire in so you 'd fire maybe a half a dozen nine rounds and you'd pick it up and move out of there. You'd do this maybe all night long. Then you had to go back to your own battery get the guns back in there and get everything lined up so your gun howitzer is firing the same way. And it got to be a pain. What are we doing up here we're not really moving ahead so there's something wrong.

Interviewer: Okay you were you and your comrades were

Mr. Schafer: I guess the word would be frustrated because you couldn't take down because if you went down six inches the water started to come up because you were below sea level. So everything had to be above the ground. We spent 72 days there before we moved back to went back to France Mormal.

Interviewer: And when you were in France of course you ultimately ended up heading to Bastogne is that correct?

Mr. Schafer: Right

Interviewer: When you received word that you would be pulling out to Bastogne on the way there did you encounter any American troops heading in the other direction?

Mr. Schafer: Well I was supposed to be CQ go back to the morning that it happened I was supposed to be in charge of quarters. Snows on the ground its cold I want to be inside while the rest of the battery goes out and again you're going through basic your out in the field doing maneuvers. And here comes Sargent Roberts and he's the section chief or number one gun I happen to be his gunner corporal he says John get the troops up down at chow pick up ammo when you go through the line. I'm in charge of quarters Roberts don't give me this I mean your going out today in the field. We're all going out and it

was about 5 o'clock in the morning we don't get up usually until about 6. Alright we go down our guns are in ordinance their getting repaired so now we've got to go over to ordinance get our howitzer out the 105s hook them up. The infantry by this time in the morning I'm sure they're on the road. So we left I don't know what time in the afternoon but we drove all that evening all morning we pull into a field and there's sporadic gun fire not too much. We did like the covered wagons we circled the battery and then we had our machine guns out of course for security. The sun comes up the old man gets in the jeep he's going up the road to Hikenhour looking for a gun position and there is stuff coming down the road you wouldn't believe. Tanks half tracks all American they're all going down the road. Wow Dago's going up the road something's wrong here. The population civilians they're coming down there with anything they could pull push or ride they've got all of their worldly belongings on there. They were clogging up the road to. About a half hour later Captain Dago comes back whole station march follow me. He turns that jeep around we're going right up the road. Hey soldier where are you going you're going the wrong way no you guys are going the wrong way. Evidentially the battle's up the road here a peace what are you doing going you know you're young and cocky your 101st now nothing will stop it.

Interviewer: So they're telling you to retreat?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh your going the wrong way man there's Germans up there.

Interviewer: So you were cocky you weren't scared, that would have scared me to death. So you turn around and tell them they are going the wrong way.

Mr. Schafer: Turn around get with it. We got up the road and took position we got the guns registered in here comes the firing officer he takes the commands from the FO relays them to the battery he gets on the phone shell and G charge cord quick face defection left elevation that was the routine. He comes in he's got these flat with the overlay he says I want to show you our positions he goes from gun to gun. He says we're here okay where's the front line he says it's like this. This was a half hour after we got up the road.

Interviewer: So you were entirely encircled? So you're in Bastogne now?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh we're in Bastogne we're on the outskirts of Bastogne somewhere. It's up the road but we're in Bastogne. And it was funny all at once it was quiet no trucks or tanks or anything going down the road no civilians everything is peace. Now we've got to get firing commands we did find out later we didn't know it for quit a while our whole medical detachment got captured going in. So basically we were in there without if you got injured there wasn't much they could do for you a little bit but not a whole hell of a lot. I seen fellows that in the infantry 501, 506 with trench foot with wrap I says why don't you stay over in the dispensary they said why they can't do nothing for me so I'm going back up where I know people. Go back up into the line with his buddies.

Interviewer: The Germans started their counter offensive around the 16th of December and by the 19th they were knocking on Bastogne's door they were right there. Somewhere in the interim there was an incident at Malmedy which was a little off it wasn't right directly near

Mr. Schafer: Yeh that was the one where they

Interviewer: The massacre Piper I believe was his name the training commander SS basically took some American prisoners and he couldn't take him with him so he just shot them all, fortunately a couple survived. Were you aware of that at the time?

Mr. Schafer: You know I'm trying to think back I think we heard about it later we didn't hear about it right away. I suppose like everything else it has to filter down they sit on a lot of stuff they don't want you to hear or see. And when they figure it's after pole then they would release that information.

Interviewer: The reason I ask is I'm in absolutely in awe of you guys at Bastogne because you were totally encircled and I've never been in battle but I suspect that if I was totally encircled with the superiority of the Panzer and the Tiger Tanks I would want to surrender but you didn't. So I the only sense that I can make out of it is that you were aware of these massacres and scared that the same thing would happen to you.

Mr. Schafer: No that would be a wrong conclusion. You're there you don't know how big I know nobody's coming down and telling you we'll say three divisions of Panzers or three Panzer divisions up there. There's tanks up there I don't care if it's a coy tank it's a tank who or how much is out we've got to hold you saw the letter that he sent out for Christmas alright you've got to hold that. Basically it's a I'm not bragging or anything but it's the job alright you give us the tools we'll do the job. It got kind of hairy you figure maybe we're not coming out of this we had three guns firing one way three guns firing the other way we had to turn around and then you normally lob shells you don't fire like a rifle they had us put them down just like an anti tank gun they are that close. And we were down to three per gun at that time before we could get air supply okay that was the scary part.

Interviewer: And the weather was horrible.

Mr. Schafer: The weather was horrible cold man we need some help here right. But we had them guns down put the barrels down and you can't use any elevation other words call back the coordination you got to sight through you've got to count on experience sight through the barrel. Until tanks come in sight through the barrel and that's how you're going to aim this sucker. So this is the only time you figure maybe there's something wrong here.

Interviewer: Maybe the guy passing me was right.

Mr. Schafer: There you go. So that was the hairiest part that I remember. Get that barrel down fortunately I don't know what day it was but we were sort of down in a swell seen a yellow flare go off a yellow or green flare go off, air supply. It was cold like this here they come C47s and they're dropping manna from heaven. Green shoots white shoots I mean there were shoots coming down you would gather it up we had a lot of stuff come in we couldn't use medical supplies blankets that was all for the medical right. Of course our ammo it was somewhere in the area they dropped it then when we got the ammo somebody would drop we got ammo head over to the batteries okay. I seen we had a flat detachment with us.

Interviewer: The second.

Mr. Schafer: The second was it 155s well they had gliders come in for resupply too and they come right down in behind our gun position. Tore out all of our aiming stakes you know did a beautiful job. The glider lands stops and the door opens and had 155 ammo in there. I don't know what it weighs but I would get a hernia trying to pick it up. This flight gentleman comes over from what was it the second he said what have you got in there man and I said I got 155 ammo. Stand back he put one on each shoulder and starts across this field I can't even pick one up with both hands and he's got one on each arm shoulder. Pilot steps out normally the ideal was he gets a ride back alright to the airport or where ever or truck and goes back to the airport and gets another glider. So he steps out and says where's the rear at. Where's what? He says I want to get back so you know I can get back to my group troop carrier. I said you better pull that revolver out make sure it's oiled and take the safety catch off. Why? I said well you're here and there is no back line I say its all front. You've got to be kidding me. So I don't know what happened to him. He took off some how or other on a jeep they must have taken him back to headquarters which was in Bastogne. So he was no further down the road. But that was funny that flight gentleman picked those two things up and went out across the field he went unreal.

Interviewer: What was Christmas Eve like?

Mr. Schafer: Christmas Eve was another story. I had a habit of singing Shanty and ole Shanty Time by Johnny Long I knew the words right and I would sing that often. Every time I would sing we would get incoming mail so they told me to shut up. So the night it was Christmas Eve Jerry came through I don't know what time it was and he drops flairs. And of course they are photographing the area trying to pick out gun positions. And I was about we went back there was a house there and we were off the gun you would be on the gun twelve hours then you would get relieved and if it was possible the other crew would take over five men would take over 6. And you would go up and if you had a house to get into you would go there and take rest bed sleep. We were off the gun that night. But about 2 o'clock Jerry had developed the film he comes back and they are dropping heavy stuff. I'm looking out the window man they big orange flairs I figured they had one of our guns sure as hell because there was all kind of explosions. Well we want to get in the basement of this place we hadn't used it too much but we wanted to get in the basement. Can't find the basement could understand the people didn't understand English and I dind't talk Dutch or German. Final lay the door opens and here comes this flight tell man. We went up to the wall and the good Lord knew where the door was they had a the door papered over so the crops wouldn't know where the cellar was. This guy finds it don't ask me how it's like in a movie guy runs up he's scared he's pounding on walls there's a door here they told us there was a door we tore the paper off and got down in the basement. The story that goes with that in Holland they have the fields divided with fence wire about three strands we have an outpost and the centre he hears somebody coming and he yells halt who goes there a minute passed an I forgot what it is that night he says man don't shoot don't shoot it's a black gentleman in artillery I don't know what outfit. Said where the hell are you coming from he said across that field Henry said no way there's two foot of snow on that ground then there's fences. The black gentleman looked at him and he said what fences. He high hurtled all the way across from where he was at he ran to where we were right oh it's funny. He went down on the turnip pile they had in the basement and every time a shell would hit the pile would shift

you'd hear him O man O Lord O Lord. They had to drive him out of there the officer had to come down there the battery commander had to come down with his 45 un-holster and drive him out said you can't stay here you've got to get back to your outfit. But it was funny cold he never knew what he just. So yeh we were there and then Patton broke through.

Interviewer: Sure now did you know he was on the way or someone was on the way?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh we had heard that he was trying to get to us.

Interviewer: But you had been resupplies through the air.

Mr. Schafer: We had been resupplied but I think what really helped.

Interviewer: What you needed were more men.

Mr. Schafer: More men no we needed the air force spit fires and to come down we could hear the tanks the incident I told you about put the barrels down and sight through the barrel itself we could hear tanks barreling around and thought O boy. Here comes the air force three of them come in they do this they peel off pretty soon you see big white clouds of smoke no more clanking.

Interviewer: P47s

Mr. Schafer: Yeh P47s I forgot the denominations and they wiped out whatever was out there we could here them they had wiped out a group of tanks. That was a savior the air force you know you had support Jerry couldn't do anything in the daytime because if he did and the air force was there and they'd play hell with him.

Interviewer: So after Bastogne where did you

Mr. Schafer: We made a tour in Europe think we went up to I'm trying to think of the name of it that was where we got our first beer ration. We went the first thing they did they pulled us out cover up your patches cover up your you know troop designation on the bumpers, what the hell are we doing here? Well we're moving up to the Alsace Mountains to Alsou Coleraine I believe it is we were going through this town and there were what we call the donut Red Cross served coffee and donuts. We covered up our patches we did everything we were supposed to right well hell I said if anybody had been reading the newspapers or listening to the radio they've got to know who we are right. No secret move we don't know if there are any spies in the area having communication with the crocks. We pull up to the first donut wagon where are you guys heading, we don't know, well you just came out of Bastogne you're the 101st right? What? You're the 101st air borne we heard about you. Okay enough secrecy your blowing our covers right. That actually happened they knew.

Interviewer: There was an incident it was right around the time of the Battle of the Bulge perhaps a little bit before. There was a German group who they had tanks I think they were an armored group for they spoke immaculate English and they were going behind the lines and their job was to turn signs around

and basically to create chaos and confuse the hell out of the Americans. Were you aware that they were doing this? Do you remember hearing anything about that?

Mr. Schafer: I honestly can't say I remember hearing anything about that. Probably did the word would come down like be careful I'm sure I'm almost positive now that I think back you'd be kind of start looking at everybody and start are you really who you are. It gets kind of hairy we had an incident where let's not create panic cause once you let that go hey Frank I know your Frank right or do I.

Interviewer: Once you amazingly got through Bastogne and then you said

Mr. Schafer: We went to Forsage and then we went up into France I'm trying to think of the name of that town I had it my computer went blank. It was up in France somewhere we got our fist beer ration. Now see that would stay in my mind.

Interviewer: Now how does European beer compare to American beer?

Mr. Schafer: Well first of all when we were over there they didn't have ice they didn't have refrigeration so you drank it warm. That's how I got to where I can drink it warm. But their beer their Genus their stock but man a lot of boys thought they could drink beer. But after two stock two Genus they start bumping into walls or go into the men's room and they can't find their way out that will tell you that's a good drink that's a good drink. They think oh man I can handle that stuff. They look like root beer okay over in Whales that's the first time they look like root beer that dark color with that big thick head. Looks like A&W alright or Hyers it wasn't it was the stuff it was good. Their beer was good.

Interviewer: So how long were you in France? At this point if you're in France you're pretty much away from things.

Mr. Schafer: Well we were doing sort of clean up again harassing we set around Deussenberg I believe and we fired across the river. They told me I didn't see it Baker Battery did one of us did leaflets again the will tell you where the war was. Fired leaflets over there asking the German people to surrender or the troops or whatever it was. And that about wrapped it up and from that they day we did sort of a tour across Germany it was nice.

Interviewer: Now you weren't supposed to fraternize with German civilians but did you get the chance to speak with many of them?

Mr. Schafer: Speak with the florins? How much ye leave should I spakenzy the with, my best German right. I couldn't understand the not fraternization because what are they going to do? Okay we all questioned headquarters with the general order hey man their whipped the no fraternization and the worst part of it was at the end when we pulled out and started back to France you know to start coming home they lift the ban. You know after we fight this was supposable you know go through all of this we want to call it hell we can't fraternize with the Germans when they ship us home our replacements come in they haven't got their feet wet yet and they got fraternization rights. There is something wrong with this picture. No we did fraternize.

Interviewer: How were you received by the civilians the German civilians? Did you feel any animosity?

Mr. Schafer: No I don't think any of us did not to the civilians I mean we were there they did the same thing Hitler said you're going to go and their going to do the best job they can and we're going to do the best job. And unfortunately or fortunately I should say they lost. No they treated us one incident were we stayed in Birkenau they were very pushy about coming back we could move into a town and clean the civilians out and take over their living quarters that's the way it went. In Birkenau cleared them out and yours gun where ever some where up in the Alps or the Austrian hills and when we move out you can come back. Well we want to take care of our garden they had beautiful gardens. One morning a fellow walks out there's an arbor there with roses on it he happens to look down something caught his eye it was a glint he turned away there was a luger. Hey if they are burying lugers and the Germans had occupied there was a women's barracks down the road right we use that as our headquarters when we were there and these guys the end result was they were burying all of their loot the German officers when they come through and when they moved out they left everything behind that they couldn't carry. And we said wait a minute they come back every day in their gardens guy goes out with his pick sticker there's a box down there. Pushed the soil away a case of Cognac.

Interviewer: Liberated cognac.

Mr. Schafer: Liberated cognac everyone of them we found we were drinking pink champagne for breakfast we had cognac the had a bowl like you would see in church to do a baptism you put a fountain you'd put the water tap on it and you'd put the bottle down in there. We had liquors that we had never seen before we had all this stuff and we were living in these private homes. You'd walk by and say John did you have breakfast, no, come on in. We were drinking cognac we were drinking champagne this went on all the time we were there. So that was the perks but that's why they wanted to come back they wanted to make sure nobody disturbed all of this loot they had right. Wrong we found it. The old man comes in and says what are you guys doing they are complaining about you tarring up the gardens we let's tell you this is what we found out there well the officers they loved to drink too well alright you keep two we'll take one. That's a fair deal good enough.

Interviewer: How well in general did you get along with your officers what was your opinion of them?

Mr. Schafer: Very well it was like your boss a lot of time you don't necessarily have to like your boss just to your job.

Interviewer: But in your eyes they were competent?

Mr. Schafer: McCrery they were competent McCrery Elis McCone as they used to call him Captain McCone.

Interviewer: Captain McCone I'm interviewing him a little later.

Mr. Schafer: Are you yeh real nice man he'll straighten a lot of this stuff out I'm telling you. Be nice to tell you you don't know what the hell you're talking about. But he's landing too a nice gentleman he was

our firing officer and then he went over to Baker Battery and became Battery Commander. And we had Bigalow he's passed away. Cornel Nelson yeh they were all no complaints there.

Interviewer: When after BE-Day did you think you were going to the Pacific Theatre?

Mr. Schafer: We there was a lot of low numbers guys that didn't have time in they shipped them out the took them right out of our outfit and shipped them

Interviewer: There's a points system.

Mr. Schafer: Right thank you.

Interviewer: Based on several factors time in, medals

Mr. Schafer: Injuries, Purple Hearts all that good stuff. And the shipped the low pointers on they figured they were going to Japan. Well there was a we left out outfit alright they were state side when Harry dropped the over there and they wrote us letters like civilian they put that in front of their name right how's things over there? We were still over in Europe and they were home they were in civvies left there. We thought we might wind up going over there.

Interviewer: I have to ask you this and if you don't want to answer feel free not to. Looking back on the experience is there one instance or combination of instances that you that were just absolutely horrendous?

Mr. Schafer: I was lucky unscaved I suppose the infantry like I said the only time we saw what we did was up in Carrington alright. Now the FOs can tell you they're right up there with the infantry so they see a lot of that. The only thing I saw was a t Carrington we moved up about 45 minutes after we got through firing and there were they caught a mortar crew in an orchard which is not where there supposed to be in an orchard because if you get shell fire coming in HE as soon as it hit anything sharp metal it explodes so I remember this they were right at we had our good place to put the kitchen you had to go through this gate to this field like for breakfast, lunch, supper. Well right there at the gate they hadn't picked up these people yet. The one German had no arms the other guy had no legs. Everything was freak you know if you could get the two of them you would get a composite one was laying there with no arms the other one was laying there with no legs. And it was a mortar group we caught them in there with our fire and that's where they laid until the French would come around and pickup the corpses. And pitch them up onto a wagon.

Interviewer: That was in Carrington?

Mr. Schafer: Yeh somewhere right outside of Carrington.

Interviewer: I'm also curious about how you view the you're the German army. I know in the Pacific Theatre there was an incredible amount of animosity between the German soldiers excuse me the Japanese soldiers and the American soldiers. Would you say the same holds true for your attitude towards the Germans?

Mr. Schafer: This is probably not the thing to say but I've always maintained it of course I'm German alright my dad's side if I was going to go to battle I'd take the German party. Don't mean to be disrespectful to the British but I'll that the Crop. I've seen him I know what he can do.

Interviewer: Is respect a fair word?

Mr. Schafer: Oh I respect them and they respected us I do believe there might have been a few bad eight balls that happened in our I'm sure there were some real egg heads in our outfits. But for the most part no I don't think they as a matter of fact my one son married a German girl and her dad and mother when we came over to visit for the 45th liberation of Holland we went to Germany as a side trip and I went to visit and he had lost most of his stomach from a hand grenade and we sat there and drank schnapps you know reminisced. I don't hold a grudge what good does it do.

Interviewer: That's great. The last question I want to ask you is there something you look back on and it makes you smile or makes you laugh or that you just an incredible found memory?

Mr. Schafer: You're talking about service now?

Interviewer: Yeh actual service time in Europe.

Mr. Schafer: Boy that's a tough one I had a lot of good experiences. Probably making that first phone call or getting when you come back we came in the final standish from Boston we cam back there and they let you make one phone call. There you go, who do you call? Do I call the redhead that I only met for one day or do I call the folks? There you go put a bet on that one. I think I called my well I couldn't call the girl I didn't know it but she was in the service. I called home one things I do remember at that instance all these people are coming in some guys from Keto Cook, Iowa in some small town and this operator couldn't make connection with his parents and the supervisors walking down behind the line of girls there was a whole battery of operators he said we got a problem and she said yes I can't get this gentelman's patents he says you got a name, yeh, you got a town, yeh, he says call some of the neighbors get one of the neighbors call somebody in that town and tell them their son's home. She did she made a call to I guess this town was small enough they knew each other the neighbor went over and got the family and told them their son was back in the states and he was trying to get a call through to them. How about that, that is what I remember. I thought that was great.

Interviewer: Is there anything that I forgot to ask you that you would like to add?

Mr. Schafer: You did a pretty thorough job I mean I don't think so I covered most of it in there.

Interviewer: Great interview

Mr. Schafer: Was it?

Interviewer: Yes absolutely.

Mr. Schafer: Like I said you had your bad times but for the most part for me unscaved you know it was a trip I couldn't afford. I couldn't pay for it back then.

Interviewer: And you've been back since.

Mr. Schafer: I went back in 45 or 45 years that would be what help me.

Interviewer: That's a math question I'm a history major.

Mr. Schafer: We went back for the 45 liberation.

Interviewer: That would be 90 I guess.

Mr. Schafer: 90, 89 we went back and that was my only regret that I hadn't gone back sooner cause they treated us up in Holland like we were royalty. Man Peter Van Revort and them you'd go in a hotel you couldn't buy a drink. They had a parade for us they had a church service the wedding party brought the band out to us on the patio and the major bought us a full tray of drinks the city invited us over and had an evening. So you don't know you're a hero until you go back. I give those people credit for one thing their children know our history better than our children know our own and that's a bad commentary in the times.

Interviewer: It's unfortunately long long overdue but I think we're stating to come around as a Nation I'm sure you've seen it the interest is just phenomenal. Everyone's writing books about well Tom Brokaw just wrote a book about the Greatest Generation.

Mr. Schafer: You know everybody pitched in but that's all I remember and what can I say. I came back and went right back to work I took about six weeks off. They said when you going back to work I said when I get tired of loafing.

Interviewer: You said a well deserved break that's for sure.

Mr. Schafer: A well deserved break.

Interviewer: Alright I'm going to turn the camera off.