

Herbert Allen

Mr. Allen: I was born and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma and I was born on 27 July 1921.

Interviewer: What branch of the service did you serve in and what primary units did you serve in?

Mr. Allen: What branch did I serve in? Infantry the main branch none of that nonchalant stuff.

Interviewer: And your primary unit?

Mr. Allen: I served with the in WWII we activated the 99<sup>th</sup> infantry division in September of 1942. In Camp Vinedorn, Mississippi it doesn't even exist anymore. And we I served in the 395<sup>th</sup> infantry for 3 years and then transferred to 1<sup>st</sup> infantry division. Well you saw the outfits I served in but they I essentially was an infantry officer all during WWII and I well we didn't get into combat early we got into it in 44 and I got that I wanted. I was an infantry company commander well platoon leader company commander that's what they say and ended up as an executive rifle battalion after we crossed in Vietnam.

Interviewer: What were your parent's names and their occupations?

Mr. Allen: My mother's name was Arlie Sue Jackson and she was the daughter of Dr. J C W Blane and she was born in Indian Territory. That's what it was called a Cherokee Strip out in Oklahoma then where my grandfather was the first graduate physician to serve in the Cherokee Strip and built the first hospital out there. My mother she was a registered nurse. And I don't know anything about my father so you can forget that.

Interviewer: Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Allen: I have a sister who's still out there in Fort Gibson.

Interviewer: Now before you went into the war what was the last grade of school that you completed?

Mr. Allen: High School. I think I had three college credits when I called in March of 42.

Interviewer: Now you were raised during the great depression. Do you have a lot of stories or recollection during the great depression?

Mr. Allen: Absolutely. I got to see the roaring 20s and the banks fell and fathers trying to feed families on 40 50 dollars a month if they had a job and I got to be the beneficiary of that because I was working I guess I started working 1936. For \$5 a week delivering groceries then went to work for a bank. And they paid me \$12 an expected me to dress and act like a banker. And you could hardly do that on that kind of money so I ended up being a rough neck in the oil fields and that's where I was when Pearl Harbor it but I was a rough neck that's a job title that doesn't mean that was my attitude. But the an oil field worker and working in the drilling rigs. And when Pearl Harbor came they lowered the draft age from 21 to 18 and a half and I went down and registered and boom I went right into the army. Reported to Camp Walden, Texas at mineral wells. First duty station had a brand new second lieutenant.

Interviewer: So before Pearl Harbor how seriously did you take the threat to the Americans through the Nazi's? I was a student of American History I went to a military school a little military school which the whole it was a very strict military school. But the study was on WWI the Civil War and all of that sort of things so I always wanted to be a soldier but I didn't get jerked out of my comfortable high school days or anything like that. I wanted to serve and I did.

Interviewer: So you were extremely interested. Now did you think that we were going to go into war right away?

Mr. Allen: My professor of Military Science and Tactics told us in 1938 said you young men are going to be fighting for your lives within 5 years and said it's going to come from Germany. And he missed it just two years we were doing it. I think it was in 1940 that we really started getting involved in stuff when they called up the reserves and the guard and started helping the English and the Germans with land lease. And when the Japanese made the stupid mistake of attacking Pearl Harbor it was schools out then cause that's the American military services at that time were well up for this. Because it had been since 1939 they had been calling up troops for training.

Interviewer: Franklin Delano Roosevelt he knew.

Mr. Allen: Oh yeh certainly. He was criticized for all the things he did but the one thing he had in mind we might have been speaking Japanese or German if he hadn't have done it. Because the Japanese shells can reach Long Beach, California from a submarine.

Interviewer: So you being in military school and studying about that now did you kept up with the news and the newspaper all of the time?

Mr. Allen: Oh sure. Edward R Mearl we listened to all of the time and H.B. Coltonbrona and who was this other one that was so good. But as a part of the instruction we were required to read, listen and discuss. But it's a as I go back on no intention of ever really being a soldier I was sent there because I was the third generation to be sent to that school. It wasn't a case of being choosing the military as a profession. That didn't happen until I was in the war. That's when I decided I wanted to make it a career.

Interviewer: So these things they hit pretty close to home as far as the new and because you were heavily involved in that kind of history.

Mr. Allen: I went to school this little school was in Mexico, Missouri you don't know where that is obviously. But if you go between Kansas City and St. Louis it's off the road about 10 or 12 miles. This is where Missouri Military Academy is located and it's been there since 1883.

Interviewer: No do you recall where you were when you heard the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor December 7<sup>th</sup>?

Mr. Allen: Yes I was in up on the rig up on top of what they call the pipe rack on the rig and it was about 1 o'clock in the afternoon and all of a sudden the driller the guy in charge of our crew stopped the

engines and said we're at war. He was a former flying sergeant from WWI. And he was very much in tune with what the Japanese were doing so we were all very much aware of it. A matter of fact my crew consisted of 5 people and 3 of us left within a matter of two or three months to join the army.

Interviewer: Did you listen to FDR's speech A Day Which Shall Live in Infamy?

Mr. Allen: Oh yes absolutely. These were things that if you didn't you were out of step because everyone was involved in it. We didn't have these cooks running around demonstrating against everything and afraid they're going to get hurt and all of that stuff.

Interviewer: Now did you approve of the way Franklin Roosevelt handled the situation?

Mr. Allen: I don't think he had any choice. We were involved in defending the Western World and for all the problems we were confronted with. His problem was he did not have a congress that would support him. The draft passed by one vote one vote or we would not have had a draft and we would not have had been ready and we'd have gotten in the war much later and we'd have had a lot more people killed. But one vote passed it.

Interviewer: And what about the way he handled when he came into office was your family in favor of Franklin Roosevelt.

Mr. Allen: No my folks were in the oil business, but at that time everything was going great. Taken the late 20s and all that stuff but Roosevelt came in when the disaster hit the stock market crashed and about half of the what that family was worth and all of the disappeared banks closed we had four banks in my home town that never reopened. And they had different laws in those days if you had money invested in the bank in those days you lost it. As my mother and all of her sisters know they lost every bit of it. Thirty years later they got a settlement of 5 cents on the dollar. And that was one of these things that's where Roosevelt had to take over and I think all things considered he was the man for the moment. It sure wasn't some of those other people that were like Henry Wallace had wanted to he was the Secretary of Agriculture and couldn't have led the country across the street compared to Roosevelt. Roosevelt was a charismatic person. I didn't agree with his politics but for the circumstances that he had I thought he did very well. But you take the labor problems and the problems involving unemployment and you young people don't see the circumstance they had then. There was no welfare there was nothing and if you lost your job and you didn't have any money that was it. Not like we now you've got many things that serve as a life what word am I looking for?

Interviewer: Assurance I guess we have security.

Mr. Allen: Well you've got all kinds of things that cost and you're finding that right now some of this stuff is going to get trimmed. But it's so much different than in the depression. In the depression you had people receiving 15 cents an hour when I worked for the bank there were times when they would work us three or four hours into the night and we were paid 50 cents. Now there's a difference though I could take 50 cents and go down and have a complete dinner. Which that won't even get you a glass of water now a days.

Interviewer: Wow that still was hard.

Mr. Allen: Sure but you had a different breed of people in those days these people were tuff. They came from all parts of the world. And where I came from out of Oklahoma we had people all over the people that I worked with well I was in school with them and worked with them in the bank and again in the oil fields. Native Indians I went to school with Victor Redeagle and John Stepson these were all full blooded Osages tuff. John Stepson reported for duty the same day that I did at Camp Walden, Texas and he was killed in the early days after being shipped out. So when you talk about where you've been and what you've done where do you want to start because it's all been different but we didn't have out where I came from we didn't have the problems they had out in the big labor markets. But we had the dust storms we had a drought that lasted over three years without a drop of rain for over seven months once. Farms blown completely away then we had all the people from North Carolina and Tennessee come out and form and they called them Okies and they were not Okies they came from over here. But we had the people passing through there on their way to California in the depths of the depression. And if you've ever read any of John Steinbeck's books like for instance the Grapes of Wrath this is all true. This wasn't a figment of some writer's imagination cause I have seen those cars loaded with entire families and all of their worldly goods just struggling to get on out to where hopefully they would find work. You compare that to now people don't have it tuff. That reminded me of the time we went down we were doing some volunteer work and I had made a donation for this one thing and this guy comes in and wanted to know why they wouldn't give him enough money to pay for his cable TV service and I said I don't have cable in my own house what are you talking about. It's necessary it's our lifestyle that's what I mean I don't think they are suffering too hard.

Interviewer: No sir their not, not at all. When you enlisted did you have a preference to the branch of service and the kind of military job that you would work with?

Mr. Allen: Infantry the man's branch. That's where the leadership was that's where the excitement the romance of the activity was. It wasn't just to wear the uniform it was where you would work with men lead men follow good commanders stuff like that.

Interviewer: So where did you do your basic training?

Mr. Allen: Camp Walden, Texas.

Interviewer: And were you when were you selected for more specialized training?

Mr. Allen: I never did get specialized I just end up being an infantry officer but I got sent to one school no two schools during the war. One was to teach me how to be a motor maintenance officer which I was for about three months and then I got the opportunity to take command of a company. And the other things was when they send me to what they call Officers Basic at Camp at Camp Waters, Texas no not Fort Benning, Georgia and they had one of these things which you work you're not qualified to go overseas if you have not completed all of this prescribed training. But as we got on the ship moving out I said I'm not qualified I didn't get to go to all of those schools.

Interviewer: But they still had you in there.

Mr. Allen: Oh we still kept right on going.

Interviewer: What was your first impression of your fellow recruits?

Mr. Allen: The what?

Interviewer: Fellow recruits.

Mr. Allen: First impression

Interviewer: Or one of your impressions.

Mr. Allen: Well it's like anything when you're brought together in a big clump of people regardless of what they are their all a bunch of strangers to you. You go through this motion of getting sorted out you know who the followers are going to be who the leaders are going to be you know the things those you feel you can trust this is all it just doesn't take long in the military. Because the when I first reported to Camp Bandorm, Mississippi it was just a tar paper shack all of the buildings were being finished. I mean these were just tar paper shacks with two Coleman stoves in them called space heaters. And one day we went down the railroad setting and we got 4,000 civilians from off the streets. And never been in uniform never had hair cuts and we got them and to make soldiers out of them and we did. Of course the first thing you did was they got their heads peeled and we had these things on which we were taught first day in the army and I went into combat with these men and they are the greatest men in the world. They're just a I have I think there are nice left from my company in WWII that are still living and we still call and talk.

Interviewer: That is something else.

Mr. Allen: It's one of these things where I had one oh he died last fall but he was a corporal in the outfit when I was a captain and we wouldn't speak to one another I was the captain and he was the corporal so everything was always done properly. But we became close dear friends and it's one of these things in which it just happened but at one time I could locate 90 men that served in my company in WWII and we had them we were in contact doing things. Well there's no real reward like having this camaraderie that goes with being with a good unit where people look out for one another. And that's the success of the thing there ain't no individuals when it comes to getting shot at you look out for one another as a team. As I say I didn't have a whole lot of it but I had all that I wanted.

Interviewer: What about black people or women?

Mr. Allen: Now you're off on a sensitive subject with me. We had no black troops until sometime in late March or early April 1945 and these was a group of black noncommissioned officers that took a voluntary reduction in other words they took off their stripes so they could serve in a combat outfit. And we had one platoon of black soldiers in each of our three battalions. And they were as good a soldiers as anyone else the only thing that you have in this is there are two different rules you have to worry about.

You have an entirely different situation now you don't have those distinctions. When I commanded out in Korea I had black officers black noncommissioned officers never had any difficulty what so ever. I had two of the best officers I ever known in the army when I had I was serving I believe my second tour out there I came home I believe in 1963 so that's when it would have been. And I had a captain commanding my headquarters company who had a Ph.D. from the University of Ohio and he epitomized all of the things that you hear people talk about when they describe blacks. Small head big shoulders no hips and dull eyes this is what Captain Underwood looked like but he was a Ph.D. smart and he was all soldier knew his business and when I had a tuff situation when I needed someone totally reliable Captain Underwood was the man. He was my nuclear weapons officer he was the control of the nuclear weapons and he and I had to work just like this. But he was black and there was a lot of people that couldn't understand this. But proof in the pudding they did their job and did it well. Now I've had others that didn't but I've have white ones that didn't either. And I've had some of the Hispanics had their problems I've had others this business of categorizing people is a snap judgment my granddaddy wouldn't do this or my granddaddy it's such a waste of time. Because the expression that the cream will rise to the top it does. And it doesn't make any difference where you came from what your color it is it depends on how you want to attack the problem. Now when it comes to women I don't agree with women in tactical units in any way. Cause you couldn't carry me if I was wounded. I don't think you could carry the base spray of an 81 mm mortar but you could do a very good job as a communicator but not up where combat is. These are personal preference and these are things I don't really care what Urst Wire First Lady used to say about how great these were as worriers and I think most of the women that you talk with they are either going to be extreme feminist and say I can do anything a man can or for the most part a lot of them are smart enough to realize we are all different you can do things I can't do and vice versa. So don't try to me your co-equal because co-equal means you can do anything identical I can do as well and you can't do it. And in the military I just don't think women are of the psychological ability to serve in combat units. Not at all we didn't have them in WWII. We had blacks but they provided those services that they could do better. Well I will recite and example for you. I had a before I retired I had a truck driver who was a spec 4 and she was driving a five ton wrecker and she couldn't change a tire she couldn't lift a tire and every time something went wrong on that truck I'd have to send two men out to get here because she couldn't handle it but she insisted that she was a heavy truck driver and she had me because under the law I had to let her be a heavy truck driver. You asked me and I said it. I can see now there will be demonstrators out in front I'm antifeminist so.

Interviewer: No no that's fine. When you before you went over seas did you participate in maneuvers on the state side?

Mr. Allen: Oh yes all over the Louisiana maneuver area and Texas and East Texas, Mississippi oh yes.

Interviewer: What kind of stuff did you guys do?

Mr. Allen: Huh?

Interviewer: What kinds of training and what kind of maneuvers were you involved in?

Mr. Allen: Do you know what the function of a maneuver is? You take all of the military units and you put them into their structure and then you test them in the field in a maneuver. You have this division maneuver against this division or you have this regiment maneuvering against that one it's a test of your ability to serve as a functioning military unit. And it's not a game that's played to go out and hassle the farmers or anything like that it's very serious. And we've got one of the best systems I've ever heard of I haven't I had the good fortune of seeing it yet but I will. The national training center is the most realistic thing to combat that you can get into now. And we send right here from Fort Campbell all the way out to the desert and they are competing under full combat conditions the only difference is no one is getting killed. That's a maneuver. So when you talk about what function did a maneuver serve very good it tests your unit ability your individual ability and they will do everything they can to break you because that's what it's designed to if you've got a weak spot they're going to discover it and they deliberately set out to do it. You don't want that weak spot when you're really when the chips are down.

Interviewer: Do you think that your training was appropriate for the tasks that lie ahead?

Mr. Allen: Absolutely

Interviewer: Did you feel prepared to fight when you got overseas?

Mr. Allen: None of us had ever been in a war before none of us had the slightest idea what it was going to be like. We were all scared to death and one of the biggest things we were scared of we didn't want to fail so we worked hard and trained hard we did things you talked about maneuvering I think we were on some form of maneuver every other week but it was always a matter of getting ready for it. But if you talk about the effectiveness of the training my first question would be against what? What could you compare it too obviously it was successful. We beat the Germans and the Japanese didn't we?

Interviewer: We did. Now going into your combat experiences from which port did you part?

Mr. Allen: We left Camp Milstandish in Gloucester, Massachusetts which was a port of debarkation or embarkation excuse me. And we left at 9 o'clock at night in a 50 ship convey. And when we finally woke up the next morning at sea and we were going to have one of our two meals a day there were ships as far as the eye could see.

Interviewer: What about at the port what was that like? All of these people leaving all of your soldieries and officers getting on these ships.

Mr. Allen: What do you mean?

Interviewer: What did it feel like? I mean there were people everywhere I'm sure.

Mr. Allen: Sure there were. Organized we were a military unit there wasn't any confusion the biggest confusion we had normally was that they didn't allow or couldn't allow enough time for some of the things we wanted to do so we were pushed real fast in the line but you think that it isn't a big unknown quantity until in the night you move your troops marching into formation and going up on a gang plank into a ship. And having a man up there saying your going to have this hole and this hole and this and

you're going to put this this and this and you'll stumble around in the dark trying to figure where you supposed to go that's an experience. It will make a believer out of you and one of the things if you will watch if you see a well trained officer when the chips get down and things get a little confusing they get quiet. You don't hear a bunch of yammer out of them and you know when the troops are anticipating they don't get excited I'm talking about well trained soldiers. And I was with these same people for three years. We weren't a bunch of guys being thrown together over night and they that's why I at the time I didn't realize how much I cares about them.

Interviewer: Well I guess you can go on and tell you r story if you'd like. I'd like to just hear about however you want to put it just when you started you got on your voyage when you got overseas and your first time of battles and what battles you participated in and what.

Mr. Allen: Well it's real easy from our standpoint we were an outfit that came in after D-day and we went into England and they were all we did was physical training I mean full packs hiking 10 15 25 miles a day getting ready to go across the channel and I guess we were this was in September 44 and when they decided we were supposed to go across the channel all of a sudden we moved in the middle of the night and go t back on another ship and didn't know where we were going. But this time it was what they called an LCI a landing craft infantry and we had a battalion and the troops with all of their transportation weapons and everything. And one of the big surprises on there we had been eating what we call iron rations we'd been eating these darn Cs and Ks for about a week and hadn't had a hot meal and we go aboard this Navy LCI and this young engine comes up to me and says captain your troops are being fed around the pan tail and you are expected to eat in the officers ward with the ships captain. But you must wear a tie sir and I just roared my radio operator my jeep driver and my inson operator we had already unrolled out bed rolls under the jeep that's where we were going to sleep because we didn't know where we were going to sleep and this young inson he knew what was bothering us but he took me down where the officers wardroom was and it was about the length of these two tables pushed together. It was only room for about ten people twelve people but we put on a tie and they had a white table cloth on the thing and we're going into combat. But see the interesting thing about this was my troops got the best food that they had had in a long time. And the Navy had they had fresh oranges apples and something else and the troops just went crazy and we got cases of the stuff anything they would give us we put on our trucks we put on our ammunition carriers and we took it with us. And the next morning when we it's only 21 miles across where we we shipped out of Plymouth and its 23 27 miles to Lahara and this things rams right up against the beach and they open the doors and there's the beach and we just roll off and next thing we're roaming around that part of France right on the channel.

Interviewer: But you didn't go directly into combat when you cam off the beach?

Mr. Allen: Oh you don't go directly into combat if you were assaulting the beach you would go into combat but that had already been secured. No we didn't get into combat until probably another three weeks but there's always this apprehension about what's it going to be like and all that stuff. But a joke my first casualty in my company was a guy named Corporal Moskowitz. Moskowitz was a fine young guy but he was standing directing traffic at the entrance of our bidwack area and a telephone line wrapped around that was tied to a sign the said command post TP that way which it struck right across the



telephone line wrapped it up in the tired and it jerked that sign up and hit Moskowitz right in the ankle and broke his leg. Of course he got evacuated to England never saw the enemy never heard of it he was the first casualty in my company. We get letters from him saying he was ashamed some guy that got shot up at Normandy would say where'd you get yours soldier the guy would say I got hit by a sign.

Interviewer: That's great. Now how were your once you got there what were your living conditions like?

Mr. Allen: What do you mean living conditions we was out in the field.

Interviewer: Yeh did you have tents?

Mr. Allen: Dug in spread out we were expecting anything. We were not in buildings no when they swung us north they swung us up into Northern France and Obell I think was the first place we had gotten with the enemy and then from Obell we went on up into Belgium and to Diase and Burperars and then in November of 44 was the first time we actually for shot at and we were supposedly in a quiet area. We were just our unit was brought in there to get acclimated to what it's like to live in the battle field and it's cold and snow on the ground and all that stuff. But the thought of what it could have been like we learned slowly because the Germans were just as bad off they were as bad off as we were we were spread a far greater distance than we were supposed to be. Then we patrolled against one another on the snow and these were the first casualties we started taking and this was supposedly the quiet area. On the 13 of December 1944 we stepped off in the attack a big one three infantry divisions. Do you know what an infantry division is? Seventeen thousand troops per division. And we stepped off into seize that dams on the Rural River to prevent the flooding of it by the Germans on the 13h of December and we were going great guns men we were already into the secret through the dragons teeth I lost several men going through that. And then on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December at 4 o'clock in the morning an artillery preparation started that lasted about an hour and they blew us right out of the water. That's when the Bulge started. The Battle of the Bulge on the I guess 3:30 4:30 in the afternoon on the first day they had already made a penetration and had gone 15 miles in back of us. And so we set up there and had I would say for a period there of 8 or 9 days that no one really knew what the results were going to be. But finally what's called the North Shoulder or Monshroff Shoulder we held the three divisions and they couldn't move us from then on and we killed Germans and destroyed tanks with great glee cause we set out there in well defended positions and the Germans kept they would go around us and back but they couldn't come through us we held that corner. And you had these the 101<sup>st</sup> was down in Bastogne which was about 15 kilometers from us they were surrounded and getting clobbered down there. Of course we always let them know anyone can go down there and get surrounded why didn't you stay out here and fight with us. That was always a big joke with them.

Interviewer: When you were in battle what did it feel like to be shoot at and do shoot?

Mr. Allen: How do you think? That is always a question that amazes me. If you know what fear is the thing that results from your good training is you can over come and control fear. But don't let anyone ever tell you that they weren't afraid because when it's dark at night you don't know whose out there and when the day light comes you can't move or because someone might shoot you. These are things you learn to live with and you learn to control but the idea that this is where the John Wayne hero is

going to leave a lot of us a red coal because it's not that way, fear is a real thing. And some of the cases of people who lost their complete control and became combat losses this is nothing unrealistic about this you can take just so much of it. One of the finest sergeants I had in my outfit as a matter of fact at the time I ended up getting him promoted to a Lieutenant he got promoted to First Lieutenant and he ended up with two silver stars but I knew him once there during the Battle of the Bulge the guy was going to shoot himself in the foot so he could be escape all that stuff he said I can't take it anymore. And this man is a college graduate he was then he was a pre-med student at John Hopkins when he got drafted and he was staff sergeant in my outfit I could tell you stories about Sergeant Armstrong. I've been trying to find him for 50 years haven't been able to locate him. I came down the gang plank in 1946 coming home on R&R and standing at the bottom of that gang plank was Sergeant David M Armstrong who now had on looked like a \$2,000 suit and he had boy just like he owned the city. But his father was a Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Pneumatic Tool Corporation and his father and his mother invited me, Armstrong's former Company Commander, to come to their home for dinner. It was on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of 375 Park Avenue when the elevator opened into their living room and I will tell you David Armstrong was an ordinary staff sergeant infantry solid all the way and I didn't know he came from that background but he wanted to be a doctor and he joined the National Guard because he could make a little money from it and when they called him in 1940 he had to come in. He never went back to being a doctor or a pre-med student. But his mother and father invited me to come to their house to convince him to go back to college. His mother said he'll listen to you but he won't listen to us. Wonderful guy I wish I could find him.

Interviewer: It's too bad that you can't or that you haven't yet. Now when you were in battle were you at all impressed with the enemy as far as the Germans?

Mr. Allen: Oh absolutely. This always gets me the one thing that you cannot do is sell your enemy short. There were times when they weren't worth a darn because they were so tired of war and they wanted to quit so they would be captured by us and we would feed them and everything. But then we turned around and we had 15 16 17 year old kids in uniform they were called the ware wolves these kids would do anything to drop a hand grenade in your jeep or anything to destroy Americans. They had been so completely imbued with National Socialism the Nazis. But when you say respect for your soldieries some of the finest soldiers I ever seen was the SS Vermock SS in the German army. These were tuff pros they knew their business and they weren't afraid of a thing. And they but they were also the ones that became arrogant people that we tried to destroy. But from the stand point of pure military professionals they were good.

Interviewer: What about civilians and refugees did you have a lot of contact with them?

Mr. Allen: With who?

Interviewer: Civilians and refugees?

Mr. Allen: Refugees woo wee. We called them DPs displaced persons and they came from Hungry, Poland, what's all that countries up on the Baltic? Houstonia, Lithuania, Lithia, Yugoslavia all of these people that were policed up with the Germans to take and operate and police their factories for them.

And when the war ended we had them we had when the war ended I was with the 16<sup>th</sup> infantry we had 55,000 German soldiers as prisoners 55,000 now mind you put those all in one area and it would be 25 times as big as this parking lot and building and these were people waiting to be to go home or do something with them. What we did they declared an amnesty and went home at the same time we had about 70,000 displaced persons that we had to feed we had to house they had been treated brutally by the Germans so we were very sympathetic with them. And in when was it I guess fall of 1945 my regiment commander said we got a message that the Russian's are going to push a train load of Jewish DPs across our line and you are in charge of it you be prepared for them. We got 3800 Jews with women children old men that had come all the way from behind the Euro Mountain in Russia by train and the Russian's put the engine on the rear of the train, pushed them got them going disconnected the engine backed it out and they just let them roll right into the American zone. And we got them to feed care for them and when you said did we have anything to do with refugees you but I won't say it yes.

Interviewer: Wow and what about children what was your reaction to the children? There must have been a lot of children?

Mr. Allen: What do you mean reaction? We all try to protect them.

Interviewer: I mean you must feel sorry for them.

Mr. Allen: But you have all kinds of things that you are confronted with when you're dealing with refugees. You have religious differences you have hatred among the groups themselves. I had one DP that was beaten to a bloody pulp and killed they beat him with fire wood because someone thought that he was a spy and they thought nothing about beating him to death. We had a I had a school house filled with women and children these were Poles the Russians wanted them to come back for us to forcibly send them back to Poland and they sent this Russian team in to talk to these people and this Russian Colonel he's this autocratic type that he's going to tell them what to do and we're standing within a couple feet of him being very weary of what was going to take place and this woman that's holding this baby takes her hand off of away from this baby and she's got a knife about that long and she stepped up right at him and she caught him on his belt or she would have cut him real good because she hated Russians she was a Pole and hated Russians and she would do this even though it endangered her life and her child's life. But the fact that we Americans that was our camp and the Russians were just visitors we were able to get them out and tell them never to come back again. When you talk about dealing with refugees it's a different world. People that are dispirited to do something with their lives to improve their welfare and all that stuff I could tell you stories about displaced persons and Jewish DPs. I've been involved we tried the American Joint Distribution Committee which was a Jewish American Jewish Organization was assisting the Jews and the caring of the children and they were concentrating the children I'm talking about children below the age of 12 and in Rosenheim, Germany we had a big settlement area for them where they we had lots of doctors and good food and decent places for them and they started disappearing. We couldn't figure out why and we started running a real tight investigation and we found that the Jewish organization the underground organization was taking them and groups of 100 and they were just disappearing at night going down and getting on ships going out from our safe grounds going to Cyprus going to places in the Med in preparation for going into what

later became Israel. Israel didn't exist in the time I'm talking about but in 1948 at the time they declared Israel as a state under that Belfour agreement of 1917 we in at that time we were in Austria we were directly involved in trying to control the movement of the Jews trying to stop them and trying to prevent it and it's I had a good friend whose a Brigadier General and what was called the Eargoon Jewish fighting organization and boy they were good fighters. Their lives were what they were fighting for and they know how to fight and they are not the least bit sympathetic if you do dumb things to Jews you are going to get dumb things done to you. That's what's taking place out there right now it's the same battle same reasons.

Interviewer: So you guys you didn't try to stop them after you found that out?

Mr. Allen: We were operating under the rules and regulations of the American headquarters. And its one of these things in which the American authorities finally start turning their heads and letting these things happen. Which is the only thing you could do because these people were desperate they weren't fiddling around for fun and games they were they were going to establish the nation of Israel and these were the young people the one that they wanted there. They had lots of fighters they had people that could fight but when they wanted a future that's when they started taking care of the children.

Interviewer: Wow that's something else.

Mr. Allen: Your last question was about the refugees now from where do we go now?

Interviewer: Wow how about it sounds to me the area you were in was just humongous.

Mr. Allen: Was what?

Interviewer: Huge the area that you occupied with your battalion I mean if you had all these refuges to keep and all the captives.

Mr. Allen: We only had a small part of the refugee problems. The this is what so many people don't understand what Hitler Germany did in terms of the way the treated all of the people of Middle Europe and how they brought them in to Germany to work on the war German industries and stuff like that and they treated them like animals and everything. When this was all over the immediate immediately the allied forces tried to bring these people all together. Get them under some kind of control so you could do proper things for them. But I remember I keep thinking that maybe you studies some of this in history but there was a time in which there was a group of white Russians who believed they were called the Vasaloc white Russians and we had about 400 of them and under the rules of game they were enemy soldiers when we all knew very well that they joined to fight with the Germans against the Russian Vulsawhich even though they were Russians. And then we got ordered to send them put them on a train secure them turn them over to the Russians and they would be taken back to Russia and we knew very well they were going to be killed just as soon as they got them across the border. And we had suicides we had men that cut their own throats everything that you could think of to escape having to go back to Russia. And that was one peculiar group then you had the gosh I just ramble on like an old man.

Interviewer: No this is neat this is interesting stuff that you just don't hear.

Mr. Allen: Well if you want to see what can happen with people especially people who have been down trodden for a long long time we captured the PW cage at Moose burg, Germany that had over 120,000 people in it spread all around but the vast majority of them were Russians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs and in the center was 10,000 Americans and the outside of that there was about 15,000 British and then there French we were in a series of concentric circles or squares well on the outside was this huge mass of Slovaks and these people that some of these people had never seen a toilet they didn't know what plumbing was and had been captured by the Germans stuck in the PW cage and all of a sudden their free. Well you can imagine what happened in the country side they just in all directions 50 some odd Russian Generals in that group. And in that same instance I went into that cage about 10 o'clock in the morning and I say cave it's a PW camp and I found a high school chum that had been shot down over San Masseur in 1942 and he was on he had been a prisoner for three and a half years. I will tell you a story about this friend of mine his name was Pete Fryer Peter Fryer who had gone to Canada and joined the Canadian Air force so he could go over and fight the Germans in 1942 he got shot down in November and he had been a prisoner until the time that I'm talking about about the first of May 1945. And he I went into that cage and I just kept asking all the way and I finally got to the center and there was this British Brigadier and I was a Captain and I saluted him and said sir I'm trying to locate Peter Fryer of the United States air force and turned around to and he said do we have a left tenant Fryer and they asked him said yes sir he's in troop and marker so and so and they took me down to where into this barter this barracks and it's all blacked out inside and they open the door and they asked them this British Officer says is Lieutenant Fryer and some voice says who in the hell wants to know and they said well there's a friend of yours out here from high school and his name is H.B. All and Pete Fryer said yah I know him and one of them said you can come in but you've got to leave your weapons outside. So I had to take off my pistol lay the stuff down because they were scared to death of weapons these are prisoners they'd been used to the way the Germans had treated them. And I took old Pete Fryer out of there and we went out that gate and the first good looking German house we came to we threw the Germans out and went to sleep on their beds then we wound fresh potatoes and onions and some eggs and boy he couldn't eat it he hadn't eaten anything like that in and it just tore his stomach up. But then I had to put him back in the cage and then what they did they brought up medical battalions to check on these people all of these people had to be checked by the medics and very important because so many of them had serious illnesses and wounds and everything else. And the next time I heard of Pete Fryer he was home and he send me copies of pictures that we had taken when this was going he is standing there holding my submachine gun and we just had a ball. But just one of those funny things when I saw him he weighted 118 pounds he was formally as tall as I am and weighted probably 180 185 pounds. The next time I saw him he weighted 235 pounds he got home.

Interviewer: How long more did he have to stay in the

Mr. Allen: Oh they went home as soon as they processed and from a physical stand point all of that they were not discharged immediately for obvious reasons you would loose control of them and they had when you loose control of them they had disease and the like that had to be cared for. They were processed out in an orderly fashion now some cases they came home and they were out of the army in a

matter of days but in other cases a matter of months other cases a few years. Varies of some degrees. You're getting me thinking about thing I haven't thought of in 100 years.

Interviewer: Did you know anyone else?

Mr. Allen: Huh?

Interviewer: Did you know any of the other prisoners of war?

Mr. Allen: Oh sure I had men from my own company that were in there. They had only been prisoners for two to three months so the group of prisoners' I was talking about with Fryer they were up in upper Salasia they on foot covered 700 miles in the snow and when the Germans were moving them ahead of the Russians and they ended up down there in Southern Moveria in this town of Moose burg. These were long term prisoners the other prisoners' that were captured during the Battle of the Bulge and well we didn't have many captured after we crossed that Romagna but I had four of my men in there. They were glad to see us the first question they asked was where in the hell have you been why weren't you here sooner and all that stuff. The prisoner situation during the Battle of the Bulge was a horrible thing because we had entire units captured not in my outfit to the south of us there were three divisions online at that time and we had a couple of regimental combat teams that were completely reduced to no effectiveness. Because when the Germans attacked it was the largest counter attack in the history of the war and when they hit they hit loaded for barren they were going all the way to the Mews River and then they were going to up in Antwerp and all and we stopped them we broke up their little party. But we had a lot when you have 7 or 800 people captured at the same time that's the sort of stuff that happen in the Bulge because the enemy penetrated they came down and back and there's nothing to do you can't fight your way out of a hole when your when they've got you completely backed into it. But there's lots of great stories about that period of time where some of these small groups are able to fight their way out.

Interviewer: Now what about I know that people had limbs frozen off and it was extremely cold.

Snow on the ground and you couldn't see 50 yards in the fog and it stayed that way for three weeks. We didn't have didn't have any air support from our own fighter aircraft because they couldn't see us couldn't coordinate when the sun finally came out I think it was 5 or 6 days after Christmas finally came out and all of a sudden we had fighter aircraft all over us. But at first a week or 10 days was a bit hairy. You when you hear bombers flying 24 hours a day they flew all night long they flew all day long and they were bombing way deep in and what we were trying to do was get past the Germans that were right in front of us. Lots of good stories about the Battle of the Bulge. If I had a half a dozen jokers from my company right here they would have you going in the floor laughing at the stories they tell.

Interviewer: But did you have people as far as like getting frozen?

Mr. Allen: I had some that I didn't loose anyone from what we call frost bit but we had a thing that they call trench foot in which where we weren't changing our foot gear and weren't changing our socks and stuff like that especially when you would perspire in them they would freeze. But I think I had I lost

probably a half dozen people that had from here down a couple of places they had to take off the foot but it came from the business of being in the cold wet in your fox hole is filled with water and your down there it's one of those things where it happens. I had a Buck Sergeant who was the Chief Medical Core in my company and he would go around and he inspected our feet everyday that he could. He'd come to me and he'd say captain take off your boot I want to check your feet. And the idea was to make sure that the circulation was being kept up. We had all sorts of little fixes to take care of that you want to see two full grown males with their feet under one another's arm pits and their rubbing one another's legs it may look horrible it may sound weird but it was circulation. And my executive officer he and I did this every night rubbing the legs and we'd keep them warm under the arms and we'd put on dry socks and put our boots back on and ready to go again. And we were the lucky ones because where we were we could do that some of those others that were getting shot at 24 hours a day they couldn't do that sort of thing.

Interviewer: What about did you ever have any free time?

Mr. Allen: Had one three day pass one three day pass in eight months.

Interviewer: What did you do in those three days?

Mr. Allen: Led a convoy of about five douse and a half trucks with about 300 men we went to Ealm, France got on a train went to Paris fun and games in Paris then we went down to Marsa and came back up and went back into combat but it's one of those things in which the. I got a telephone call and the old man says I want you to take a break you're going to command that convoy going back and you'll be gone three days we were gone for a week we just couldn't find our way back.

Interviewer: Of course not.

Mr. Allen: Oh yeh all sorts of stories come out of that stuff.

Interviewer: Did you write a lot of letters to your family?

Mr. Allen: No I didn't have anyone writing to me except my mother so. I had my mother sending me tobacco sauce and A1 sauce and someone conned her into thinking out in Tulsa some woman out there in the department store said that all the soldiers wanted OD colored booties to wear inside their boots and in their bedrolls. So my mother sends me OD they are neatly knitted and everything I tied them one to each side of the windshield on the jeep because and then someone out there said soldiers like Bon Shriek after shave lotion so my mother sends me about at pint of the dang stuff you can imagine what soldiers say when they smell you oh well and all that good stuff. My mother did not have the slightest idea what we were involved with but she wanted to do everything but we wrote a lot and she sent me things like I say mainly A1 sauce and tobacco to she tried to send me a bunch of cookies once and when they got in there you could just sweep them into because they had been crunched and banged.

Interviewer: Did you guys play games or cards or have any sports activities while you were there?

Mr. Allen: You mean while I was in WWII? Of course as long as we were in training areas like Camp Vandoran or Camp Walden sure. Lots of baseball football sure. But in combat there wasn't any of that stuff and we didn't do it in an infantry outfit and when we were in England in a staging out and stuff like that there were no fun and games along that line it was all too serious. As soon as the war was over we started it all over again we had lots of fun they pulled us back out of the edge of Czechoslovakia to what's it called a touring a border between Germany and Czechoslovakia and we immediately had all kinds of competition the Germans have a game over there a bowling game it's different from ours and we even took that out. That put us making sure that we had checked out all of the breweries and could tell you who was making the best beer in what little town and that sort of thing. But they pulled us back to a place called Kenichofin. And we were within about a mile and a half within the Russians when they came up the Russians we pulled back the Russians came up and occupied the other side of the boarder and then we started having trouble we had trouble from then on. They we would pick up their deserters and the first time we'd just take them up to a crossing station and give them to them they'd take them down the road a few hundred yards and machine gun them. We didn't have any deserters no one wanted to desert to the Russians I'll tell you but then we tried to have athletic competition between the Russian soldiers and us, it didn't work. In the first place they didn't know what we were talking about they knew a little bit about soccer but not much or foosball. But the only contacts we really had with those people were these very formal exchanges of prisoners they weren't exchanges we turned them over to them. But we learned we couldn't drink vodka that way they did we learned that they couldn't handle bourbon the way we do so.

Interviewer: Now when you learned of the end of the war do you remember the day you learned of the end of the war?

Mr. Allen: The 8<sup>th</sup> day of May 1945 at 11 o'clock in the morning. The Command came down cease all forward movement the blackout is lifted you may turn your headlights on on all of your vehicles. And the war ended the next day. That's when they had the total surrender unconditional. And we were in Lonsoon, Germany and you had the Danu River and the In River and Lonsoon was about 90 kilometers from Munich and Passau where the Danu and Munich came together was the American exchange point for prisoners and all. I remember that day because we were dumbfounded we didn't realize how much we missed lights at night and you all of a sudden turn your lights on take that blankets off the windows and all of that and let the light shine forward. It was exhilarating it was one of those things that you never realize how off you were. That's why when people cry to my how tuff things are they don't know what tuff is. Like that guy that said why wouldn't I pay his cable bill for his TV.

Interviewer: Were you ever wounded in the war?

Mr. Allen: No came close once. Once across the knee cut off the tops of the trousers but I didn't get hit where I'd be evacuated no. I'm just as happy.

Interviewer: What did you guys do after the war ended?

Mr. Allen: What did you say?



Interviewer: What did you do after the war ended did you just stay there?

Mr. Allen: No occupational duties and that was to take care of all of those people we were talking about. There were things that had to be done international political situation was very unstable at that point you had Russians enter into the war with the Japanese four days before the war was over . You had the Japanese had been on the Korean peninsula for 47 years all of this stuff and I wasn't in the Pacific at that time all of my time was spent in Europe. But in Europe you had this constant readjusting of troop's prisoners you had complete units of Polish soldiers Danish soldiers French and what we called the jug head Yugoslavians and Hungarians all of this was a constant adjustment we moved a lot. When the war was over in May and they moved us sometime in the middle of June back in this one area Kinitool and then all of a sudden we are moving again and I ended up moving down to Vanbrugh and on down to a thing called Helms shop going towards Vasop now I know this is all not going to make sense on your tape but we were extremely busy and one of the reasons were they kept us extremely busy deliberately because idle hands are the devil's workshop especially if it's with soldiers. Soldiers have all the means to all sorts of things with guns trucks communication so they keep you busy. We started training them when the war was over we started retraining getting reorganized restructured because my division was scheduled to go to Japan you now there were going to take em back re-outfit em ship em to Japan because the war wasn't over yet and I stayed in Germany because they interviewed a group of us and they selected 10 or 12 out of my regiment to stay with the first division.

Interviewer: So actually some of yours did go to Japan?

Mr. Allen: Well I don't know the only thing that I know was when I left the division it was taken back somewhere into France and I don't know whether it was ever flashed out it obviously it didn't go to Japan though because the war ended before they could ever get back and get. But there were outfits that were scheduled to go to Europe that while they were at sea they turned around to go to Japan. Now you had that 's one of these things in which you there is some excellent books written on a pure professional side as to what took place immediately following the war and it was not a half hazard thing. Obviously there's a lot of stuff to laugh about like you'll hear guys telling stories going from the cigarette camp like they go from Camp Pall Mall to Camp Lucky Strike to Camp Campbell to Camp Chesterfield this was the process of getting home. You move from one camp to another until finally you reached the fort and got on a ship they weren't flying us they were coming on ships.

Interviewer: How much later after the war did you stay in Europe before you came home?

Mr. Allen: I came home on R&R in the spring of 46. I volunteered to stay then I came home for 60 days spent everything that I had saved and my mother hadn't used had a ball and went back to Europe and then in July of 1946 I met my wife and three months we announced our engagement in six weeks and then we got married in December. And we've been married 55 years this coming December. She was with the American Red Cross.

Interviewer: Do you remember when you saw your mother?

Mr. Allen: When what?

Interviewer: When you saw your mother for the first time after you came back, was she excited?

Mr. Allen: My mother oh sure my mother I was her little boy. But I want to show you since this is an informal thing there's my wife in a Red Cross uniform there we'd been married for 6 months and this is what she looked like last year in England.

Interviewer: Oh she's so pretty that is sweet as can be. So you met her in the state?

Mr. Allen: No I met her there in July in Lonsoon, Germany. And she thought I was a smart elick and I didn't think she had too good of sense at that point in time because she didn't properly respect this young major so. As a matter of fact she latterly invited me out of her Red Cross club one night because she didn't like the way I was talking to a soldier so we laugh about this all of the time. But 1946 was the big time we got married and we came home in 47 and the next time we took off for Japan I went to Korea and she went to Japan. But I'm getting far off filed.

Interviewer: Oh but this is neat did ya'll have children?

Mr. Allen: Huh

Interviewer: Did ya'll have children?

Mr. Allen: One son and he was a chopper pilot and he and I were together at the same time in Vietnam. And his mother had her whole family in Vietnam and she made me promise I wouldn't fly with him and I wouldn't. Because if it went down she'd lose either her husband or her son or both. But he was a chopper pilot with A Company the 229<sup>th</sup> air assault battalion which is right out here at Fort Campbell. But he flew this was 71 72 in Vietnam.

Interviewer: How did you migrate to Clarksville?

Mr. Allen: Oh I'd been traveling through here I remember Clarksville when it had 12,000 people in it. And we had old Camp Campbell here Camp Campbell you know was opened and closed three or four times but I used to pass through here. Then later on many years later I was going through here and my assignment at that time I was commanding Fort Sure, Illinois and I would have to go to headquarter supporters command in Atlanta and we'd drive through here and we found it so interesting, clean, friendly people and one day I got a letter that said that your personnel records indicate that you have 35 years 11 months 27 days you will be placed on the retirement rolls effective 1 April 1978. I had six months to pick out a place and we looked in Texas, Oklahoma, California and we kept coming back to here. I wanted four seasons, water, hills, trees a university and I wanted a one hour drive of a major population center and it was all here. All here then I learned that Fort Campbell was operational it was a full strength operating outfit. I also learned that Tennessee was a no income tax state so it all worked out and we've been here now 23 years. And we complement ourselves all the time that we can't wait to get home because this is home as compared to other places. And you got a lot of people that look at that Tennessee is sort of hillbillieish and that sort of thing but from the if you want to look at it real good when they call them volunteers and their individuals I'm amazed at what we call state government but it's not all as dumb as it sounds. I like I believe in an income tax I think it's necessary and we're going to

have to do it and tax reform but I don't have one friend that agrees with me. It's the tradition of the Tennesseans not to have an income tax and that's the way they want it. My granddaddy didn't have one and my great granddaddy didn't have one. But that's the reason we picked it out it had a lot going. When I came here the population was 65,000 it's now your getting close to 140,000.

Interviewer: There was one other thing I was going to ask you and I can't remember. Now you've gone back to Europe since you've gone back to Germany.

Mr. Allen: oh yes well it took me 25 years to get back there. I got to go to Southeast Asia three times in Korea and Japan. And I finally was assigned to Naples, Italy at the headquarters of allied forces Southern Europe which commanded the Mediterranean. And I spent three years there and we were able to get back up into Germany quit often and Austria we were married in Salzburg, Austria in a bomb trap house. Are you familiar with bomb traps? The family you now what the sound of music was? The sound of music the bomb trap house that's where he had our reception and we were married in Salzburg.

Interviewer: That is so interesting I am going there this fall going to Europe this fall.

Mr. Allen: What part of Europe?

Interviewer: All over I don't get to go to Ireland or Scotland. Possible I get to go to England but I'll be in first Spain and then Italy and then Greece then to Germany and Austria.

Mr. Allen: How long are you going to be gone?

Interviewer: Three months.

Mr. Allen: Oh wonderful surely when your in Germany they'll take you to Balberia and you'll go up into Northern Germany and if you get if you go due west of Munich you cross the border into Salzburg. Burchase Garden where Hitler's hang out was and Oberabergown and all that area. But if your going to be there three months how are you going with a group?

Interviewer: With my parents.

Mr. Allen: With your parents.

Interviewer: Missionaries

Mr. Allen: And you're fathers a former soldier?

Interviewer: No sir we're missionaries.

Mr. Allen: I see well I don't know why you'd be going over there. What church?

Interviewer: First United Pentecostal Church.

Mr. Allen: Get carried away with things like I won't get on that. When gave that guy a 30 day stay on his execution when he killed 168 innocent people.