

Krumel: My full name is Earl Joseph Krumel I was born in Airsville Ohio Richland Township they called them back then. I was born January 11, 1942 and born and raised on a farm I did a lot of hard work as I grew up through the years. Knew how to milk cows, make hay, take care of hogs knew livestock fairly well we had horses, cows, dogs, and cats and all that kind of stuff. But as years have progressed by we used to have to walk to school which I went to St. Mary's School in Defiance Ohio and from our school to the farm was about three and a half miles. And many of time we'd have to walk it well back then it's the only way to go walk it or somebody would had a horse and buggy they would bring you to town. And then later years some people had a car and we'd hitchhike and then later I got a bicycle. In fact the bicycle my dad bought me he paid \$4 for it I could walk easier than I could ride the bike because that bike road so hard. But anyway growing up with that I finished St. Mary's School then went into high school at the age of 15 I think it was Mr. Goals from Defiance had a grocery store on the east side and he asked my dad if I would be if I would like to work for him. My dad said yeah he could always use money so my dad said if you want to go to work for him go ahead which I did I worked two hours after school sometimes three hours after school. I would work Saturday morning and back in those days Sunday was what you call a Boo Law no stores were open back then you couldn't buy anything on Sunday. And after that I had a desire to have a car a friend of mine had a car and I wanted to get a car like he had or almost like it. I would work maybe for a nickel but I did accumulate enough then in a years' time to buy me a car so that was in 1937 I think it was. I bought me a 31 Chevrolet for \$90 and man alive I had a lot of friends and nobody had a car but a I had a car.

Interviewer: What kind of work did you do at the grocery store what was your job?

Krumel: Clerk by that time we worked at a store let's say well the store we have now are bigger but back then it's what you would call a Ma & Pa Store gas station. We sold oil and tires didn't have much to do with tires the place we were at but we had gas and groceries and meats. It was a funny thing I was making 16 cents an hour when I started and about the time you'd wait on somebody who wanted a half a pound of bologna you had to wash your hands get the bologna and pretty soon somebody would drive up at the gas pump you'd run out there and take care of the gas. Back then they had gasoline men they didn't have the electric pumps you have now you had to hand pump it which was a gravity feed you pushed the gas up in a glass bowl and then you release it to come down on its own gravity. And most people then they could only buy maybe \$1 worth of gas because you could buy five gallons of gas for \$1 then. And after a couple of years of that why I took up the training of a mechanist in high school and.

Interviewer: Did you like school did you like going to school?

Krumel: I was never a good scholar I would never be a school scholar I liked skill work or work with my hands I was more into that than I was a book actually. But I did learn the mechanist trade through the high school and my teacher there the last year of high school he got us a quite a few of his students like me a job at the Defiance Machine Works. And we'd learned the machinist trade in the shop there and hour we had to log 4085 hours I think it was. We had to work on different types of machines line lay, boring mill, planers and grinders and grills had to put in so many hours on each piece of machinery. Well then the war came along then I didn't get the chance to finish my full training of full-fledged machinist to get my certificate.

Interviewer: So when you graduated high school were your plans to go into machinist?

Krumel: Yeah I was to be a machinist at that time yeah. But the war came along then and I had to go to the service. I got that letter from the United States Government how did they word that now: Greetings you have now been selected and elected for service of your country.

Interviewer: Now your home did you have electricity did you have a telephone you know anything like that?

Krumel: Home on the farm at that time we didn't have any electricity we had coal oil lamps and back then one of the biggest lamps at that time was called the Aladdin lamp. And which used kerosene to burn too but it was a lamp that had like asbestos and some way or another it would like up and shed all the light for kerosene back then.

Interviewer: The area you lived in was it during the depression was it poverty is it pretty people well off?

Krumel: No people back then were there wasn't anybody wealthy I mean back on the farm in those days everybody was self-sustaining. You had your sugar you own cattle your own seller for your fruits and vegetables and stuff you stored for the winter. And then we had to get wood in for the winter too all the woods you know and we didn't have the luxuries of going town and buying a quart of milk or whatever you wanted to do then but everybody lived pretty much the same. Some people were a little bit better off than others but by enlarge everybody was about the same category.

Interviewer: Now how old were you in 1939 when Hitler invaded Poland and started the war?

Krumel: In 39 I was how old was I? I was about 21, 21 years old.

Interviewer: Now let's see were you aware of all what the events were going on in the world did you read the newspaper I mean did you realize?

Krumel: I didn't know too much about it but I heard old people elderly people talk about it in the stores about were going to have someday WWII overseas in Germany there and we've got to stop this Nazism. Nazism was growing and strengthening in fact they wanted to concur the world. But I didn't think too much about it until I got in the service myself I think back these people were talking about it and here I am in it so.

Interviewer: So in say 1939, 1940 did you sense what war was on the horizon I mean did you realize this was gonna happen or was this just something that you really didn't think about much?

Krumel: I thought about it but it didn't sway me too much one way or the other. I was more interested in my work at that time in the shop machine work at that time.

Interviewer: How did you hear about Pearl Harbor for the first time did you hear it on the radio?

Krumel: I heard about that on December the 7th on a morning we were working on machine work and it was on a morning about 9 o'clock. They come over the loud speaker and said everybody shut their machinery down and get there in the hallways we had there said the President of the United States wants to talk. Which we did everybody shut their machine down and we went out there and President Roosevelt at that time and he announced that we had been attacked at Pearl Harbor December the 7th 1941. And boy that kind of got me too he announced that we are now in war said now I now declare war

was that it was I now declare war. And a fellow and I was working on one of the machinery said well I know where we're gonna be in another few months and well about two months later it when I got my draft notice.

Interviewer: So did you have any desire to join the military right after that or did you just want to wait until you got drafted?

Krumel: I kind of stalled along wait until I got drafted which I did. Some of the guys went ahead they went in the navy a lot of them did. But I was working on a job for the B & O Railroad at that time and the superintendent came down and said if I can get I was supposed to go into service on June the 2nd of 1942 and he come down asked he said if I can get you deferred to finish this job this contract he said would you be willing to stay? I said if you can get me out of here I'll stay I didn't care about going to the war then. But anyway I finished the government job we were supposed to be doing I was working on a steam stack for big water trains at that time. And I was working on a spacer bass spacer to put theses stacks together he said you're doing such a good job on it I hate to have anybody else to touch it. So the tolerance we had to work with we had to work with a thousand and a half tolerance and working with brass you had to be very careful not to overheat the brass because it would warp on you. It would expand I had knowledge pretty good size of my own way of doing it and anyway we got me deferred then until December of 1942 deferred until December the 1st and December the 2nd I went into the service.

Interviewer: Now when you got your draft notice it was like a letter that was sent to your home was that how you found out?

Krumel: The notice you mean?

Interviewer: Yeah when you found out you were drafted?

Krumel: Yeah it was a letter it was a letter on a yellowish kind of paper like you know. I didn't save it I wish I would have saved it now but I didn't save it.

Interviewer: What were your emotions were you surprised were you disappointed?

Krumel: I thought well it's going to be a new way of life and at that time I just kind of felt like the other guys we were just kind of wondering around in a fog somewhere you know. And we were alerted to go meet down there at the Defiance Armory on December 2nd at seven o'clock in the morning.

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

Krumel: Well they were disturbed too it was a new experience you know and people going off to war you know you don't know what to expect. Young guys I was in my 20s 21 and it was kind of a shock to everybody we adjusted.

Interviewer: Where did you do your basic training at?

Krumel: Basic training was done down in Camp Vandoor Mississippi but prior to that we went to Camp Perry Ohio that's where we first went that's there they shot us all down there. And then they gave us orders from there as to what department you was gonna be in or what company you was gonna be in or

what some assignment. And they come down we were there for ten days and boy you sure miss your mother's cooking after you get in the army because there wasn't any food to speak of oh God it was terrible. But anyway they had a guy go out in the morning a Sargent go out in the morning he had a can like the size of a big coffee can or a paint can is what it was and that was full of cigarette butts. And he'd go out and throw those things all around then we had to go out and pick the damn things up. That was our order to do that you know boy if you missed any there was hell to pay you was on KP or something else you know.

Interviewer: Now did you have a preference as far as what branch of service you were going into? I mean did you care that you were going to go into the army or would you have rather gone in the navy?

Krumel: In fact I didn't know much about the army different signals of the army I didn't know much about the air force or anything else. I didn't know I had a selection but had I known then what I know now I would have shot for the air force. But I got drafted into the general infantry and I took training there well after we left Camp Perry in fact we didn't know where we were going. They said well you're going south of southwest well we thought maybe we were going to be going to California. Well we went towards California and got into Chicago and then the train diverted down south and we ended up in Mississippi. And I'll tell you that was a very poor state back then you know and

Interviewer: Was this the first time you'd been a great distance from home?

Krumel: Well that was my yeah the furthest I'd been away from home in my youth was Toledo and Lima and that was about as far from home as I ever got, got away from home. Oh Fort Wayne Indiana yeah.

Interviewer: What was the adjustment like to military life was the discipline rough was it what were the conditions like?

Krumel: Well what do you mean the ways of life?

Interviewer: Yeah what was the difference between civilian life and military life is it pretty difficult?

Krumel: Military life you were under somebody's thumb because you know you had a Sargent that you had to report to and if they told you to do something you did it or else you were doing KP or else you were doing something else you didn't like.

Interviewer: So what was training like in Mississippi like what did you do?

Krumel: We went down there it was well it was cold up here then but down there it was fairly nice and warm which was one thing in our favor. But every morning 6 o'clock the First Sargent went around to your barracks and up and at em boys or something like that you know. And that was 6 o'clock at 7 o'clock we had to be down at the mess hall and 8 o'clock you had to be out on the infantry grounds or grounds where they was gonna give us our basic training. And you'd go out there and do calisthenics for a half you'd do bends and stretch and all that kind of stuff you know.

Interviewer: How long did basic training last?

Krumel: Gosh it seemed like forever but I think it was about three months I think it was about three months yeah. From the time you took your got yourself in shape and learned how to manhandle guns

and know the workings of a gun you had to take a gun down apart. And they'd have class you had to describe what this part was for and what that was for you know the assemble and disassemble they'd take a gun all apart then you'd have to put it back together. That was our at that time was our M1 rifle they called it. Then the later years they got into no at that time it was a carbine a smaller gun and then as time progressed we got into M1 rifles which are heavier projectile. The bullet size was about the size of oh maybe a little bigger than a cigarette or a small cigar about that size.

Interviewer: So after you did your basic training did you have any more like advanced training with any like specific weapons like any heavier weapons?

Krumel: I got into they assigned us and they assigned us to different signals of the army. I got attached to what they called the 395th heavy weapons infantry and I was a private to a Sergeant at that time. And they assigned us to a gun what they called a 37 millimeter gun at that time during our training. And I had a squad of nine men there were ten in our squad with me. And as time went on and I got promoted to Staff Sergeant and I was in command of this squad of mine and our guns then we moved into the 57 millimeter antitank gun like that picture I showed you there. And we lived with that a little while down in Camp Vandoor then we had fuel trainings every so often. And once in while we'd have a break have a day off we'd go to the nearest town like down there we had a little town called Centerville in Mississippi there. And it was kind of amazing the streets back then were gravel streets and chicken that would run up a storm hogs and cats and everything like that they ran wide open.

Interviewer: Did you ever have time to go were you ever allowed to go back to Defiance during this time at all?

Krumel: Yeah after six months yeah I think it was about six months I got back I had a furlough what you called a furlough then I think that was 10 days I think it was. And they routed you on the train to get home on I came back way of Chicago and then back to Defiance by the way of Edgefield that way brought us back.

Interviewer: So after you did your training did you feel confident that your training and weapons you used did you feel that they were going to do you well in the fight?

Krumel: Yeah we had confidence in the weapons we had until we got overseas at that time we ran into very very cold snowy weather. And we had our guns we trained in down in Texas why we carried those all the way overseas and that was the guns we had. But after we got into combat the guns were almost useless it got to cold the projectiles the bullets the projectiles they called them they would freeze up they wouldn't fire. And as the war progress and tanks got bigger and better why these guns were getting obsolete. Then we had to join the company they called the 394th division at that time and which was infantry then it was man to man combat then.

Interviewer: So before you went overseas did you know whether you'd be going to fight the Germans or the Japanese or did you have a preference between the two?

Krumel: Did I know where we was going no some of our guys went like you say to the Japanese Theatre and some of the guys went to the European Theatre so.

Interviewer: Did you have any preference?

Krumel: No you didn't have any preference.

Interviewer: Didn't care

Krumel: The only preference they had they came in and asked us in training down in Mississippi what would you like to be in would you like to be in infantry or would you like to be in motor pool or would you like to be a cook. And I said when they came to me I said I'd like to be in the motor pool is what I'd like to be in. Well they put me in infantry the guys that said I don't care where I go they got in the motor pool. That's the way they horsed you around sometime.

Interviewer: So how did you travel overseas to Europe were you on a ship?

Krumel: Yeah we were on we left out of New York it was a converted tug boat an old tug boat they had back when they had the New York Harbor. And tug boats were kind of low low in profile and high on the end you know and going over about the second day we was out to sea boy we hit an awful storm and that boat was a rocking and rolling like nobody's business you know. And the guys got so sick and I did too but one of the sailors was going by and I asked him if he had any pills or anything you sailors take to help my squad out being so sick. He said about the only thing you can do I can bring some bread in said eat dry bread and he said learn to roll with the boat. He said when the boat goes up you inhaul when it goes down you exhale and boy you did that all day long you get wacky. But I did get sick but I fought it I never got real sick like some of them did. Boy some laid on the floor they didn't know if they dies or what.

Interviewer: Was the ship crowded?

Krumel: Pretty crowded yeah we were pretty well jammed in there yeah. Between that and the gear you had everything you had you owned was in what they call a duffle bag you know. By the time you fill that duffle bag up the darn things weigh about 80 pounds.

Interviewer: Were you concerned at all about the German submarines?

Krumel: When we crossed over the channel going over to Shugaburg France that time we were a little concerned then too because as we crossed the channel the some kind of whistle blew which was the alert of the ship's captain that there was some kind of danger ahead or somewhere you know. And that was what we were thinking maybe there was a submarine in that channel you know come underneath us you know. But nothing ever happened.

Interviewer: So you left from New York and where did your ship eventually land?

Krumel: Landed in New York we landed in Plymouth England and as we docked we got in there about let's see I think we was on the sea about 9 days I think it was 8 or 9 days. We landed in Plymouth England and that was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon their time and as we docked why we wanted to get stuff off the boat there because you know war was war we didn't know too much about the war. Didn't know if they were going to come over in our air or what but we wanted to get the boat unloaded. And the whistle blew and all of sudden these guys were at the dock and everybody dispersed and I said what's going on here. They said well it tea time they had to have their tea and crumpets. They took a fifteen minute break they didn't care if they got blown up or not.

Interviewer: So how long were you in England?

Krumel: England I was in there about we were there about two months about in England something like that.

Interviewer: What were your impressions of England?

Krumel: England they were about 20 years behind us I mean it was old fashioned and the country of England itself was kind of damp and daunt and they didn't have too much sunshine over there. If you do have sunshine its short lived it's very few hours. It seemed like it was always kind of I suppose being close to the waters seemed like it was always damp. But it was a little different at least you could understand then anyways they spoke English. They had a little different brew but you could understand it.

Interviewer: How did the British people respond to American soldiers and

Krumel: They welcomed us with open arms yeah glad for us to just come over. Yeah when we were there that time I experienced the Germans shooting over these what they call a buzz bomb. And the bomb it was self-flight you know it looked like a little zeppelin going through the air you know. It made an awful wicked noise and when they shot them they just dropped down and they'd dig a hole in the ground well we could but our whole house around the hole they have you know.

Interviewer: So after you left England where did you go to France?

Krumel: Yeah from there after we left England we went to Cherbourg France that's where we docked across the channel there. Yeah we got across the channel took us a good day and a half to get across well no about all day to get across the channel. The Channel wasn't that wide but sometimes you'd go across they divert they go north of it or south you know must have had some enemy action there somewhere we didn't know anything about. But then we got hooked up with the British soldiers at that time we was on a British ship. And the morning when we left they fed us on the boat going across the channel and they had boy it makes me sick to think of it right now but anyway they had a big tub of salmon and that's what we had for breakfast. Cold salmon for breakfast cold salmon and we had some what they call tarts a bread like you know that's what we had boy terrible.

Interviewer: So what were your impressions of France when you arrived there?

Krumel: Well at that time we for into France it was fairly well tore up there from the war the guys ahead of us progressed along you know and they had it pretty well torn up by the time we got in France. But we got in around Paris there in a little town outside of Paris but people would come out on the streets and they'd say kill the Camogchie or kill the Germans that's what they meant in their French slang. And they'd bring wine out to us and we in turn had some cigarettes or something like that you know we'd give it to them you know trying to make friends you know along the way. But we had a convoy and as we got through part of France and got into Belgium there Belgium was a pretty country up there Belgium was pretty. But and then we stayed in Belgium a while then we had every time you stop you'd stop we had to go through our training. They wanted to keep you in shape you know you had your maneuvers and you had your exercise and you had to make sure your guns were firing or ready to fire check your ammunition that was kind of constant.

Interviewer: When did your unit move up to the front line?

Krumel: Let's see we moved up there on I think I wrote that down somewhere. We moved up there November the 3rd I think it was of 1944 let me recollect myself. Yeah November 3rd of 1944 we moved up to the front lines and boy it was I have notes here too it was cold and snowy and we was on the edge of Germany then. And the division or the part we was in was called the Hurtkin Forest a lot of forest up there. But the section we were in was the Hurtkin Forest and that was our job well my squad and the other guys squad and then the two around us was the British. And it was out job to protect this well it was kind of like a bowl there and they said protect this ground at all cost.

Interviewer: Now at this point in the war you were you were advancing and the Germans were retreating or?

Krumel: Yeah at that time we were pushing them back into Germany when we got there. See the 99th division I was in was a fairly new division and we were inexperienced and sometimes we was up there we didn't know where we was at and the lieutenants didn't know what we was doing nobody had any maps. And once in a while we got a mess leader come along said we're progressing we're moving ahead we're gonna move ahead five miles or something like that you know. And I only made one move like that by that time I got up there where I got they said on December the 2nd I think it was we were supposed to get some fresh socks and underwear stuff like that because it was getting cold. We didn't have our supplies up there we didn't have enough clothes and they started bringing socks up there to us oh they brought whiskey up there to us too you know. And I took my shoes off that was on December of 23rd I think it was the 24th it was no the 23rd right day before Christmas or close to Christmas. And I took my shoes off and boy my left foot started to swell up. I put the socks on and I couldn't get my shoe on you know. The lieutenant came along in the jeep the driver and he said boy said you've got a bad foot there said we'll take you back to the field hospital and see what happened you know. So I told my second in command I told him I'd be gone for a little bit and I'll rejoin you. At that time we were getting ready to make another move well then I got back to the field hospital they were coming back there by the hundreds for their feet. And I was about one of the first ones the first entry there they took me off there and the lieutenant says we'll be in touch later you know. Well there I had lost contact with all the guys I had been with for two and a half years a complete new world. Then from there everything started going in reverse. From there I went back to France and from France back to England then an English hospital there.

Interviewer: So what was your first combat experience like? Where were you at what happened?

Krumel: Well that was the Hurtkin Forest where we were at. They laid some artillery on us that time I probably got I could of got a Purple Heart I don't know but I got a piece of shrap metal in my elbow that time. I remember I was around a tree looking around a tree and all of a sudden something went through my sleeve you know and later I had some a bunch of us was scraping my elbow. I didn't think too much of it you know but a lot of the guys got in they got a Purple Heart for an old wound you know. To me I thought that was kind of nonsense. But that was the only close call I had.

Interviewer: Now you were an antitank did you see any German tanks did you?

Krumel: Yeah I seen German tanks up there but we couldn't do much about them either because we had an outfit behind us. What they called the 57th Howitzer outfit and the shells they projected of gosh were about the size of a end of a baseball bat probably 12 inches long or longer maybe. And we called for fire

back there they lobbed in over us the projectile would fly over all of our guys and would hit about the direct area where these tanks were at. Boy they'd bombard those things over there so they could we could push ahead then. But as say I only had one dead or one move of experience with that because as the tank progressed why they guys were moving along I was back in the hospital.

Interviewer: So was this like the Battle of the Bulge that time?

Krumel: That was the Bulge.

Interviewer: So the Germans were like counter attacking or?

Krumel: Well a lot of times we didn't know whether they was counter attacking or whether they was moving behind because a lot of confusion. And the weather was god darn cold over there. Cold and damp and snowy you couldn't some of the trucks we couldn't hardly move we had to leave everything sitting and go by hand to hand combat then.

Interviewer: So you went back to England for your feet how bad were your frozen feet?

Krumel: Well my left foot was the worse I had by the time I got back to the hospital back there they started to thaw out a little bit. And my left big toe and my left little toe were black as black could be and my hill had gangrene in my heel and my right foot I had gang in my right foot too but the right foot didn't get as bad. But my left foot was what give me the problem I was in the hospital there for probably in England probably a good six weeks I imagine. And then they started evacs up out I think they had about 28,000 casualties at that time with trench foot. And so they moved us on to back to the states then moved us back we went to New York and then from New York they dispatched the others said well where would you like to go? I said well I'd like to go to the nearest hospital home which would be Columbus or Fort Wayne or Cleveland or something like that. So the ones that didn't want to be close to home they shot them out to Colorado that's where I went then. So which it turned out to be pretty good out there you know. But I was in the hospital out there in Colorado Springs for a good five months out there.

Interviewer: What kind of treatment did you get for your feet like what did they do?

Krumel: Back then they had in fact my left foot they had to refreeze it again they had to refreeze it.

Interviewer: Really

Krumel: Yeah and

Interviewer: How did they do that just?

Krumel: Put cold cloth on it or like Freon cloth I guess it was.

Interviewer: Did that hurt or?

Krumel: It just felt like a stump down there it didn't hurt a bit it just felt like a numb stump. And then they had they had to leave it thawed out like as it was it thawed out too fast and I was losing my coordination. But then another couple of other guys who were with me in a different outfit and anyway

we had to go through that process. Then they took us down to what they call a whirlpool treatment down where they had like salty warm water we had to sit there in that big tank there you know. They had to keep your feet, that was supposed to stimulate your muscle I guess. And then we had to do that twice a day one in the morning one in the evening we did that for a period of so many weeks then eventually they got a little bit better and little bit better a little bit better. And then I have a little trouble with my feet yet today if it's real cold or a little damp I keep them pretty well I keep them warmed up pretty good.

Interviewer: Did you worry about them maybe having to amputate some of your toes?

Krumel: Well at the time they wanted me to sign paperwork down there they wanted to take my one big toe off and that little toe off that time. And I got to thinking about it I said boy my big toe I can remember it to this day they pulled a shell off of it like an egg shell only it was black pulled that off and it was down to the bare skin then. But they said it would be best to have the toes amputated and I said boy then you can't walk. They said yeah you won't be able to walk very good you'd have to walk with a cane or a crutch something like that. And I looked at them I didn't sign the paper I didn't sign it I said I'm going to go for broke and which I'm glad I did.

Interviewer: Yeah definitely.

Krumel: Some guys signed off and lost a toe or something like that you know but they did that to get a little more pension money you know. That's kind of ouchy.

Interviewer: Yeah so you say your feet even hurt you today sometimes?

Krumel: Yeah they do yeah my mainly my left one does yeah well both of them do I mean they're not in the best condition but I can get by alright.

Interviewer: So where were you at when the war ended? Were you back in the states in the hospital or?

Krumel: I was in I got discharged I think I made my notes here let's see I got into New York on February the 25th of 1945 and the first of March I went to Colorado Springs and I was discharged in August of 1945. And about the time I was discharged that was when the war ended the European Theatre.

Interviewer: Right

Krumel: And it just so happened you know.

Interviewer: Were you ready to get out of the military I mean were you

Krumel: Glad to get out of it?

Interviewer: Yeah

Krumel: Yeah I was kind of glad I had enough of it. On my discharge they called it a medical discharge my discharge. Some of them had honorable discharge some had medical discharge or medical honorable discharge. But yeah I mean after I was glad to get back on level ground again and get back home yeah.

Interviewer: You didn't have any thoughts of maybe staying in the army making it a career or anything?

Krumel: Well I had a guy in Colorado Springs that time after I was up walking around and wellbeing he ran what they called the PX. A place where the soldiers would go and have oh play cards or you could go and get a coke or you could get little knickknack or something like that you know. And he wanted me to stay with him and run one of those PXs for the army out there in Colorado. At that time they paid him \$75 a month you know and it was pretty good money back then you know. But it just didn't appeal to me so I didn't stay.

Interviewer: So you knew you were going to go back to Defiance then?

Krumel: Yeah go back to my old machine works.

Interviewer: So that's what you did after you got out of the army you went back to machine works?

Krumel: Yeah they held my job back home I'll say that for them. I got back my old job and shortly after that that was back in 1940 see I went back to work in 1946 yeah 1946 I think it was. Worked there maybe a couple of years and then Defiance Machine Works was about ready to fold up and close up then you know. That's when the Defiance Foundry came in then the General Motors Foundry came in in 1949. And I went out of the machine works my dad was working for Pecker Packing at that time and Mr. heard about my discharge getting out of the army and he wanted to hire me to work for him out at the meat plant. Going from the machine business to the meat business was a drastic change.

Interviewer: Yeah

Krumel: And that was well in 1948 we got married and shortly after we got married I was out of a job here I've got a family to keep and no job. So I went to work for Eckerd then and I worked for him for about two weeks and boy I didn't make enough money to pay the bills. I told him I said I've got to move on I can't stay here I don't make enough money said I'm going to go out to the foundry. And he said well what do they offer out there and I forget what it was any more I can't remember the amount of money it was any more. But anyway it was about a third more than what he was paying me and he called me in his office and he said now you got a big raise and you're going to be driving a truck. So I stayed with them then.

Interviewer: Did you ever have any thoughts of maybe going to college like with the GI bill or anything did you ever think about that?

Krumel: I should have I thought about it but I didn't progress on it. I could have taken up real estate I could have taken up I always kind of liked bookkeeping too I was kind of interested in that. But I didn't pursue it I just kind of let it lay I guess.

Interviewer: Well after 60 years how do you think WWII had affected you?

Krumel: Well I'll tell you it gave you a world wide world of knowledge more than you could learn in books or anything like that. It was hands on I guess you might say. And it gave you a little different perspective of life you have better respect for the human element and so many different fields you could get into to make a living you know. It just broadens your educational foundation I didn't have too much of an educational foundation but it gave you a lot of eye opening.

Interviewer: Do you think about the war often I mean is it something that's on your mind?

Krumel: Not too much I get down to the I belong to the VFW down here and we get to telling war stories back then you know. And some guys really had it rougher than I did but you know we talk about it you know. But I think the Korean guys and Nam guys had it worse than we did I believe. There was ugly fighting over there and poverties and they were more animalistic I don't know I just.

Interviewer: What were your impressions of the Germans did you meet any like German soldiers or prisoners or anything like that?

Krumel: Yeah we took on Thanksgiving day of 1944 we took in three prisoners that day and I had kind of soft heart for them they were just like we were. They were fighting for their country and we were fighting for ours and they were doing right and we were doing right. And they looked be dragging and bull be gone and beat and how we had taken them prisoners that day the field I want to say the cafeteria or food on Thanksgiving day we were supposed to get fresh turkey. We hadn't had any fresh food for I don't know when and this was outside of Oaken. And about time we were getting ready planned to eat I guess it was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon it was a day about like this there was snow on the ground but it was warm. And all of a sudden somebody threw a smoke bomb in the kitchen of the trailer kitchen the mobile trailer. And here were these three Germans trying to get the food you know. Boy it didn't take long to get a hold of those guys you know.

Interviewer: Yeah

Krumel: And we marched them back in a cell somewhere and put them in a truck and got them back to a prisoner of war camp. But they ruined our dinner that day. Yeah we didn't get any fresh turkey that day.

Interviewer: So were you ever in Germany?

Krumel: Yeah I was in Sutesguard and Elsimar and Elsaoken the north ends of Germany is where we were our division anyway.

Interviewer: What was it like was there a lot of buildings destroyed?

Krumel: Yeah a lot of buildings were destroyed but you could see the tips of Germany what a pretty country and clean I mean could have been clean. A lot of history about them well a lot of tanks and guns and vehicles along the ditches you know had been abandoned and destroyed. And some of the beautiful buildings that were beautiful at that time they were ground level and on this one area we came through that one time shortly after they were destroyed they didn't get all the bodies up. Boy you could smell the stench you know but I didn't get to see a whole lot of Germany but I seen enough of it you know it was nice or could be nice country.

Interviewer: Well is there anything you'd like to add or anything I've forgotten to ask anything important?

Krumel: No I think we've about covered everything on the surface there. Just in my time it was a great experience an experience that I never thought I never even dreamed of you know. I thought when I started to work I'd get married well I wasn't married then yet but I thought this little area here is all I know and I thought this is it. I never knew the world was so big and it is a big place but now it's getting

to be smaller and smaller all the time. But the biggest impression I think was the airplanes we had back then the command of airplanes the many you looked up in the sky it looked like a bunch of birds flying up there. But combat planes were in fact I think they was what helped win the war you know. You've got to do so much ground work but the heavy stuff had to be done by air. So yeah that about concludes my little way of life I guess.

Interviewer: Okay thank you