

I was drafted in the army. I was married and I had two kids so then then they needed man power and I went in. I was young I wanted to enlist my wife wouldn't let me and a couple of weeks later they took me anyway. And there I ended up in the 101st.

Interviewer: And you joined the 101st in North Carolina?

No in England took me there and they needed the manpower and I preferred that to anything else.

Interviewer: How did you get to England?

By boat.

Interviewer: Were with a division or were you an individual replacement?

No I was an individual replacement and I became a division man.

Interviewer: Were you an infantryman?

Yep I was a heavy weapons man infantry BAR and automatic rifle.

Interviewer: Were you surprised to find you were joining the glider troops?

No

Interviewer: Did you want to?

I wanted to yeah because a lot of my friends were in there I figured well they go I go. Besides I always was sort of patriotic anyway.

Interviewer: And did you train with the division in England prior to the Normandy invasion?

Yeah

Interviewer: Did the 327 get to practice glider landings while they were training in England?

I did I don't know if all of them did. But I knew we went for flights practice and we practiced tying up the loads and everything else so they wouldn't shift and everything else.

Interviewer: Which battalion were you in?

327th

Interviewer: 327th infantry and were you in the first, second or third battalion?

I don't remember to tell you the truth.

Interviewer: And can you tell us about D-Day.

I wasn't there D-Day.

Interviewer: When did you get to Europe?

When they needed man power and I ended up in the 101st and it wasn't long before we went to Holland for combat.

Interviewer: Was Holland the first combat that you had with the 101st?

Yes

Interviewer: Now you came as part of the invasion in a glider were you one of the pilots on the glider?

There was no pilots they put me on the front seat with a pilot for the simple reason I think they needed space for something. Anyway my job was when we landed if we had too many too many of it was a soft landing at times we would not send down fire because the Germans would take them apart and use them. If there was heavy fire I'd be the last one out and I'd send down fire I had a harry bomb by the handle by the door and I'd just pull the handle as I left the plane and that set you on fire.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about that glider ride over the channel and your landing?

The landing was rough all landings were rough because you had well everything was a crash landing every crash everyone I was in was a crash landing. You hit trees or went over creeks or whatever was in the way there was no way you could take an easy one but those pilots were good.

Interviewer: And when you were on the ground did you start the glider on fire did you pull that cord.

Yeah

Interviewer: And it burned away huh?

Yeah

Interviewer: Did the other gliders in your lift did they do the same thing?

If they had problems yeah. But as a rule if it was a smooth landing for some they wouldn't do that because the army was using our gliders.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about your feelings and experience the first time you were in combat once you were on the ground. Was it scarier to be in combat or was it scarier to ride a glider?

No it wasn't either one I was young. And when you're young you don't think of those things. As far as being afraid sure I was afraid but that was it.

Interviewer: Do you feel that the training that you got in England had prepared you well for combat in Holland?

Not well because we didn't have time we didn't have time.

Interviewer: What were the kind of things that your training focused on the training that you did receive?

Most training I had there where we practiced tying up the loads in there the jeeps or weapons or whatever stuff like that and go for a few rides. And with our helmets on in case we got sick we used that for to get sick in but I never seen at least I didn't I never seen a glider get sick when we were going into combat. And the only thing I can say is our mind was occupied on other stuff but not going into combat a lot of people got sick then one or two guys would get sick and before you knew it we had a lot of steel helmets being thrown.

Interviewer: When you were in combat was there anything that happened that made you think about what kind of training you wished you'd had?

No no we were going all the time didn't have time to think of anything other than going home.

Interviewer: How were your NCOs did they take good care of the soldiers? Anything memorable that they did for you?

They were good but they were rough. Rough with respect discipline and obeying order especially and that was a good thing they were we needed that.

Interviewer: Do you recall your squad leader or your platoon Sargent?

Well Sargent Lasher was one but he's dead he was killed the rest I don't remember.

Interviewer: Is there any instance of good leadership that you remember a specific incident where you said I'm glad he's my leader?

The majority of them were good Sargents. Most of the time we fought under Sargents he was really our leader in most cases whatever he says went.

Interviewer: Did you get to see much of your officers your platoon leader or company commander?

Oh yeah you saw them not too often at times but you saw them. And they'd be up on line too firing.

Interviewer: What kind of impact did they have on your unit as a fighting unit?

Pardon

Interviewer: What kind of impact did the officers have on your unit?

They were good officers the majority of them and when you saw them with you you felt better. The majority of them were good.

Interviewer: After Holland you moved with the divisions to Reams?

After Holland we went to Bastogne.

Interviewer: Well you went straight from Holland to Bastogne? Did you not come back to

Well we went back to Holland and we turned in our a lot of us turned in our weapons to be reposed or cleaned or repaired. And then Holland come an emergency ten or twelve hours they pulled us out and said told us what happened and said grab any weapon you can get don't care who's it is load yourself up because we've got to go to Bastogne the Germans are breaking through. So some men didn't have weapons but they went in.

Interviewer: Can you tell us about the weather conditions do you remember the weather conditions from that period?

Cold a lot of it was cold. Some of it was good but we had a lot that was a cold winter real cold winter.

Interviewer: In Bastogne did you ever know that your division was surrounded had that become common knowledge?

Yeah once we got in there then we knew everybody knew then.

Interviewer: How did it feel to be surrounded by the German army?

To be truthful you didn't think too much of it you figure we're in here we're in here you weren't happy about it but you fought like hell.

Interviewer: Did you ever think about being captured or surrendering?

No never did but I didn't expect to be truthful I expected to be killed there. I didn't think I was gonna make it and I thought of home a lot my family but that's it. You were too I don't know how to say it we were too damn busy to think of those things.

Interviewer: What was Christmas like in Bastogne?

Well I was evacuated on December 28th from Bastogne. But it had to be cold it was a cold winter. Because when we were hit and wounded we were taken those doctors operated like I said in the warehouse men, women, children because they were killing civilians and everything. In fact there was one case there a woman was pregnant and expecting any day and they operated on her there in the warehouse and I heard the captain talking to one of the officers said boy when that baby comes that woman is going to go through hell. Because she was in plastic braces all the way up to her abdomen and she was a civilian.

Interviewer: You were wounded at Bastogne?

Yes

Interviewer: And what were the extent of your wounds?

I was wounded my leg and my arms my stomach some small spots on my face had splinters.

Interviewer: And then from Bastogne you were evacuated?

Yeah when they finally got us out I think it was about December 28th when they finally broke through to evacuate us by truck.

Interviewer: Since that day that you were evacuated did you ever have an opportunity to get back with the 101st Airborne division at a reunion?

No like I say I was wounded and I was in hospitals for a year and that's in Europe and then they kept shipping us closer to home. And they ended up in Springfield Missouri in a hospital there. From there I got medical leave.

Interviewer: Have you ever attended a 101st Airborne Division Association reunion?

No I didn't and only for the reason I wasn't too happy about the war. Not that I check it to the division I loved that division. And that was that.

Interviewer: I wanted to go back to Holland and just ask you a question about working with the Dutch underground and the Dutch people. You had mentioned that the underground had told you that if you were in trouble told American soldiers if they were in trouble how to contact the underground or how to find a safe place?

Yeah especially they said if you see a church with a gold top or a gold paint don't hesitate any trouble or help go in there and they'll help you. But watch the other ones. They were good people they helped every chance they could get.

Interviewer: Of your experiences in WWII do you have a favorite story you can tell your family?

Well I don't know if I have a favorite story but that's about it the most favorite story would be that people were so kind to us and helped us every chance they could. And that was a fighting outfit yeah.

Interviewer: Very interesting story thank you very much.

Thank you