

**Interviewer:** We're at the home of Delbert "Bud" Roder and his wife Jenny Nichols Roder. The date is September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 and this interview deals with Buds experience with the 115<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battery C of the Tennessee National Guard during WWII. Ok, for the purpose of the interview, uh, what is your full name and where, where and when were you born?

**Mr. Roder:** April 20<sup>th</sup> 1920.

**Interviewer:** April 20<sup>th</sup> 1920 and what branch of the service you served in?

**Mr. Roder:** Battery C 115<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, that was the 30<sup>th</sup> Division.

**Interviewer:** 30<sup>th</sup> Division, uh, do you have any recollections of the Great Depression, uh prior to the years that you went into the military, I mean did that affect your family?

**Mr. Roder:** That happened, what back in the 30's?

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Mr. Roder:** Sure I remembered the depression, yeah.

**Interviewer:** What was it like, you know, and this is the period leading up to the war, what was it, what was your personal recollection of that time, how did it affect your family, how did it affect you?

**Mr. Roder:** We had a big family, we lived on the farm, and uh, there was 6 of us boys and 3 girls and you couldn't get a job anywhere and make any money anywhere, and we would even get out and haul walnuts and sell them to make a living to eat. We had plenty to eat, we raised it, you know, so it was hard times. I remember it well.

**Interviewer:** Now towards the period close to the beginning of the war, were things getting better for you and your family?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, in 36', they was getting a lot better, my dad bought a new automobile in 36' and things were getting better.

**Interviewer:** Now did you listen to the radio a lot, uh, did you have a radio?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, we had a radio, we didn't, it was a battery radio and we had run it down too much, we had a radio.

**Interviewer:** Did your family get a newspaper on a regular basis?

**Mr. Roder:** I think we did, it might have just been the Sunday paper, but they took us a paper all the time.

**Interviewer:** Prior to our involvement in the beginning of the war, were you aware of what was going on in Europe and aware we were having problems with Japan prior to Pearl Harbor?

**Mr. Roder:** Very little, see we was in the National Guard and things had been so hard, we was ready to do something you know, so we left here and we left here, we mobilized in April, not April but June the 16<sup>th</sup> 1940, June the 16<sup>th</sup> 1940, stayed down at the fairgrounds here at...for a couple of weeks, and then shipped out to Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

**Interviewer:** So you were actually, you were actually in the Guard before Pearl Harbor happened?

**Mr. Roder:** About 2 years.

**Interviewer:** 2 years.

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, we was in Columbia, South Carolina when the war was declared.

**Interviewer:** Hmm. So you had first entered the uh, you first entered the military service what year, 38', 39'?

**Mr. Roder:** Probably about 38', probably.

**Interviewer:** Okay, what uh, what lead you to join the Tennessee National Guard?

**Mr. Roder:** What's that now?

**Interviewer:** Why did you choose to join the Tennessee National Guard at that time?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, just to make a little, have a little income. I earned maybe 15 cent a week.

**Interviewer:** Wow, so you were mobilized actually in 1940, a year and a half prior to Pearl Harbor, did you have any idea that you were training up for a possible war?

**Mr. Roder:** See, we was mobilized for one year, and then after the war was declared we, they just kept us.

**Interviewer:** They just kept you?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** When Pearl Harbor happened December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941, did you hear the President's speech on the radio, how did you first hear about it?

**Mrs. Roder:** At the church.

**Mr. Roder:** Well, we was up there at.....you know, and some of the men was out living with their wives off of camp and they couldn't even get back to camp that day so, actually we heard about it right quick.

**Interviewer:** They couldn't even get back to camp they just basically closed the whole camp off and put guard on the gates?

**Mr. Roder:** Just closed down.

**Interviewer:** So did you hear it on the radio Jenny?

**Mrs. Roder:** No, I was at church and uh, people heard it on the radio and then come in that morning and standing by the heater and telling about what had happened, because she had a son she knew was going to have to go and that's how some of us came to know that something had happened.

**Interviewer:** How did you feel about it, how old were you at the time when this happened?

**Mrs. Roder:** Well...

**Mr. Roder:** About 18, 17.

**Mrs. Roder:** Something like that, I'm 88 now so really I don't know how long that's been.

**Interviewer:** So I mean when you first heard that news though, you know, when you heard, ok the Japanese had attacked our Navy at Pearl Harbor, did you know right then and there that this country was going to war, was it just something you knew inside if yourself.

**Mrs. Roder:** Yes we did.

**Mr. Roder:** You know so many people just didn't, didn't give it much thought, we was young boys, we didn't care, we was ready to do something, we had rough times is hard, and we was ready to go.

**Interviewer:** Did you feel angry about it, did you feel, did you want to....?

**Mr. Roder:** No, I didn't feel angry about it.

**Interviewer:** It was just something you had to do, you signed up for a job and you were just going to do it.

**Mr. Roder:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** Ok, this uh, you weren't drafted you had already come in, now this incident occurs, when was your mobilization supposed to end, were you suppose to come home....?

**Mr. Roder:** We were only supposed to be gone for a year, we went in September and we were supposed to back the next September, one year.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hmm, and of course once this happened, what was the next thing that happened for you, when did somebody come and tell you, you're going to take part in this.

**Mr. Roder:** They didn't tell us a thing like that, we was just in there.

**Interviewer:** So you're at, you're still at Fort Jackson and nobody told you, you were going anywhere, when did you get your orders, when did you get orders saying you are now going to this next place?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, you know, we pulled first two years, we pulled maneuvers in Tennessee, about 2 or 3 weeks went back to the Carolinas and pulled two more weeks and that was all the maneuvers we pulled until we got ready to ship out.

**Interviewer:** Now, when they shipped you out where did you leave from, did you leave from some place on the East coast, like New York or...?

**Mr. Roder:** No, we left from Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

**Interviewer:** Oh, you left from a ship right, right.....?

**Mr. Roder:** Boston, Massachusetts.

**Interviewer:** Ok, ok, did you ride a train to Boston or...?

**Mr. Roder:** We rode pulleys.

**Interviewer:** Rode pulleys to Boston and then you left from the Harbor of Boston on a ship or...?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, got on one ship, our outfit did, and we got as far as Canada and it got to, it was snowing so bad, we had to turn around and come back to Boston.

**Interviewer:** Now, originally were you apart of a convoy?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, yeah, oh yeah, I big convoy.

**Interviewer:** So this single ship by itself had to turn around and go back?

**Mr. Roder:** The best I remember, I can't remember if we had any protection or not.

**Interviewer:** Did you uh, were you aware of the submarine attacks that were happening through those convoys?

**Mr. Roder:** Later on when we got back on the other ship, yeah.

**Interviewer:** But at the time, you were worried about it, sailing on a single ship back to Boston?

**Mr. Roder:** No, no.

**Interviewer:** Ok, once your ship was fixed, what was the...?

**Mr. Roder:** Well we, they got another ship for us, we stayed there in Boston about a week before we left out again and it was a Duchess of Bedford, I never will forget the name of it, and it was a pretty ship, I think, and that's was rough.

**Interviewer:** Was it converted ocean liner or was it a military ship?

**Mr. Roder:** It was a big ship, I don't know what, or whether it was converted or not, but anyway, we slept in hammock and that kind of thing.

**Interviewer:** A lot of soldiers on there?

**Mr. Roder:** Full.

**Interviewer:** Full, about how many people do you think?

**Mr. Roder:** I wouldn't have any idea.

**Interviewer:** Thousands?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** During, during the crossing, were you able to go up on deck every once in a while, get some fresh air or...?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, I was a Sergeant guard on that boat, but I was so sick, I didn't go nowhere, I was sick from the time we left Boston until about to Iceland.

**Interviewer:** Being from Tennessee, I guess you know, being the first time you saw the ocean, up until the time you started getting sick was it a thrill for you to first see the ocean?

**Mr. Roder:** Oh, yeah. I never seen an ocean before, I don't reckon.

**Interviewer:** Now, ok you were, you started out in Tennessee National Guard in Field Artillery, that's what you were assigned to, to begin with.

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember the type of guns that you uh served?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, when we left down here we had 375.

**Interviewer:** World War I type 75's?

**Mr. Roder:** Do what?

**Interviewer:** The World War I type 75's?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah. Ok, and we got to Fort Jackson for a while, we got 105 Howitzers, so that's what we went across with. We packed all the materials guns and everything and we shipped them out somewhere and we thought we had them with us but we never did see them no more.

**Interviewer:** You never saw those 105's again?

**Mr. Roder:** Not the ones we loaded up and sent off, we had uh, a ship or two sunk in our convoy and I don't know that, if they was in there or what, or whether they just needed them somewhere else real quick or something.

**Interviewer:** Hmm, wow. Now, when you first started out in field artillery, were they still using horse drawn anything?

**Mr. Roder:** No, they done motorized when I got in.

**Interviewer:** Well, at the time field artillery had become motorized, um, do you remember the vehicles that you used.

**Mr. Roder:** Well, we had 2 different size trucks, Dodge and Chevrolet, pulled the guns, just ordinary trucks back then.

**Interviewer:** When you finally arrived over in Europe, where did you arrive at, where did they ship you to?

**Mr. Roder:** Shipped us to Iceland first.

**Interviewer:** To Iceland?

**Mr. Roder:** Iceland, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yep, what did you think about that, I mean?

**Mr. Roder:** We didn't know what to think about it, we about freezed to death.

**Interviewer:** It was that cold, what, what, do you remember what month you arrived, was it still winter?

**Mr. Roder:** August.

**Interviewer:** It was in August?

**Mr. Roder:** Over there you would have, say in August you would have sunshiny day, you would go in maybe a short sleeve and maybe the next day or 2 it might snow on you, you couldn't tell what it was going to do over there.

**Interviewer:** So you arrived in, this would be August of 1942?

**Mr. Roder:** Do what?

**Interviewer:** This would be August of 1942, when you arrived in Iceland?

**Mr. Roder:** I think. I think we spent, could have been 43', but I think its 42' or 43' in August.

**Interviewer:** Ok, was it less than a year after Pearl Harbor?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, it was after Pearl Harbor.

**Interviewer:** Ok, so but it was less than a year after Pearl Harbor?

**Mr. Roder:** I think so.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, now once you went to Iceland, if you didn't have your guns there, why, what was your job?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, we used British, we took over the British relief, and they had some 25 pounders, they called them, and we used them as long as we was there.

**Interviewer:** And how long did you stay in Iceland?

**Mr. Roder:** We were there 14 months.

**Interviewer:** 14 months. Ok, that would have put you in about 19, early 1944, ok you stayed in Iceland until, before the invasion of Europe, before D-day, correct?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Hang-on, I'm just going to pause this for a moment.....Ok I'm trying to get a timeline here, so if you arrived, you were there for 14 months, then it probably was January or February of 1944, did you go to England then from Iceland?

**Mr. Roder:** I guess it was 44', I was on Advanced detail and we went to London and stayed there about 2 weeks before the outfit.

**Interviewer:** Oh, you went to London?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What did you think about that, having come from Tennessee, I mean yeah you had seen a little bit of Boston and a few other thing, what did you think of London when you got there?

**Mr. Roder:** You know we were soldiers, don't you?

**Interviewer:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yes. Soldiers know how to find a good time. But how did you feel having left Iceland and now you are in London, when you were there, did you have a feeling that something big is coming up?

**Mr. Roder:** I never thought about it, I don't know why it never did bother us, it didn't bother.

**Interviewer:** You were just along for the ride?

**Mr. Roder:** I reckon so.

**Mrs. Roder:** See they were all friends, weren't you Bud?

**Mr. Roder:** We was all on my side, we were friends, you know. We had to get a lot of selectees to fill in, you know.

**Interviewer:** Hm- hmm, but I mean all your friends, just mostly the unit was from Hickman County and people you have grown up with your whole life, that you went to school with, did you complete high school?

**Mr. Roder:** No I didn't, we was a poor farmer.

**Interviewer:** When did you uh, when did you leave school?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, I left about 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Interviewer:** 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Then uh, so here you are, you're in London and uh, what happens after that, how long before, 2 weeks then the rest of your unit arrived and where did they send you to then?

**Mr. Roder:** They didn't come to London, they went to .....Whales, south of Whales, so that's where we went to.

**Interviewer:** So when you were in Whales, were you in a military garrison environment, was it a training camp that they had set up?

**Mr. Roder:** It was a training camp, we was training replacements that were coming through there.

**Interviewer:** You were, ok, you were, your job was training uh, the replacements, were you training a specifically for field artillery?



**Mr. Roder:** Well, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and basically sending them on to where then, whatever units they were putting together?

**Mr. Roder:** Right.

**Interviewer:** So the National, was the National Guards primary responsibility to train soldiers?

**Mr. Roder:** No, I don't think it was our primary reason because they just happened, they pulled the 115<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery because we had everything with us out of the 30<sup>th</sup> Division, they broke that up, it was too big, you know, so they pulled out the 115<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery and all the units there, and stuff like that, with it.

**Interviewer:** Now...

**Mr. Roder:** And we was attached to everything, just about, you know.

**Interviewer:** And what do you mean attached to everything?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, we done, when you make a move, it would be attached to this other outfit or something like that you know.

**Interviewer:** Ok, and so you, were you still with the....oh no I'm fine, were you still with the 30<sup>th</sup> Division at the time or you hadn't been assigned to 30<sup>th</sup> Division yet?

**Mr. Roder:** We was pulled out of the 30<sup>th</sup> Division.

**Interviewer:** Oh, you were pulled out.

**Mr. Roder:** We was 115<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery before we went over there.

**Interviewer:** Now, were you attached to a division, to another division later in the war?

**Mr. Roder:** We was attached to a lot of things, but I couldn't tell you, I got a book right here that can tell you where all we went.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Now, up until this time, you know, you're in Whales and part of your training, did you feel like your training was good, that it was good, it was adequate, that you had confidence in yourself and the soldiers around you that you were all going to be able to do what you had to do?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, I think so, some of them had a little training.

**Interviewer:** Did you do live fire exercises?

**Mr. Roder:** Do what?

**Interviewer:** Did you do live fire exercises, you know firing the guns, and did the pace of training pick up a little bit as 1944 wore on a little bit, as we started getting near the summer and nearer the invasion?

**Mr. Roder:** Oh, yes, we were moved from....it starts in 1940, I think that cover the whole National Guard time from the Beginning, 1940, you'll see it somewhere in there.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, August 42', sailed from Boston, Massachusetts, July 43' reunited Iceland, ok, ....., uh the Battalion was reunited in Whales, and then 1 May, 1944, left Berry, Whales for ..... Near Devonshire, England, replacement troops for the replacement Depot. Now, when the actual invasion happened on June 6<sup>th</sup> of 1944, were you aware that something big was going on?

**Mr. Roder:** Oh, yes, we was out there on the sand, right out there on the beach you know, of course you would see ships just silent, when you it was fixing to happen, and after it did happen we was close enough you could the explosion at that time.

**Interviewer:** So, what kind of a sight was that for somebody who had come from a small farm in Tennessee to see, to see all of those ships and I imagine it was just from one end to the other as far as the eye could see uh, what were you feeling when you were looking at that?

**Mr. Roder:** You started thinking a little then, you started wondering what was going to happen.

**Interviewer:** But your job continued to be to train replacements up until September I guess, September of uh, 1944, when your unit crossed the English Channel, landed on Omaha Beach and then went to Fountain Blue Forest France on 23 September and you continued to school troops at the 9<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot, remained there until 18 December 1944, what was, what was your area of France like, I mean, you were training troops there did you get to have a little R and R did you get to go visit places, did you ever...?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, we went to Paris.

**Interviewer:** Went to Paris?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah. Went to Paris and I can't think of what I was trying to say, it passes you know, and uh, in fact I had a appointment to go to Paris and the day they called us, midnight, somewhere like that to get ready to go to front line.....

**Interviewer:** That was during the Battle of the Bulge?

**Mr. Roder:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** So you were, you were just getting ready to uh, basically have a good time and then, then you got this news, just be prepared to....So that would have been, yep, December of

1944, now uh, once uh, once they basically told you that was going to happen uh, did you end up going to the front lines?

**Mr. Roder:** We went to the frontlines, not to the front line but we when in second defenders.

**Interviewer:** Mm hmm.

**Mr. Roder:** And that's all the safety we had, our gun and our ordines and we couldn't get out right then, that's night, and that's what saved us they got another outfit to go in the second defense line there.

**Interviewer:** What happened there, did the other outfit went in, did you ever find out?

**Mr. Roder:** No.

**Interviewer:** So your mission through all this time though was continuing to train replacements to go to the regular Army units to the Division on the frontlines?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What was it like to see Paris at that time?

**Mr. Roder:** You was a soldier, I don't....., I don't know what it done to us.

**Interviewer:** Was it just a feeling of, wow, here I am in this place, you know, I've seen London and I've seen Paris, I've crossed the ocean, I mean that, that must have been an amazing adventure for a young man at that time, were you already married by then?

**Mr. Roder:** Oh, no. I wasn't nothing but 21 years old then.

**Interviewer:** 21 years old, wow.

**Mr. Roder:** I didn't tell you about Iceland, what we did over there.

**Interviewer:** Ok, tell me.

**Mr. Roder:** I was uh, I don't know why they picked me, but they was doing some warfare training and they picked one or 2 men out of Sergeant or officer, out of each outfit, there was about 50 of us in all, we went up on the glacier and lived up there 2 weeks, training, our house me and 2 more guys dug us a house out in that hill side there, big enough for 3 bed post, and we slept in that, we had a little kerosene stove, we lit it up and got it first fixed and it just, it was like glass, just like a glass roof over it, you know, and we slept warm.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that's one of the things that you learn also, that snow makes a pretty good blanket too, a lot of people don't understand that, but it does.

**Mr. Roder:** That's true.

**Interviewer:** It does, and I little side of an igloo, if you build an igloo, little candle will heat the inside of that things as comfortable as being in this house. So you were attached then after 28<sup>th</sup>, after the uh, you remained until, at the 9<sup>th</sup> replacement depot until 18 December 1944, moved to the village of Fronoy, near Sadan, uh, remained in Belgium, Charoletville France, remained one or 2 days to an Engineer Construction Regiment, attached to the 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry, I can see why you said, it was just one attachment after another, after another.

**Mr. Roder:** .....

**Interviewer:** And during the Battle of the Bulge provided support for a remnant of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division which was a blocking position between the German penetration and the Nuse River, did you uh, did the German reach your position or anywhere near it?

**Mr. Roder:** No, I don't how far they got but they didn't get, they didn't get, we got on the river ridge, and we never did see a German.

**Interviewer:** Never did see a German the entire time. Now once that particular battle was over with, it says the on April 1945, you were assigned to 15 Northwest Army, this is very close to the German surrender, uh, supported the 66<sup>th</sup> Division in the attainment of garrison Dolorian pocket, battery moved into Dolorian on 12 May 45'. Now by this time, when, when you heard that the war was over, when you heard that the German had actually surrendered and you looked around and the guys that you had come in with, you all, did you all make it?

**Mr. Roder:** We didn't have but one boy to get wounded and we had 2 or 3 transfer to another outfit and they got killed, we just, we just, well we, I had a 105 go over my head, we was just lucky.

**Interviewer:** Wow, I mean, that's just, that had to of been just amazing to go through that whole experience and just be expecting terrible things to happen and then the war is over with.

**Mr. Roder:** You would hit the ground when you heard one of them go over because.....

**Interviewer:** Yep, but you were fired upon but nobody except for one person got wounded.

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah see, we was guarding a bunch of German up there, and there was a pocket of Germans and 4 or 5 of them, we couldn't hardly bring anything with them, they had things built back in there, concrete and all and you couldn't, 105s would just bounce off of them.

**Interviewer:** Did you uh...

**Mr. Roder:** They would just fire off of them, they shot a few round at us and we'd fire back, you know.

**Interviewer:** That was while you were in the Dolorian pocket?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did you uh, encounter German prisoners, were you ever at uh, did you ever get duty to guard prisoners or anything like that?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, uh, not until after the war was over and then they put us to guarding a whole bunch of German prisoners, and then we, they put us over there in a camp, it was uh, a camp that had everything in it, every country and everything else.

**Interviewer:** Ok, 3 displaced person camps, battery received took over a polish camp, this would have been in early of June 1945, uh prior to that you had been in Cologne, remained there until, until uh, your unit was assigned to take over the displaced person camps, then 18 June 1945, removed by British forces, banded for ..... on Danube River, near the Czech border, ok so you were actually placed on the Czech border in the week or 17 July 45', personnel were transferred to other Battalions for reassignment for discharge. Battery C awarded 4 battle stars for participation in the following campaigns, Ardennes, Central France, Northern Europe and....., so you definitely got to do the whole ride, but you were also amazingly lucky, in the sense that....

**Mr. Roder:** I know, I know, I just, I don't know.

**Mrs. Roder:** .....

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah. Transferred out to a new outfit.

**Interviewer:** So at this time, you've been reassigned to go back stateside, you took another ship to come back to stateside, do you remember where you departed?

**Mr. Roder:** No, we flew back from uh, somewhere up there in Germany. We flew to uh, what's that place over there, I can't think of that place where we were sent to, anyway we left out on a, I can't think, my thinking is gone, the Flying Fortress, what I was trying to say....

**Interviewer:** Flying Fortress?

**Mr. Roder:** We left out from there, and I was uh, I was in the gunners position up there, they let you ride anywhere you wanted to on there.

**Interviewer:** So you wanted to ride in the gunners place?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, I wanted to see what that was like. It was pretty scary.

**Interviewer:** By the time that you were on the ground I'm sure that you saw plenty of planes going over?

**Mr. Roder:** Oh man, that spell, you know for rough weather, you know, you could just see them, a sky full of them, so they could get out you know.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever think about how, amazing it was about how the people back how were building things that's fast to put that many in gear?

**Mr. Roder:** I wondered how they was building them that fast, I couldn't understand how they was doing it with the equipment.

**Interviewer:** Now, were you writing letters to the folks back home and getting news from home during that time?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, every now and then, my mother was dead and I didn't write too many letters, I'd write every now and then, you couldn't tell anything, they'd look through everything you'd write.

**Interviewer:** So you flew in a Flying fortress leaving Germany, did you uh, fly directly back to the, well did you fly back to England first and then to the states?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, we flew over the walls and kept going and uh, stayed there in some place, I forget the camp and then we loaded up again and headed for the states, when we got over there.

**Interviewer:** You also flew back to the states?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, not in a Flying Fortress though, we flew there in a transporter.

**Interviewer:** Transporters?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah and uh, well, anyway, when we landed somewhere over there, they reloaded some gas, and they jerked me and 2 men off the bottom and we had to stay there another day before we got to get out and we landed in Boston.

**Interviewer:** When you came back to Boston was uh, was there....

**Mr. Roder:** No, we didn't land in Boston...

**Interviewer:** Or was it New York City?

**Mr. Roder:** We didn't land in Boston, we landed in..where did we land...well my thinking is not right.

**Interviewer:** Was it up in the Northeast, is it near New York, Boston, Philadelphia, New Jersey?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, it was up in there.

**Interviewer:** Possibly Canada?

**Mr. Roder:** No, it was in the U.S.

**Interviewer:** But then once you landed, how did you get back to Tennessee, was it you had to wait in place for a while or did they...?

**Mr. Roder:** Well they put a bunch of us on trains, we got off at Fort Hadbury in the end, is where we got our discharge at, before we got back, and uh, we was on the train then and we was on our own.

**Interviewer:** So you took a train back to Tennessee?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, to Nashville.

**Interviewer:** To Nashville and does anybody come to Nashville to get you or did you just...

**Mr. Roder:** They didn't know when I was coming in.

**Interviewer:** So nobody knew that you were coming in, you've been through this entire thing, you've flown back and you taken the train ride and then how did you get back to Hickman County, did you bum a ride?

**Mr. Roder:** Greyhound bus.

**Interviewer:** greyhound bus back to Centerville.

**Mr. Roder:** Right.

**Interviewer:** And when you got off the bus what happened then?

**Mr. Roder:** It was about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning and I wound up on a boy drunk that I knew before I went into the Army, and first thing, he was drunk, I think the deputy had called me a taxi, and I went home with my brothers, so he came running out in his shorts, he never did put on his clothes when he heard.

**Interviewer:** He was pretty happy to see you?

**Mr. Roder:** Oh, yeah. My oldest brother.

**Interviewer:** So that night did you stay up for a while that night or did you just go find a bed and go to sleep?

**Mr. Roder:** Oh, no, we set up the rest of the night, of course it was getting on in the night.

**Interviewer:** And when did everybody else realize that you were back in town, was it the next day, was there other than your brother was there anybody else, you know...

**Mr. Roder:** Well, you see I left my twin brother, we was in the same outfit, I left him in France, I think it was, Because I don't know how they picked the numbers to get out first you know.

**Interviewer:** So when did he come back?

**Mr. Roder:** About a week or two.

**Interviewer:** So now that you're back here, how did you pick up the strings of your life, how did you pick up your life and just, did you just start farming?

**Mr. Roder:** Life?

**Interviewer:** how did you transition back into your old life did you wear your uniform for a while or....

**Mr. Roder:** No, I didn't have me no clothes, I had to buy me some clothes, because I had 2 or 3 pairs of khakis you know, you can buy at the PX cheap, of course I had that Eisenhower jacket, and my brother he was a carpenter and a farmer too, and he was doing some carpentry work and he wanted me to stay there a while and farm for him, and I did for, oh, a couple of months or longer.

**Interviewer:** How long was it from the time that you got back and the time you started to work?

**Mr. Roder:** I went back to work right off on the farm over there, but it was December before I went on my job at the shoe factory.

**Interviewer:** So you started off at the shoe factory and when did you meet Jenny?

**Mr. Roder:** Met her there.

**Interviewer:** Met her at the shoe factory?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Now, this, Jenny were you working at the shoe factory during the war?

**Mrs. Roder:** No, the shoe factory had just started.

**Interviewer:** It just started.

**Mrs. Roder:** I was working there, I was about the 3<sup>rd</sup> one they hired, and he was...

**Mr. Roder:** I was the first one they hired.

**Mrs. Roder:** Yeah, and so we were in the same department and uh, we uh, stayed there until they moved him up the place to do more work you know on a machine and then uh, I uh, stayed down there.



**Mr. Roder:** Well, that's where we got acquainted, in the basement, in the garage. That's where they set up a few machines to train people. So I was a shoe cutter for 10 or 12 years, then I was stock handler of all that material, that come in from Nashville every night.

**Interviewer:** So Jenny, during the war, what was your life like on the home front, I mean, you were 18 or so when the war started um, did it affect you, your day to day life?

**Mrs. Roder:** Well, yes, there wasn't anything to do, you just had to find what you could or what to work at and uh, I worked at different things and uh....

**Mr. Roder:** Garment Factory.

**Mrs. Roder:** Garment factory and all that.

**Interviewer:** Were there wartime industries around this county?

**Mrs. Roder:** Yeah, there was where they made jackets you know for the Army boy and things like that and I worked there.

**Mr. Roder:** You made barracks bags didn't you?

**Mrs. Roder:** Yeah, we made barracks bags, we sure did. We made uh, jackets later. We made barracks bags, it's been a long time!

**Interviewer:** Now, was that a fairly strange situation for you, to see so many other women working uh, in that day and age to have, I mean...

**Mr. Roder:** No it wasn't, because we was just glad to get something to do. And uh, little old plant down there and Mr. Cliget came in and run it and uh, I stayed there, well I reckon until.....and then .....hired the boys and we liked to be around the boys.

**Interviewer:** So during the depression, I've heard it said that you could go through an entire neighborhood and couldn't find a nickel you know between 20 people, you know there was no money, no work, now all of a sudden there was work, there was a little bit of money, what was the mood like in this county, in Hickman County, Tennessee, what was the mood like while the boys were overseas doing their, their job over there, did people talk about the war a lot, was it a topic of conversation?

**Mrs. Roder:** Well, my daddy kept the radio on all the time, be listening to it, every time he'd come in the house, if you had it on something else, he'd turn it on to see what was going on overseas.

**Mr. Roder:** See back in World War II, you couldn't, you couldn't tell your family nowhere, we was in Iceland for a month or 2 before we even got any mail and you couldn't put a thing in the letter, well we didn't have no letter, we had whatever you call them things your wrote on but

yeah, when we left the states they wouldn't let you have a thing, it couldn't say anything about where you was from or anything, drivers license you couldn't carry them, I had a G.I. license but after I got over there.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever get any kind of news, your unit, did you ever get any kind of news that, what was going on uh, in the rest of Europe, did you ever receive news about the operations in North Africa or Italy or Sicily or Japan?

**Mr. Roder:** In Iceland we had a, we had a radio, it uh, run by windmill, outside our hut, and the wind blew all the time over there and you keep the battery charged up and we'd get all kinds of news on that thing.

**Interviewer:** You used to listen to the BBC coming out of England?

**Mr. Roder:** BBC, yes.

**Interviewer:** So, you were aware of things happening elsewhere and also in the war against Japan?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** When, were you back home by the time the war ended in the, Japan?

**Mr. Roder:** I was home when the war ended.

**Interviewer:** Now, what was that news like, when you had heard that we had beaten Japan, what was your reaction to that...?

**Mr. Roder:** We was all tickled so and, now that we knew the war was over and it's not like it is now, even when you was in the war, you wasn't afraid to go anywhere you wanted to go, because them Germans they was glad it was over too, you know.

**Interviewer:** So, did you get to meet a number of German people and during your time, did you, did you ever get a chance to talk to a German who spoke English and ask them about how they felt about all this?

**Mr. Roder:** Well, I didn't, I didn't uh, I never did learn to speak German or anything like that but I had something in here that I was going to show you, there our first get together our outfit had when we got back and there's only 2 of us left.

**Interviewer:** There's only 2 from the whole outfit left.

**Mr. Roder:** From that outfit there.

**Interviewer:** Could you point yourself out over here?

**Mr. Roder:** Do what?

**Interviewer:** Could you point yourself out in the picture?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Look at you, young rascal.

**Mrs. Roder:** He's still young.

**Interviewer:** Well, that's Delbert right there, with the tie and he's very business-like, and uh, this is an interesting little book here that you have because it tell all the different places that you've been right?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.....was established first here in Hickman County.

**Interviewer:** Yep.

**Mrs. Roder:** Who fixed that up for you, was it uh...?

**Mr. Roder:** I don't know.

**Mrs. Roder:** It was one of the guys that was in the .....

**Mr. Roder:** This book right here was from when we first got to Fort Jackson here.

**Interviewer:** Camp Jackson 1937, 38'. Field Training, .....National Forest, 1938, August. Camp Shelby, Mississippi, 1939. So I'm guessing, I'm trying to find your.....yep, so you were already uh, already a part of the Tennessee National Guard as of 1939, well before the war ever took place.

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, yeah, I went to 3 camps I think. Yeah, we...

**Interviewer:** All in all are you happy to have the experience of having been through that, having seen what you saw?

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Or would have been just as happy to stay at home?

**Mr. Roder:** I wouldn't have stayed at home, I would have let them draft me but....

**Interviewer:** You got to see a good part of the world though.

**Mr. Roder:** I was Chief Section on that 105 house, that you were talking about, took 7 ....., a Corporal, and a Chief of Section, 9 men.

**Interviewer:** Wow, your experience though was yeah, I mean, it's just amazing you know, this was truly a World War, I mean there was just people who were picked up from all over this country, that found themselves in places they never thought they would see...

**Mr. Roder:** I reckon so.

**Interviewer:** ...or doing things they never thought they would end up doing and uh, you came back in one piece and looks like you've had a very good life since then.

**Mr. Roder:** I have, I worked hard and tried to live right and hadn't had a bottle of beer since the night of the first date we had, had to have a bottle of beer to get up the nerve I reckon.

**Interviewer:** So you haven't had a beer since your first date with her back in 1946?

**Mr. Roder:** You are exactly right, my twin brother was an alcoholic, it took 4 or 5 years before he died and I just, you know I went out for a little bit and drank for a month there I guess but I decided not to get out and get drunk and spend all your money, you know.

**Interviewer:** Well, God bless you, thank you for your service to our country, and thank you for allowing me to come to your home to do this interview, I truly appreciate it. Delbert, Jenny, thank you.

**Mrs. Roder:** What will you do with this?

**Interviewer:** Now, this is going to be, this is going to be recorded onto a DVD, a transcript is going to be made of the interview and it's going to become a part of a collection that will be used by historians who will be putting together a picture of America uh, from all over during that time, based on the memories of the people who participated and who lived through all this and it's going to be a very, very valuable resource, there's all kinds of different stories from everybody, the war is a personal thing, it's different for every single person, everybody that was on the home front, everybody that was there got their own particular recollection and all together, you fit it all together and there's a picture that emerges of what America was like during that time.

**Mr. Roder:** I thought of where we landed at, Prescal, Maine, landed up in Maine.

**Interviewer:** In Maine. Well, thank you again folks.

**Mr. Roder:** Yeah, your welcome.