

Weaver: I met a fellow at the last convention the one we had at Benning five years ago. I'm not really a gung ho type guy I like to talk and I like to express some of the experiences I've had. But I don't wear a lot of emblems and that's the first cap which they gave to us here but I don't wear a 101st cap or anything like that. I've got an army tag that I have stuck in the back of my car not hers but mine which I drive around town. But it's everyone has their own thing I guess something like that.

Interviewer: You went into the army you said in 1943?

Weaver: 1942

Interviewer: 1942

Weaver: November the 14th.

Interviewer: You still remember. And you were drafted?

Weaver: I volunteered for the Marine Core they turned me down. I went back to South Bend where I was staying at that time. I was drafted from my hometown in Goshen Indiana and went to Toledo. Volunteered for Air Borne they sent me to Fort Brag and took my basic training glider infantry. And I kept after them I could read and write so they put me in the office and

Interviewer: Could you type?

Weaver: Yeah my MO was clerk typist.

Interviewer: So you could type as well as read and write so

Weaver: Yeah I was a good typist.

Interviewer: Anybody could carry a riffle but a good typist is hard to find.

Weaver: I can't type now my fingers are so messed up. But I kept after the CO the Warrant Officer in the office to send me across the parade ground to the 502nd parachute regiment so I could get my jump training in. And he did eventually so from then I guess probably I don't remember maybe my records showed where I was transferred to the 502nd from the 101st glider man. But I took my basic training in gliders and went to Benning on my own. And came back and spent the rest of my three years with the 502nd.

Interviewer: What was the air borne training like at the time?

Weaver: Well it wasn't too tough for me because I had already been through what I thought was hell going through with the glider infantry. But I think the toughest part was probably the last week. One week was physical training another week was talking about the make of the shoot and what have you give you a little stay away from fear. And another week was packing shoots and then the fourth week, and all along we're working on these towers they have but we were sliding down ropes. But as a matter a fact I've got pictures of Benning way back when. But the last week we made five jumps one each day. After each jump we went back to the field and packed our own shoots just to be sure everything was right and we built up our faith in the shoot. And after those five jumps we got our wings and then I

personally went back to the 101st at Fort Bragg. Most everybody else went back to some went to the 101st others went to air borne groups but they came from artillery and all over. But it was it wasn't a tough week I didn't think I mean a tough month because as I mentioned I had already had my basic training in gliders.

Interviewer: So you were already in good shape by the time you went to air borne school.

Weaver: Yeah I thought so. I'm not a big man but I kept up with most of them.

Interviewer: So I'm very curious here you said you packed your own shoots. We don't do that anymore. How much time did they spend teaching you to pack parachutes?

Weaver: Well they had instructors naturally.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Weaver: We knew a little about the nomenclature but I really don't there were instructors and they had big long tables and you stretch your shoot out and just like the

Interviewer: I've seen it done but I've never done it, that's a specialty now in the army. They have parachute riggers they called them and that's their whole job.

Weaver: Well they had riggers. I've never of course I've only made 13 jumps.

Interviewer: Thirteens' enough.

Weaver: Well that's all I had to make. Five of them were training.

Interviewer: I made five and they call the five jump chump.

Weaver: Of my 13 five of them was at Benning to get my wings and then we had a couple of maneuvers before we went overseas. One of them I think we went to Tennessee.

Interviewer: You should have been here for the Tennessee maneuvers sure.

Weaver: And we had, don't ask me how many maneuvers but then we made one or two practice jumps. And each time I had to go with because of the jumper I had to go with one of the line company. And I remember one particular and I think it might have been our last jump before the invasion was with for Churchill. I've got a picture of him in my book there.

Interviewer: Doing a demonstration jump in England?

Weaver: Yeah it was made by someone else but I got the picture of him standing out that at dusk, it was near dark when it all ended. Then the two combat jumps ended up at 13. I take it back I had to jump one time before I came home in order to stay on jump duty.

Interviewer: Right to keep your jump pay.

Weaver: Yeah that was my 13th jump and I was a little worried about that one. Being worried it was the 13th jump and being when I got out to the field I found out I was the jump master. Never jumped first in my life but I was the ranking noncom Buck Sergeant and the other fellows were going home too. But I had a line and they made me jump master first time I ever went out of the plane as number one.

Interviewer: How was that?

Weaver: Well it was a beautiful day I have the number of the plane all of the names of the fellows that were in the stake. I have written down the type of day it was I have written down the time and everything and I have it in a bunch of mess I have over here.

Interviewer: This one was that last jump was in England also?

Weaver: Yeah no it wasn't, you mean to come home?

Interviewer: Yes

Weaver: That was over in Europe I mean over in France or Holland.

Interviewer: France or Holland

Weaver: Yeah somewhere over there. I think I have a list but I've never been asked that question.

Interviewer: I was just curious I was just curious.

Weaver: We were the war was over.

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: And the Officer came through the office and stopped at my desk he said Sergeant Weaver you want to go home and I said yes. He said you have enough points to go and you can go most anytime and I said I would like to. He said there might be one catch though if you want to stay on jump training jump pay 50 bucks a month extra that you'll have to make a jump before you leave. Because during the war time you didn't have to jump every so often and we didn't there was a year to go by before I jumped sometime. But or six months but after the war was over we had to make jumps what every three months or every month or something like that. I don't but I went out and made the jump and it was beautiful day beautiful jump and coffee and donuts just like they did in Holland. You probably haven't heard about this but the Holland people the people in Holland when we made the jump near our area that we were protecting you heard about the Bridge Too Far.

Interviewer: Yes

Weaver: The 101st was there designated area was I don't know about 30, 40, 50 miles south of The Bridge Too Far. And we were supposed to keep the supply line open to the British who were supposed to jump up there and did I guess. But it was a beautiful jump the folks over there were waiting for us I guess when they heard the planes and treated us like we were kings. And all hell didn't break out until oh maybe six hours after we landed then it was kind of hell to keep that section open highway I guess it was.

Interviewer: Hell's Highway?

Weaver: Yeah to get supplies to.

Interviewer: Now the jump training I keep going back but when you did your qualifying jumps were you afraid of jumping or did you enjoy it?

Weaver: I was not afraid and I was enjoying it after the first one.

Interviewer: The first one scared you?

Weaver: The first one you know as you might have heard before people are wondering whether they are going to be able to get out of the plane. But after the first one and we jumped in good weather the training I guess was treated to teach us how to get out and how to land and what have you. By the way we were taught a lot of that training at jump school was teaching us how to land in water in trees on hard surfaces and things like that. But yeah the first one was a little fear but from then on it wasn't the other four weren't too bad.

Interviewer: Did you have to make a night jump?

Weaver: Yeah and that wasn't bad because we had already made some not night jumps but we had I guess maybe the last one was

Interviewer: That's how we do it now four day jumps and then a night jump the last jump. Mine were all night jumps.

Weaver: They were?

Interviewer: I had my eyes closed every time. I never went out the door with my eyes open.

Weaver: Well the only other night well we made a night jump in England on a training deal over there. But then of course you know the invasion was I think we jumped a little before midnight on June the 6th or a little after 12. We were supposed to follow the air force was supposed to follow what Captain Littleton and his path finders had set up. And they got a little they got a little mixed up but you know it was all messed up.

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: And the Germans and I think the Americans realized if it wouldn't have been mixed up we might not have come out as well as we did.

Interviewer: That's very possible. When you were shipped, you said you started at Fort Bragg you took part in the Tennessee maneuvers back to Bragg and then up to New York to ship over?

Weaver: Yes

Interviewer: And you were on ship 40 days?

Weaver: Yes we were on a British ship out of New York I have the name of it I have my mess ticket and I made little notes. We got out of New York and all of a sudden we went into New Finland. And I forget the name of the camp up there but we were taken off that ship and went to that army camp and we found out that there were submarines German submarines getting close to the convoy. And a couple of days later, and here again I have the dates somewhere that we came down to the dock and there was an American ship there. And there is a big different between the American and British ship. And we went we went out over and I guess went into Liverpool and it took us 44 days or something like that to make the whole trip. Now that's counting a few days in New Finland.

Interviewer: How were the conditions on the ship?

Weaver: Not good on the British ship pretty good on the American even though we were pretty well crowded.

Interviewer: I would imagine I've seen photographs with entire divisions on one ship just packed in.

Weaver: I don't have any stories to tell about money I gained or won or lost in those crap game.

Interviewer: No gambling on the ship for you?

Weaver: Well yes there was a little but I've never been a big gambler.

Interviewer: That's smart.

Weaver: I just won \$10 on Bobby Knight's deal.

Interviewer: Good for you. Now when you arrived you said in Liverpool you went into a base camp at Liverpool?

Weaver: Yes we were spread well we went right there to our headquarters I guess it was headquarters I was the town that was closest to where we were was Hungerford England. And believe it or not well you probably will believe it since you've been in service. I couldn't remember the name of that town to save my life until I read the paper about three years ago our local paper and someone had turned loose with this automatic gun and shot a number of people in this fast food restaurant in Hungerford England. And I jumped out of my chair and I told my wife that's where I was in Hungerford England.

Interviewer: About how long were you held there in England?

Weaver: Well

Interviewer: Several months getting ready for the invasion.

Weaver: Yes we jumped on June the 6th and I can't remember and I was let's see I went in service in June and the invasion was what 44. I guess probably we were probably there for 6 months to a year. Sometimes I can't find my way home so you're asking the question

Interviewer: How did you pass the time there training?

Weaver: Yeah we had training and of course we had furloughs. I had a chance to go to London and Scotland and we became familiar with the local folks. And there was a young lady whose husband was in the British army and she I had to satisfy my wife's curiosity I have a few pictures with her and myself but I also have a lot of pictures with the lady and some of the other fellows in the unit. But it was passed away with going around there was a little town Redding England and two sisters ran it was dress shop. And some of our units were based around there but the name of the shop was Weaver big Weaver across the top I have a picture of that with the two sisters beside of me. Most of my time naturally was in the office.

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: I didn't go on all of the, I didn't have to take the routine roughness that the line fellows had to do daily just about.

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: I didn't take any long running stents or any marching or anything like that.

Interviewer: Now how long before the actual invasion were you made aware of what was going on. How much did they tell the, at the time you were a Corporal, how much did they tell the Corporal about the plans?

Weaver: Well we felt there was something coming up but I think it was probably as far as I personally can remember it was maybe two weeks.

Interviewer: Two weeks

Weaver: When I started hearing rumors about things are going to happen we knew they were going to have to happen pretty soon.

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: Because weather forecast and all of that sort of thing and people were talking about Eisenhower doing all of this and Eisenhower doing that and the other officers doing this and doing that the British and so forth. So for me in the office it was probably about two or three weeks and then we started thinking it may be coming.

Interviewer: What was the atmosphere were people anxious or scared or nervous or glad to finally be getting off the dime to do something?

Weaver: I think you named it right there. I think everybody was happy that it was going to happen and it was finally going to we were going to do something.

Interviewer: Finally going to do something you had been training for two years now it's time to

Weaver: Yeah now at that time I never had a thought and I don't know whether Moore or Pitson had thoughts we knew we were the only jumpers in the officer. But we had no idea we'd be going in with the you know with the first phase.

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: Until the Colonel called us in one day and this was about only about a week before the planned invasion. And told us what he wanted done and why he called us in and he assigned me to the 3rd battalion he assigned Pitson to either the first or second I don't know which one and Moore to the other battalion in our jobs. Told us what our jobs would be the office cut orders to send me to the 3rd battalion G Company. All of my training of jumping I was in the middle of the stick now don't ask me how many was in the stick because I don't remember anywhere from 12 to 15.

Interviewer: I'm trying to remember how many people go on a C-24 and I can't recall.

Weaver: It might have been 20 the night of the invasion I don't know. But anyway the fact that 3rd battalion especially G Company had already made up their manifest I was the last one in the stick the last one to jump out of a plane. And when we got in the plane and got airborne there was a sergeant with the air force that was standing right behind me his back was against the pilots wall there. And he had a 45 and he knew what was coming he said soldier you want this 45 I'll give it to you if you want to take it with you. I said it won't hurt and I stuck that thing under my parachute and it never did come out of course we didn't jump from to high we only jumped from 500 feet something like that everything was all messed up on the jump. But anyway I told him I said now as we when they give the signal to jump you be sure that I get out of the plane. If I stop at the door you push and he's probably telling the same story someplace else in the country now if he's still living. But that was interesting.

Interviewer: So you were assigned to G Company 502nd.

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: To jump into keep records of men manpower reports

Weaver: Morning reports our job was to get around to anybody in any platoon any squad any company and get as much information on missing in action or killed in action that particular day from the last time I saw them. Sometimes I couldn't find someone

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: Each day and sometimes it would be late in the day when I'd be able to get some kind of confirmed information to take back to headquarters.

Interviewer: Now when you jumped in you jumped with a headquarters group or did you

Weaver: I jumped with G Company 3rd battalion.

Interviewer: You jumped with G Company so you were right there with the infantry soldiers jumping in.

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: And you said you jumped a little after midnight on June the 6th that you can recall?

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: And when you said when you hit the ground it was very confusing. What was going on when you went out the door what did you see?

Weaver: You're one of the first ones to ask that. I meant it was all messed up and I might as well tell you if I forget to it was about 3 or 4 days before I got back to my unit.

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: I landed on a hard surface road and as they teach you not to do I landed on the road and I heard what turned out to be a motorcycle with a side car. But the shoot fell on one side of the road and I rolled over in the hedgerow on the other side of the road with stretched across the road and I was in the hedgerow. And this motorcycle came up stopped there were two Germans there was a German on the bike and a side car the old type side cars. And they stopped and they said something I don't know what the heck they said but they said something and went on. Until the next morning I realized I had rolled into a field where they were repairing halftracks or it looked and the small mobile moveable guns German. I stayed there for I tried moving in the ditch in the hedgerow and I found out I couldn't go anyplace. I had an apple and an orange and I ate those and I think it was the third day early I heard soldiers coming up the road and I stuck I looked out a little bit and I saw they were American and then I was concerned how should I present myself.

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: They might be a little gun happy or what have you.

Interviewer: You didn't want to be mistaken for a German.

Weaver: So I rather than jump out quickly I moved out slowly. They were almost in unison giving me all kinds of praise I thought to me but they meant soldiers in the big pocket with the big pockets parachuters. And they were most happy to see me and the sergeant in charge of the patrol sent me back and I had a jeep of the company commander who took me back to his headquarters who was the colonel was named Roosevelt he was one of Roosevelt's sons. And he questioned me a little bit and let's see where your headquarters are and he was looking on a map and he said I will have you sent back to your headquarters. In his jeep how about that?

Interviewer: Good deal

Weaver: So I arrived back at our headquarters the day they had put me on missing in action and I got that straightened out. Because as soon as my mother would have heard that back in Indiana she would have been somewhat concerned.

Interviewer: Absolutely, now how about the others in your stick where did they wind up?

Weaver: I have no idea.

Interviewer: No idea

Weaver: I have no idea.

Interviewer: So you got separated and you were alone for a couple of days you were separated from anyone?

Weaver: Yeah many people were many of the soldiers were. And that brings up the point that we won because everyone was so confused. The Germans were confused we were confused we had these little clickers

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: And I have mine the original one and I would use it I would never get an answer. And I don't think I have read and I have talked after the invasion after we got some kind of you got a little bit organized and started our move I jumped at Utah Beach or behind Utah Beach supposed to.

Interviewer: That was the plan?

Weaver: Yeah that was the plan I don't know where you asked me where I don't know where I landed.

Interviewer: You don't know where you landed and a lot of men don't.

Weaver: A lot of them don't but a lot of them will tell you they do. And I don't believe they really know unless they landed in a town or a little village or something like that.

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: I didn't and I was a little those two nights that I was in that hedgerow the Americans were shooting at Chaetae on up the road and I kept praying please don't have a short shell.

Interviewer: Oh they were throwing artillery shells over your head. You were in between you had the Germans the Americans throwing shells and you were in the middle. The patrol that picked you up were they from the 101st?

Weaver: No they were from, don't ask me whoever and I don't even know which you know Roosevelt had two sons over there.

Interviewer: Yeah

Weaver: And they were both officers I think and this was I keep telling people this was the oldest son he looked mature. And of course I was on I suppose 21 by then maybe 22. But I think it was the oldest son and he I mean I had the best service and they took care of me like I was king you know.

Interviewer: They gave you something to eat.

Weaver: Yeah until I got something to eat yeah.

Interviewer: Exactly

Weaver: Until I came back to my unit and then I had to come down off of the balloon.

Interviewer: You were an honored guest there for a little while at Roosevelt's headquarters.

Weaver: Yeah well they respected what the 101st had done.

Interviewer: Sure you have to any thinking man has to.

Weaver: And you may ask and you may know here at this convention I've had several people come up not only to me but to the 502 that because the 506th was in the part of the 101st also.

Interviewer: Yes

Weaver: Last night we were sitting out after we came back from dinner we were sitting out in front of the hotel here and we someone who's high up in the rank as far as the 506th association is concerned they have one of their own little one. Came up and made the remark we certainly appreciate what the duce's done for us they saved us. Don't ask me how we saved them because I don't know but, you remember that honey?

Interviewer: Nice to be appreciated.

Weaver: Yeah they came right up I mean he was leaving he wasn't staying at this hotel he was leaving to go back to his hotel and he knew I was leaving tomorrow to head home. And he said I just want to remind you again we thank the duce for doing what they did. Evidently somehow we must have saved some of the 506 people.

Interviewer: Very good. Now once you were returned to your headquarters once you left Roosevelt's headquarters your duties consisted of collecting daily information from platoon leaders', platoon sergeants, company commanders to forward to higher headquarters?

Weaver: Anyone I could get up with and they were morning reports.

Interviewer: Yes sir now you mentioned a motorcycle earlier.

Weaver: He wasn't a sergeant at the time but Sergeant Moore confiscated a German motorcycle.

Interviewer: Okay

Weaver: And he also had the idea it wasn't mine now, he also had the idea that the two of us could cover three battalions quickly and we could do it together. The line was pretty well designated the front line at the time we were moving and we were heading up toward Caritan and up through France as fast as we could. And we didn't experience any gun fire or what have you until we got up close to some of the areas that we wanted to pick up the information. Funny thing you know we kept that motorcycle he did I couldn't ride one I mean I couldn't operate one naturally but we kept it for about oh a week. And then I think some smart officers said you know we weren't issued that so we better and he knew it was

a German motorcycle. But we were able to collect information a lot faster at that time of course later on things spread out a lot again and we had to do it individually. And we covered all three battalions the two of us because Pitson was evacuated he got hit you know on his jump. And I think that was one of the things that lead to what I thought was my first award the Bronze Star.

Interviewer: And you were on you were at Normandy looking at your records about 16 days.

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: And then you were promoted to sergeant and did the unit pull back to England at that point?

Weaver: Pretty much so it was within a week or two all of the 101st were evacuated back to England to base camp. Base camp my, the office I worked in my typewriter.

Interviewer: Was in England.

Weaver: Was still in England and I went right back to that right back to that.

Interviewer: And then when did you make your next jump?

Weaver: In Market Garden which was in Holland.

Interviewer: Right you jumped into Market Garden. It was the, what was that jump like?

Weaver: The same nomenclature the Colonel called Moore and myself in. When we went back to England there were a number of replacements in the office and there were a number of jumpers. Colonel called us in at that time it wasn't McKayless he was the first Colonel and Colonel Shipuley I think was the one that called us in the office Moore and myself Sergeant Moore and Sergeant Weaver. And he said which one of you would like to go with the next operation and of course as I remember neither one of us we kind of looked at one another and we didn't say anything. And he said I think probably we broke in now this is the way I remember it I don't know how Moore remembered it. I know he flipped a coin and I either won or lost, I had to go and he wanted an experienced person that had been in the field to go with these two young fellows. I never got as close to them as I did with Moore but and I can't say Pitson because Pitson was evacuated on the invasion. But I don't remember I was on the attack service 3rd battalion again the G Company. And the other two gentlemen I don't know they went with the 2nd and 1st battalion but I don't remember their names.

Interviewer: Now you jumped Market Garden how was that jump?

Weaver: Yeah that was what?

Interviewer: Was that jump a confusing fiasco?

Weaver: No no

Interviewer: I won't say fiasco it wasn't a fiasco but from the standpoint of being by yourself for two or three days in the hedges with nothing but a couple of pieces of fruit that's a fiasco to me.

Weaver: Well now I can think back it was I a little concerned I didn't want to move.

Interviewer: I don't blame you.

Weaver: I didn't know which direction to go because I was using my clicker when I could but I wasn't getting any answer.

Interviewer: And you weren't supplied with a map or a compass?

Weaver: I have the original map that I jumped with.

Interviewer: You have the map you had a map?

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: Did you have a compass?

Weaver: No

Interviewer: So which way was north?

Weaver: I have no idea.

Interviewer: Exactly

Weaver: All I know is where the well I knew where the gun fire where the fire was coming from. I guess that would be toward the beach area but I never gave it a after the first full day of daylight. I don't know that I gave much of a thought of moving until the fellows came in you know that came up from the beaches.

Interviewer: To the forces caught up with the air borne. Now when you went into Market Garden it was more organized the jump?

Weaver: Daytime jump not knowing whether it's true or not I'm going to make a statement I think everybody landed where they were supposed to land. It was a beautiful day as I recall the people in Holland greeted us greatly we were near Eindhoven. And our mission we were set up pretty quickly the whole division was set up pretty quickly or the 20 or 30 or 40 miles we were to protect.

Interviewer: Of the supply lines you said you were to protect the highway.

Weaver: The old highway to the Bridge Too Far up in Nijmegen I think the name of it is up in there. And it was about as far as I remember 4 to 5 hours before all hell broke loose maybe 3.

Interviewer: So you first you jumped in there was no resistance from the Germans. You were greeted by the Dutch.

Weaver: As I recall.

Interviewer: Then after you had been on the ground a few hours

Weaver: Then all hell broke loose.

Interviewer: Things got ugly.

Weaver: Yeah and there was some right good skirmishes we were to save a few bridges not big bridges but major bridges over canals and what have you that was in our territory. And all of that was accomplished.

Interviewer: Very good, now your duties there were the same as they were at Normandy?

Weaver: Same as they were they were a little bit easier

Interviewer: Collecting personnel two people were .

Weaver: Two people I could find I actually was able to get up with company commanders.

Interviewer: See there instead of having to chase down some squad leader.

Weaver: Well you I still got good information from squad leaders.

Interviewer: Sure then you have to piece together you know.

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: Which squad you know this squad belongs to which platoon which belong to which company and here if you have company commanders and company clerks it would be a little easier to get accurate information.

Weaver: The word I learned this later as you probably know too. I thought things were going well and I had no reason to think that the supplies were not coming but they weren't coming evidently I heard later. And I hear on the history channel that I probably shouldn't say it but the history channel said the British didn't move quite they were having fun as they were coming up the highway with supplies. As a matter of fact I think before I came to this convention I think on the history channel since it is in June I guess because of the big thing they've had several quotes on the history channel about some of the British commanders of these tanks and supply trucks and what have you were dropping were stopping and having fun you know with the town folks and what have you.

Interviewer: I've heard similar reports.

Weaver: But that's that was out of my I just heard that but I knew they had hell up at the bridge.

Interviewer: That's what I understand. Now how long were you there for Operation Market Garden?

Weaver: I don't remember.

Interviewer: Days, weeks several weeks? It kind of runs together after a while.

Weaver: I really I probably should have read up some of the notes that I had made but I

Interviewer: That's fine

Weaver: I can't remember. I do know that my particular job and activity was unhampered and it went along well. I do know in every operation you know we were going to go in England and be there a couple of weeks or a couple of days and we were over there a hell of a long time I mean France on the invasion. We were there a hell of a long time because of the mix up.

Interviewer: More than a couple of days.

Weaver: Yeah and I don't know whether we I think we were on the line a little longer than what Eisenhower or what the allied commanders thought we would have been but things had to be done I guess. Then we were relieved and as I recall we went back to base camp.

Interviewer: Back to base camp again.

Weaver: Or a rest area.

Interviewer: And you said after sorry your next operation after Market Garden was the Bulge did you say?

Weaver: I didn't say.

Interviewer: You didn't say. Before we turned the tape on.

Weaver: It was Bastogne.

Interviewer: It was Bastogne yeah. Now you went into Bastogne you didn't jump that one.

Weaver: No

Interviewer: The 101st didn't jump there.

Weaver: We had been relieved from the line. Some of the fellows equipment had not been issued yet some of the fellow and they had then the Bulge started. And we were the most moveable unit around the 101st. And so they we were taken up to Bastogne by cattle truck what we call cattle truck. And some of the fellows didn't have helmets they didn't have riffles we were short of ammunition you know had been issues because we just come off the line and you know.

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: And we met the whatever group it was that was up there coming the other direction and there was some words passed, you better not go up there and that type thing. And we were able to surround and this I get just from history and maps

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: We were surrounded we just surrounded the city and the Germans made the mistake of thinking they could get through and they used the wrong method of getting through the lines. At that time well when we were pulled off the line at Hell's Highway General Taylor left came back to Washington. And General McCullough was the

Interviewer: Was the commander

Weaver: In command

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: And being in headquarters I was still in G Company but I'd got back to headquarters. But I spent and I still had the 3rd battalion to cover and they were on the south east perimeter of the of Bastogne. And we were out about three miles four miles something like that. And there it became hard to get up with people because there we started having bad weather and this and that and the other thing. Then the Germans got surrounded the whole town and that sort of thing. I happened to be back in Bastogne came back from the field back at headquarters the day that that German officer came in or three or four officers came in with a flag and asked gave McCullough a chance to surrender.

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: And that's where the big nooks came in. The funny part it wasn't blown up it was a hell of a true story.

Interviewer: That's what I understand.

Weaver: He was talking to some of his aids standing around and they just mentioned why don't you just tell them I'm nuts. And it almost brings tears to my eyes right now and he said I guess I will or something like that. Of course I didn't hear the conversation but I was in headquarters as a matter of fact I wanted to get out of there in a hurry because they were bombing and shelling the headquarters real good. After that quickly well they were doing it right then but they thought that they could break it. I had no idea why they didn't succeed until I saw on the history channel that they were moving in one section at a time and we had smart enough officers to move our artillery what we had left and men to help. And we were able to get them back we lost a lot of men by frozen feet and things like that and I lost several people several of my friends that the 3rd battalion that I grew to know. Maybe not by name but by rank and where what they were doing and what their jobs were. But it was a great feeling to be able to know that they weren't able to crack through. And I remember I was in headquarters one day getting ready to go back to the area where the 3rd battalion was covering and a shell hit right down in the middle of town and took out the bakery. What they were able to you know of course they had already taken the medical staff. We were short of medicine short of everything. But things turned out pretty good the weather turned and they were able to drop supplies in. General Patton part of his army broke through and came up and the note that you know turn over the Bastogne in good shape I guess we turned it over to Patton's Army I don't know.

Interviewer: Yes

Weaver: Yeah and that gives you a thrill when you get into something like that.

Interviewer: You said you were short of everything now.

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: I know for a while that the 101st was completely cut off by the Germans.

Weaver: As a matter of fact I offered I carried an M1 all of the time I never did have I can't think of the little riffle.

Interviewer: Little car beam

Weaver: Yeah car beam I didn't ever have one I liked the M1. The jump in Normandy they taught us we had extensive training and here again I was with I knew I was going in the navy when I went in so I trained with the 3rd battalion G Company.

Interviewer: Right

Weaver: We went over and over putting that M1 together in the dark blindfolded and what have you. I don't believe anyone landing in Normandy on June 6th got their M1 together any faster than I did. I could just it was in a sheet across underneath the gear that I had on. I got that baby out and got that M1 together without even looking down as I recall you know it all happened just like that.

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: But I offered several times I offered my clips at Bastogne to some of the fellows that just plain ran out of the ones that had the guns just plain ran out of ammunition. And I had a I guess I offered maybe a half dozen to eight clips. I didn't have many left but gave whatever I had to the guys on the line. I would go up and it was hard to find them because they were in holes fox holes. And I don't think I think the Germans plus the Americans thought it was going to be over in a hurry and morning reports were important at that time. But I don't remember getting as many morning reports back from all the units company GH and I in the 3rd battalion. I don't remember getting as many reports back to headquarters as a matter of fact I don't remember getting back to headquarters too many times. I can't remember how long we were up there in the hole in the donut.

Interviewer: Forty seven days, it was quite a while a month and a half.

Weaver: Yeah I've got pictures of myself beside of the Bastogne sign and what have you. It was quite an interesting experience and then I play golf with a man who was a POW in the Bulge. He's two or three months younger than I am and I said where did you I see you've got, he belongs to the same club I do back home, and I said Tom I see you have a POW where were you a prisoner of war? He said in The Bulge. I said guess who turned you lose who got you who saved you. He said who? I said me I didn't know him at the time. But because of our then movement after evidently we passed people got them out because we moved at that time but then again when we moved off the line for a while. And then went on up to German Up to Hitler's headquarters we ended up up there.

Interviewer: Very good. The war was over you came home in 1945?

Weaver: Yeah June of 45.

Interviewer: June of 45

Weaver: The 20th

Interviewer: So three years later.

Weaver: Three years and six days.

Interviewer: That number you have down to a science.

Weaver: Well I never thought of it in these terms but out here last night in the hospitality room there were several people with the duce. And I got you know I might have known them and I might not have I don't know but we got to talking and I we were what did you do and who were you with and all of that sort of thing. And one of the fellows made a remark he said what did you do jump with your typewriter? And I said no but you bring up a good idea I probably should get a medal for being the most decorated clerk typist in the army. Because I was it just so happened that I went in with everybody that went in. As a matter of fact I've got probably more, well I got all of the unit videos. One thing I want you to know before we, when I got back and I don't know when this was I've got the dates someplace. But I went over to England on furlough with oh about ten guys ten fellows in from the 101st I can't remember who they were but maybe 10 or 15 fellows. And with some other units naturally and when we came back from England we always had to go to a camp and rest before we go back to our regular units. And this rest area the commander in charge of the rest area came to the ranking officer with us and said that he would like for his for us to be at certain strategic spots tomorrow in the camp, this is a rest camp. And we didn't know of course our ranking officer that was in charge of us until we got back to our base you know our 502nd probably knew but he didn't tell us until the next morning. He said probably you fellows would like to know why you have to have your boots all shined and all of your clothes in shape and your hat on your cap on straight and all of that. You're standing in review of General Patton he's coming in to inspect the camp today. I was standing on the porch they had a big porch at this rest area there and I was one of two soldiers standing at the front entrance. And I was from here to you from that pearl handled pistol when he walked through.

Interviewer: He didn't slap you did he?

Weaver: No no I want to show you before you leave and it's too hard to get it out right now with our interview but I want to show you the letter that General Patton sent to our commanding general after to General Taylor after this incident at the rest area. But in the basic in the middle of that letter he used the words that you generally would hear from General Patton. You have the best God damn fighting unit not only do you have the best God damn fighting unit in the whole American Army but you've got the best looking one too. I've got that I have a copy of that letter right there. That almost brought tears to my eyes right now it's funny how this thing. The first time I ever had tears come to my eyes was when my son gave me that Christmas and now twice since you and I've been talking. I've been thinking about things that you know I hadn't thought about that for a while. That was nobody else I know has it well they might have. I think probably the reason I have it I got it because I was in headquarters and I was back

Interviewer: Sure

Weaver: But I think that letter was copied and sent to everyone because it was such as fine coming from General Patton.

Interviewer: Fine compliment

Weaver: Yeah now he didn't write it, it was written by one of his adjutants I guess or something but it was quoted by him.

Interviewer: Very good and tell me how you felt when Germany surrendered. What was the feeling your own feelings the feelings around the unit.

Weaver: Feelings were great we heard about it and prior to that the Germans were coming out of the hills by the hundreds. Just walking down no ammunition I mean no guns no nothing. They were giving up they knew and we were at Birches Garden

Interviewer: You were at Birches Garden by Eagle's Nest.

Weaver: And they were coming out of the hills and what have you and I stopped an officer and he had a dress digger on his belt and I pointed to it and he knew what I meant and he took it off and gave it to me. It's got something on the blade it's worth a couple of 50 dollars.

Interviewer: Do you still have it?

Weaver: Yeah

Interviewer: Very good

Weaver: Well my son has it. I brought two what I think are nice things to bring back. Sometime after Bastogne I was with a squad up front kind of I just happened to be with them. And they found a box about square as this table and was German. They broke it open and there were maybe a dozen two dozen P38s in there brand new in Cosmo line or whatever it is that takes care of guns. And the P38 is the one that was issued after the luger because they ran out of good material. That luger was a hell of a gun hell of a pistol so I was one that got one of those new P38s so I came home with a P38 and that dagger. And my son is had some military training he was a fighter with the Marine Corps and he has those things. He wanted them and you know the only time I'd show them is maybe today if you came in you know. I had a British I mean a small pistol I don't know what ever happened to it you could only bring so much through the line. But I got a history we were in Marvelon France I guess that was a rest area when I came home as I recall.

Interviewer: Come back by ship also?

Weaver: Came back by ship American ship I got my meal ticket from we ranking I mean non-officers we had meal tickets and they would snip them when you'd go in and have meals. Coming back we had some bad weather actually. But I have the history the daily history from coming back from Europe back to England I mean back to the United States.

Interviewer: Back to the U.S.

Weaver: Well they printed the ship's crew printed what they called the something cry. Everyday they'd tell what had happened during the day and how the weather was and who won this and who done that. They had several athletic events on board ship. It was a good size troop ship, don't ask me how many soldiers it held I don't know.

Interviewer: You mustered out as soon as you got back to the states?

Weaver: Yeah I went back I had become oh this may be interesting to you. While I was at Fort Bragg when I came back from jump training to Benning I asked somebody well a tour man in the officer where can I go and spend a day I mean spend a weekend that wouldn't cost me much? He said go to Lumberton North Carolina they have a nice hotel it's not expensive and they had a USO dance every Saturday night. So I went to I caught a bus went to Lumberton check in a hotel messed around during the day went to the USO that night to the dance and I met my current wife.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Weaver: At the dance. I had already promised asked another young lady to take her home but my current wife Betty got a hold of me now I may miss this a little bit, and wanted to know if I wanted to go to church the next morning. I said yes I'd like to so I went ahead I guess I took the girl home not Betty. I met Betty at her ramming house I guess and she said I've made arrangements to well we went to church and then somebody had a car and we went out to the farm where her folks live for dinner that Sunday. And I had her hooked because I went out in the kitchen and asked her mother for the second piece of coconut cake, her mother fell in love with me. This is my story and we dated back and forth they came up in those days they would get a bus of young ladies and bus them into camp for dances. And we kept in touch and I would get in if your unit had a dance and I wasn't invited I would get in somehow because I knew Betty was going to be there. And we started out that way and we kept talking I mean by mail from Europe to Lumberton North Carolina. She was working in a bank there I we got close enough during these letters that I said why don't you go up and meet my dad and mother in Gholson Indiana. She got on a bus and traveled to Gholson Indian and arrived at my home in Gholson Indiana the day we jumped in Europe June the 6th.

Interviewer: Is that right. D-Day for you and D-Day for her.

Weaver: Amen we both survived. So after that I don't know she stayed a week maybe three or four days whatever it was I don't know I don't remember she does. She went home I during letters and what have you I found out mother and dad liked her and she liked them and what have you. So I told my folks to and I had been sending a few dollars home allot money you know. And to buy a ring and send it to her, they bought a ring and sent it to her. I got out of service I went back to school we got married I went back in the University Indiana and two of our roommates and myself came down and my family. And we were married in Rolland Methodist Church back 53 years ago and that was June 26th I think.

Interviewer: Yeah she's not throwing her purse at you so you hit it.

Weaver: And then we went back to school we had another little interesting thing you might like to know of course it has nothing to do with military now. But we became pregnant before I graduates we had picked out two names depending girl or a boy Gary or Lindsey I mean Livy Elizabeth. And the first job opportunity I had was in Gary Indiana manager of the down town merchants association. And Gary was born in Gary Indiana and everybody said you named him after the town didn't you? No we already

picked his name out we liked it. He was delivered by a doctor who got his doctor's his Ph.D. I guess his doctors degree medical degree playing guard with the Chicago Bears.

Interviewer: How about that.

Weaver: Compton I think Johnny Compton something like that. Anyway I thought that was interesting.

Interviewer: Sure is. Well I thank you.

Weaver: Well it's been an honor.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing your reflections with me.

Weaver: As soon as you walk out the door I'll think about five or six other things that I should have told you.

Interviewer: Well I would like to exchange address with you.

Weaver: Fine

Interviewer: Because your recollections are uncanny. You have so much to tell and your memory is phenomenal.

Woman in the background: I hope you've got something to write on.

Interviewer: Yes ma'am. (Holding up a board of medals) Now what I'm trying to get a picture of is the clicker I don't believe I've seen one anywhere else. We have the IB the Pathfinder, Airborne and I don't believe I've ever seen the Belgium Victory Cross before.

Tape ended