

I am Tom Edwards with Austin Peay University and this is Mr. Ed Manely formerly with the 101st Airborne in World War II. His specific unit was the 502nd and I will be speaking with Mr. Manely about his experiences during World War II. But before we do that I wanted to back up a little bit and ask you some questions. First of all where were you born and when?

Mr. Manely: I was born in Cook County, Chicago on 76th Street just south of the stockyards and it smelled beautiful.

What did your father do?

Mr. Manely: He was a CPA. He died about two weeks before I was born. He was a CPA figuring the military rates between New York and Chicago for the troops and the likes.

Did your mother work as well?

Mr. Manely: When I was born, no. She wasn't going to work when I was born. When my dad died she came back to New York. She was an orphan from Brooklyn. That was the only place she knew was Brooklyn. She brought me back. I'm upset about this. My grandmother wanted me and my mother to stay in the house and she would take care of us. But the catch was that I had to go to the court, I had to become a priest. I think I would have made one hell of a priest. So other than that life goes on.

How old were you when you moved to Brooklyn?

Mr. Manely: I was about almost a year. I had pneumonia in the hospital and they asked my mother to take me to my grandmother's place because they didn't want me to die in the hospital. So my grandmother put me on Brandy and I have been on Brandy ever since. It served me well. It was good enough for Churchill so what the heck.

What was it like growing up in Brooklyn?

Mr. Manely: I didn't grow up in Brooklyn. I was brought up in a home in _____. She got a job in New York. She was from Brooklyn. We lived in an apartment overlooking Grant's tomb. That is a river and she used to take me in the evening when she came home from work. She lived with two other women and would leave me in the house with the others and then the others went to work every day. I couldn't go in the home until I was five. So when I was five she took me to this place. She gave me a little card with some little soldiers on it. I still can see that thing. I'm playing in this sand box; a little concrete thing. I was playing and I looked up at mom to see that she appreciated what I doing with these soldiers. At about the 4th or 5th time I looked she was gone. She left me in the sandbox at the home. People wonder why I am the way I am. I'm a little rough around the edges. I have been fighting all my way since I was five years old.

Where did you go? Who took you in?

Mr. Manely: Well I saw her every weekend; One week on Saturday and one week on Sunday for 5 hours. The big thing each year was to go down on Coney Island with a card. It was like 50 rides for .75 cents. When you took the ride they punched the ticket. That was the big thing on my birthday. That is what she used to do, take me on my birthday to Coney Island. Other than that it was dog eat dog in this place. I was fighting all the time.

It was an orphanage?

Mr. Manely: Yeah. My mother was still alive but most of the kids were families that couldn't make it. My mother couldn't make it. Her salary was like \$17.00 a week. She was a clerk for an insurance company. She taught herself to type and she taught herself shorthand. She came up the hard way. But she always looked at life like it was bright you know. I guess from her stance in life you had to do that. It hurt every time she left when you are a small kid like that. It tore my guts out ever week when she left. She used to buy me a bag of fruit at Tonys fruit stand. She always passed by the fruit stand and I was told to always share with the other kids that didn't have anything; apples, oranges, tangerines and that type of stuff. So all my life I was taught to share. I found out that it is not a two-way street. It took me a very short time to realize it.

Particularly in the depression I imagine. What was your first memory or your first realization that you were living in a time of depression? Do you recall?

Mr. Manely: Well initially when I first went into the home I was five years old so it was 1926. The depression was just going to start. The depression didn't really hit until 1934. That was the heart of the depression; when Roosevelt went in. But up until then it would get tighter and tighter. From where I stood it didn't make any difference. They fed you; it wasn't fancy food. But no complaints. I could run as fast as anybody on the block. I could do anything. But the thing was and you might get a kick out of when we took a shower we only had one bath towel for seven guys. If they could see a drop of water on your body when you used that towel you were dead. They took the end of it with water and took the skin right off of you. It was a big full bath towel. So what we used to do was do chin-ups on the pipes until the water had burnt off of our bodies. In the public school they used to give a little badge away, PSAL, Public School Athletic League. You had to chin ten times and you had to run 50 yards in a certain amount of time. Us kids from the home we could do it. I was chinning ten times with one hand when I was like seven years old. When I first was in the home they had the, on Saturdays we had stockings, we had to sow stockings.

We had to stop the tape for a second but he is in the process of telling me about...

Mr. Manely: In the home my first pair of long pants when I graduated grade school. Up until that time we had knickers; knickers like the golf players used to have; stockings that came up to your knees. But when I wore knickers I always wore short pants because you wear the knees out. In other words on Saturday mornings we had to do stockings. We had stockings that came up like the girls and these things had hooks to your pants. The top of the stocking hooked onto your pants. Instead of a girdle it was a pair of pants. So anyway

on Saturday morning before we could play we had to dawn these stockings. We had just like the women did that little dawning thing, you put it in the stocking and we learned to dawn. So anyway getting back to the stockings, we had to hook these things up like we would do the girdle but had to dawn them and we had the little thing. Until I was seven years old we had two women in charge of us from 5-7 and then we went to another building.

Was this orphanage run by the state or was it run by a church?

Mr. Manely: It was run by ____ Foundation. But anyway he was a philanthropist who was a very big man. He was up in the Rockefeller league.

Right one of the Captains.

Mr. Manely: But anyway, when we were doing these stockings there was a table with these little white mice and they used to run around this thing like a figure 8 with a bowl of water and a bowl of food for them. They used to do figure 8's and the darn thing was only about 18 inches long. So anyway these little white mice used to run around there and Mrs. Bloom used to do just what they did in the Catholic thing. You know you put your hands out and she had an 18 inch ruler and it was a half inch thick. If you did something wrong you put your hands out and you got so many licks on each hand. They were training in woodwork and they started with a hammer and nail and then we progressed to a saw and then we progressed to a jigsaw; a band saw. My mind was always going while I was sewing. I'm watching this ruler and I am thinking, "What can I do?" So I take the ruler down from where it always sat; it always sat in the same place. I take it down to the band saw and every inch mark I would saw. I put it all together and put it back. She never hit anybody again.

Not with that ruler!

Mr. Manely: This is the kind of mind I had; my mindset.

How old were you when you left the orphanage?

Mr. Manely: Eleven. I was hanging around with guys fourteen and fifteen when I was eleven.

Where did you live?

Mr. Manely: In Brooklyn.

I mean when you were eleven years old you no longer lived at the orphanage.

Mr. Manely: My mother remarried and I went out to the apartment there in Brooklyn. I lived out there for two years. But I was hanging around with guys that were stilling batteries and stealing iron. They didn't want this little kid around so they would knock

me down. The only way to stop me was to kill me and they didn't want to go that far I guess. So after awhile they just let me run after them. I was in on everything they did but I didn't do anything. I was a participant but I didn't touch the goodies. I would not have known what to do with it if I had it. There was nowhere to sell it. It was all part of my growing up process but it served me well in the service. I had a mindset that was good for combat. It worked well for me. I would not go in a building. Most of the guys would go in and they would look for souvenirs and stuff like that but I would not go in a building. I felt that I had a better chance in a field. If you are firing from a building you got to be firing from one of the windows or the porch doors or whatever. They would concentrate on that. But if you are in the field, unless you are using the tracers, they don't ___ like that.

So you are eleven years old now and you are living back with your mom and she is remarried. Were you going to school at this time?

Mr. Manely: Yes, public school.

Did you go all the way through public school?

Mr. Manely: I went through third year high. When I came back I had to take an equivalency which I did very well on. It was a 98 or something like that. I needed it to take the civil service exams. When I left school I was interested in woodwork. When I went to high school I should have gone to a first year vocational school. In my area in Queens they had just opened a brand new one. But you were a dope, you weren't considered great if you went to a trade school. You were a dumbbo. So I went academic. But the only reason to go academic is if you are going to college. Otherwise it doesn't make any sense because the things I majored in were mechanical drawing and woodworking. I should have gone to a trade school. I would have gotten a better education and I would have liked what I was doing. In French, I was just as tall then as I am now, 6'1". I had a woman who was about 4'10" or something like that. She wasn't quite 5'; Mrs. Brooks and she taught French. I would stand way up here and she was way down here and she would be. One day she was doing that and I touched her under the chin and I said, "Gee Mrs. Brooks, you are awfully cute." I went down to the principals and that was the end of my French class. This is the way I live. Whatever comes into my mind; unfortunately I do it with officers and sergeants. Before we went up to Bastogne we were supposed to go to Paris. We had just come back from 76 days in Holland so we were supposed to get R&R in Paris. We were really looking forward to it. The next thing you know this sergeant comes out and he says, "We got 8 hours to pack up." We didn't even know we were going to Bastogne, we just knew we were going so I waited until the other guys went their different ways and the sergeant was standing there by himself. I walked over and said, "You know Sarge, I really don't want to go." I had enough after Normandy, Holland; the empty bunks the guys tore apart, the guys screaming at night on the grounds, a German lying out there almost the whole night before he died. They don't tell you about that in these war films.

Now we will get more into that here in a few minutes. I wanted to get an idea of how you responded when you found out on December 7th, 1941, that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Do you remember your reaction?

Mr. Manely: Got to go get them!

That was your reaction?

Mr. Manely: It was unanimous.

Do you remember where you were and how you found out about it?

Mr. Manely: December 7th I remember was on a Sunday. I know I was in the car because I had the radio going. I paid \$25.00 for the car and \$33.00 for the Motorola radio with the foxtail on it. I can't really tell you exactly where I was but I know I was near home and I know I was in the car. Actually I went down and signed up for the submarine battalion down to sign with the Navy. I had astigmatism and for submarines they would take me the Navy but they wouldn't take me in the submarines because I had to have perfect eyesight. So I went over across the street to the Army. Oh no I went home because I couldn't get into the damn Navy. I went home and I was only 20 so my folks had to sign a release for me to get into the service. I was stewing about this. It must have been about a week to ten days. I heard on the air that they needed guys; I was working for American Airlines parts department. They needed guys for the DC-3's out at Mitchell Field; 45 minutes from where I was going. So I told my folks that I could do the same thing for the service. They need guys and they are asking on the radio for people. On the weekends I could home and I would have it made. So I went down this time to sign up for the Air Force. I was in a European-style room with a cage-type elevator in the middle of the room. There was room all around that cage. There were about 70 guys in this room and this Sergeant comes in and says, "Would anybody be interested in the parachute troop?" I put my hand up. They got three guys out of 70 guys and the other two guys didn't pass the physical. So they got one guy, me. So the Sergeant says to me, "When would you like to leave this week?" I said, "How soon can I leave?" He said, "There is a train every morning." So I said, "Tomorrow morning?" He said, "Yeah!" I said, "I want that train."

How did your mom respond when you told her?

Mr. Manely: I never told her. What had happened was I sold the car in a bar across the street. I could have kicked myself in the butt because I could have made a fortune taxiing guys around in the car because we were only getting 21 a month and then they took laundry. You wound up with about \$17.00 a month on payday.

This is for American Airlines?

Mr. Manely: No this was for the Army. The pay was so ridiculous that I could have used anything like the car. I used to play trumpet when I was a kid. When I played in the band I used to play at non-com dances and picked up extra coins. On payday everybody would

go to town. I would stay there and wash ____; \$10.00 a pop. On payday the price of everything up in town. But the second or third week everything started to go down again. I used to lend money on payday; two for one. In the middle of the month, I was King Tut I always had money on me.

Now where were you stationed? You didn't tell your folks?

Mr. Manely: No, I didn't tell my folks. I sold the car at the bar. The guy had \$20.00 on the bar and I changed him a 20 and I took the pen and signed him a slip and for ten bucks I sold him the car. I said, "You still have some money to buy food." That is the way I was, I didn't care about anything. I snuck home because I was drinking all the way home. I went into the house and picked up a couple of things that I needed. My folks never knew; they were asleep already to go to work the next day. I got what I needed and I went down and was on the train.

No note?

Mr. Manely: Nothing. I was bombed out. I will never forget it I was laying on this bench at Penn Station and this guy with a leather jacket who used to drive Ninja racers, he was going on to parachute. That is the only thing I remember. He and I would do the whole damn thing together, we were buddies. Unfortunately he has emphysema now and he has a cane and all. But anyway I met Bill and all I knew I was going to parachute. They gave us a bag with two sandwiches and an orange in it and they put us on this damn train. I was just sobering up. I signed up in January of 1942 and they took us over to where the wall stadium is now in Jersey. They used to raise pigs there. The whole area stunk. They took our train down and put on a siding. I don't know why but we were there for over an hour. The stinch was in this area and it was one of them days that the wind was blowing and it just permeated everything. I'm just coming out of it and I don't know why I got the creeps but I took this orange and threw it down to the end of the car and hit somebody way the hell down on the other end. The next thing you know a bunch of guys oranges are flying everywhere. I feel sorry for the porter who had to clean this up. Anyway I went to Fort Dix.

Fort Dix is where you did your basic?

Mr. Manely: No I didn't do my basic there. I'm on my way to Benning; parachute school. I had had two years of CMTC, Citizen Military Training which is exactly what they gave me in basic. There was really no difference other than the length of time. I did the four weeks and two summers at Dix with the manual of arms, shooting, and the whole damn thing. It took them 13 weeks to get 13 guys to go to Benning. You couldn't get paratroopers. It was suicide. They shipped us in the train number was number 13. We get down to Benning and they want accept us until we had basic training. We had one guy, Ken Shaker, he had fought with the Spanish on the losing side and they wouldn't accept that as military training. The group that went all knew they were going to parachute training. They put us all on the second floor in these barracks. The whole floor was going to parachute school. So we took the screen out and when we fell out in the morning

instead of going down the stairs we would all fall out and get along the roof on one of those three foot overhangs. We would all get along there, the whole damn string and then we would start jumping, "Geronimo, Geronimo, Geronimo!" we jumped off of the roof about 13 feet down to the ground. The guys from the other camps used to come over and watch us fall out for reveling. That was the kind of esprit de corps we had.

How did you adapt to training and to the very regimented..?

Mr. Manely: That I didn't adapt to at all. I'm street and I can't take authority. I just can't. I got that from the home. I had to all my own fighting and these people would come along and give me a hard time on top of what I was getting from the guys. They wouldn't protect me. I had one guy beat me up so badly. There were three types of brothers. The youngest one, he and I were even. I would beat him one time and he would beat me the other. But every time I beat him I had to take his bigger brother on. I took a licking there. One time I got so damn mad and I don't know why but I beat this second guy so I went to the third. He didn't touch my face it was body stuff. I wound up at in a clinic. But I was in that clinic for a week. I was urinating blood. I was in trouble and then for me to have to take crap from the front office you know. They are not doing anything for me to protect me but they are giving me a hard time. But what we did have there in the home that I started to tell you earlier; when I went into 5-7 you were with Mrs. Bloom and Mrs. Sherman. I can remember these two women. After I left there I went over to another building and that was where the big guys were up until 18. Then you left the home when you were 18. When you go to the big home, when you go in the door it was a regular gym. It had a full basketball court that you went into to get to your quarters. You had to go through the gym. There were four ropes hanging there, hand over hand. We used to go up to the top like monkeys. First you start using your legs to go up but after awhile your hands. We were strong, we were in good shape. In the winter time they had the tennis court. They would flood the tennis courts and go ice skating and actually play hockey. We had basketball courts, we had squash. We had more than what most kids did during the depression. For two weeks in the summer we used to go up to Camp White up in Connecticut. We had a nineteen man war canoe. We raced with the Boy Scouts and whoever else was on the lake. We did very well for a bunch of street bums.

So it is 1942 now and you finished your basic training and now you are preparing to go to Parachute. What was your first jump like?

Mr. Manely: I couldn't wait to do it because the three weeks of beating your brains in. the first day you walk four and you run one. The second day you walked three and ran two and Friday you ran 5 minutes with jump boots on; jump boots, shorts, t-shirt and a helmet liner. To go from zero to five in one week; if you couldn't make it they would drop you back and you had to do it again. The only reason you kept going sometimes is you seen the guys ass in front of you bouncing.

So after awhile of that you were ready to start going?

Mr. Manely: The second week we actually started packing chutes. In the morning you would be doing pt and in the afternoon you would learn to pack a chute. The third week was the same thing. The fourth week you packed your own chute and as soon as you were finished you could go to town. We had this one guy, Oxford, he was real slow. He was with us in basic training. He could never get used to this sling under his arm. He lived on a farm in Georgia just outside of Atlanta and his daddy had 40 acres and a worker; a black man who worked the fields. But he would make 50 gallons of moonshine and old oxford never did anything but hunt and fish, hunt fish. He never did a day's work. When he wanted to go to town, he took these 50 gallons and went up to Atlanta. He peddled the bootleg and the money he had he did his thing. I'm not going to go any further; there is more to this story. Anyway Oxford couldn't use the sling. The Sergeant would kick his arm to lay him down in prone position. The Sergeant said, "You damn well better do well on that course." We had to shoot live rounds later.

Was he training on the M1?

Mr. Manely: No, O3's. We never got the M1's until I was up in North Carolina. To cut the story short Oxford was the best shot in the regiment. But he still couldn't use the damn sling.

After you completed your basic, where did you go?

Mr. Manely: Well from basic I went right to Benning and the jump school.

What about after that was completed?

Mr. Manely: The Frying Pan area which was at the end of Benning. It was hell. It had red clay. There was lister bag hanging on a 12X12 tarp to keep the sun off of you. Do you know what a lister bag is?

No.

Mr. Manely: It is a canvas bag that held about maybe 50 gallons of water and you press your button to get your drinking water out of it. They had salt tablets hanging. If a sergeant caught you not taking a salt tablet like we were told; the salt was going out of your body, we had to replace it by taking this damn salt tablet with a drink of water. If they found out now it's a fallacy. In those days that is what they believed. You would look around and see if you saw the sergeant. The sergeant used to hide every once in awhile. We did 50 push-ups. They didn't fool around. Today's Army I don't think they do that kind of stuff. They guys do it on their own. But if you were the last guy that went from one formation to another at the jump school; if you were the last guy you had to do 50 push-ups.

Your first time that you had to actually get airborne and jump out of a plane, were you..?

Mr. Manely: I was anxious.

You were ready to go.

Mr. Manely: I was ready for it. I could tell you we went through all this pain and agony to go out that door. For instance, those jump boots. Today they wear the wings down. We wore our wings on top of everything. Today I still feel that way because that was the biggest things was getting those wings.

What was it like hitting the ground?

Mr. Manely: Like a _____. If you threw a vail from the ceiling down to the ground that is about equivalent to it. You would hear the men landing next to you.

So it wasn't like you see now?

Mr. Manely: I did that 94 jump there in France at the 50th Anniversary. I signed up for this thing not knowing that I had to do three qualifying jumps. I just thought I was going to go over to France get in a C-47 and go out the door like old times. It didn't work like that because I hadn't jumped like that for 50 years. There were five of us that hadn't jumped for 50 years. A whole bunch of us had to go down and we qualified. So 41 of us had to go down to San Diego and I was the first one. I guess I had the biggest mouth or something. But anyway I was up representing the five guys. It was a Cessna, four seater and three seats are out. The pilot got a seat I don't know why he rated a seat but he got one. The TV camera he had his foot up on the dashboard and then the jumpmaster was in front of him. I was the first guy that was going to be going out so I was at the door. There was no door. He took us up to 3,400. I had never jumped higher than 1200. It looked good you know. I was anxious. But anyway you sat on one cheek and this other leg was out along the fuselage. It was actually outside the aircraft hanging out. The instructors face was a foot away. He said, "Are you ready?" I said, "Yes." "Go!" I was out the door. There was a little funny thing that happened there. I didn't realize they had a wire from the ground to tell me what to do. So I got at the door and he says to me, "Okay give me a 90 degree right." You just your arm down; unlike our chutes that you had to twist the lines to turn and kick your legs a little bit. This damn thing here you just pull it down to the shoulder and you will keep turning indefinitely in a circle. If I'm facing you and I put my arm straight up I stop right there. You don't coast or anything. He said, "Give me a 90 right." So I give him a 90 right. He says, "Give me a 90 left." So I am back to where I was. He said, "Breaks!" when you are coming in to land you pull down to your knees rapidly. I went down on my waste. He knew I was reading what he was saying. So he said, "Okay you are on your own now until I come back in." the funny part is the fence there is the border. The field we are jumping on is right on the Mexican border. If we would have gone over the fence we would have been _____. I'm coming down and I'm saying, "Geez, this is better than sex!" what I don't realize is a two-way wire. The field is like this at a 30 degree and I am coming into it. I am not going down the grade I am going into the grade. This guy is about 7 feet higher than me. You have to do what he tells you to do; you can't do what you want to do. He says to me, "Okay, ready to land." I'm looking and thinking that this isn't right. But he is up and he is looking down at me he is not at the same level. So he says, "Okay land." I did what he told me to do and the toes of

my boot dig into this slope and I go down on my knees. The next jump I made I said to him, "Is it okay to it when I want to do it?" He said, "Okay." I said, "I know what I am doing now." I didn't have any trouble. With my depth perception I am good at that kind of stuff.

Was this in the 90's when you did your anniversary jump?

Mr. Manely: It was 1994.

After all of your training was completed where did you go as far as overseas?

Mr. Manely: I got out of Stratton Island and it took us 43 days to and two ships to go over there to Liverpool.

What was the crossing like?

Mr. Manely: We had a Navy cruiser and he was 1500 yards off and we never saw his hull, we just saw his super stretch because they knifed through the water. It was cold, that damn vessel we were on. It was a four stacker which I think was the 9th largest ship on the seas at that time. But it wasn't rigged for troops.

Was it a commercial ship?

Mr. Manely: It was just thrown into service. Normally you have seven bunks stacked on a military ship. This thing here I don't know where the hell the guys slept. It wasn't rigged for bunks and I know I slept in a hammock in the galley. When the galley guys ate I would take my hammock down. If the guys were playing cards I couldn't put my hammock up. I spent a lot of time up on the deck. We hit bottom; first we lost ____ so we had to go into St. Johns, New Foundland. We were only out about three or four days. We had to drop out of the convoy and the convoy continued. We were the largest convoy at that time to go to Europe. It was October of 1943. We went into St. Johns and while we were in there we hear on the radio that the 101st had been sunk. We are sitting in St. Johns but they knew that that vessel was in that damn convoy.

How alarmed were you about the possibility of a submarine attack?

Mr. Manely: At that point I wasn't too worried. When we were in St. Johns that was where the wolf packs were. That was the way the convoys went. We were there two weeks while they prepared this thing. We used to march around up to Camp Edwards and shop at the PX every other day; half the ship could go one day and half the ship the next. Everybody wanted to get the hell off of that ship anyway. I wore out a damn pair of brand new ____ climbing those damn rocks up there. The girls in the town instead of having sidewalks in front of the cliff front they had these wire things with the wooden boards in it. The girls were up on there doing can-can. The whole damn ship literally everybody got up on one side of the ship; they had to make a public announcement to get back off of the railing or we were going to capsize. That was a four stacker ship. One of the ships in our

original convoy came back from England and right to us and picked us up. It was a smaller ship but it was rigged for troops. It had bunks on it.

Have you heard anything just prior to going to Brit about the civilians and how they regarded Americans; particularly American soldiers?

Mr. Manely: Are you talking about Britain?

Yes.

Mr. Manely: They told us to behave.

Did you have any preconceived notions as to how you would be treated by the civilians?

Mr. Manely: I didn't care.

You didn't spend a lot of time worrying about it?

Mr. Manely: I was saving their ass.

How were you struck by the civilians?

Mr. Manely: Personally I got along with them very well. I am not like your average GI. Most of the guys get together and they would go into London. I would go into the little hamlets and throw darts with the locals. I fell in love with a girl over there and we probably would have married. They had a uniform for the girls that worked for agriculture. They had a big sombrero and boots that went up to the knee with their pants tucked in them. I got with this family and young lady. I had to break it off because I didn't want anybody to go through life what I went through without a father. If she would have become pregnant I would have married her but if she had a baby and I died or was mutilated or anything I wouldn't be happy about it. I never said a word to them I just never came back.

Obviously you didn't know the details; you didn't know that on June 6, 1944, you would be....

Mr. Manely: We had gone twice before. We had gone to the airport twice before then. We didn't know actually of the 6th.

But did you suspect that you would be participating in an invasion?

Mr. Manely: You are talking about a kid from the street who is 22 years old; I am going to kill Hitler myself. I'm going to do it unless they changed my mind when I got on the ground over there. We were over-trained. We were ready to go before the 82nd was down to Africa. We were in North Carolina. They took the bar out in the street, the 90 foot bar, right out into the damn street the night before they left for a big celebration. They got on

the airplane and we are down there drinking a beer and waving them off. They saved the best for last.

So the night of June 5th was the night that you would be dropping. Were you briefed at all?

Mr. Manely: Oh yeah. I had a small map of one square mile of where I was going to be, I had another area 5 miles and they dropped me 8 miles away. I had no clue to where the hell I was; none of us did. I took the compass and the _____ was that way and these guys wanted to go to the hamlets. I said, "You go on ahead and go to the hamlet." I never saw them again. I wound up with all chiefs and no Indians. There were three field officers each from a different regiment; field officers major and up. I'm with three field officers and there were thirteen people. The closest to me is a Staff Sergeant. So guess who is out in front? I'm the point man. The point man draws fire. So I start down this road and I start going 45 degrees into the field. He says, "Hey, where the hell do you think you are going I told you to get on the road." I get back on the road I go about 400 feet and he is still standing where he was when we parted. I get down about 400 feet and now he is going to start behind me and I go in. What is he going to do shoot me? If he shoots me he is the number one man.

Let me back you up for just a second because I'm really curious to know what the trip over the English Channel when you were in the airplane. What was the mood?

Mr. Manely: When you looked down you wouldn't believe it. It looked like you could see from ship to ship and the moon was going in an out in and out. The moon was bright it was really full. It looked like you could step from one vessel to the other.

What was the mood of the men like?

Mr. Manely: Some of them were actually sleeping, taking a nap. Most of the guys were quiet but apprehensive. Probably some of them were scared. But I would apprehension was the bigger. It was just like getting up for a war game; until you get into the game you get all tingly. But once you get in to it you are too damn busy to be apprehensive.

There are stories of the British paratroopers when they went in and on the way over singing songs.

Mr. Manely: Oh yeah that is there thing.

But by comparison your group was much more somber but good.

Mr. Manely: It was good. The British go in to this like it is a game. To give you an example, up in Holland they were 36 hours late getting there. They were screwing everything up.

Are you speaking of Operation Market Garden?

Mr. Manely: Yeah. There were four bridges. They parked 50 tanks in one field at one bridge instead of spreading the damn things out and that is the bridge that was knocked out. So they had to put a ____ bridge up so these guys were 36 hours late. We were up there waiting for tanks. Now the Germans are starting to know what our strength is. They came up and they were only with us about an hour or hour and a half. Then they stopped and we are in combat. They stopped to make tea on the goddamned radiators. We had a Colonel come over and put a 45 to the leaders head and said, "You get this goddamned thing going or you are dead!" The guy believed him and he would round them up and take off. But they would make tea on their radiators. If their battle plan is 1000 yards, they use ten times as much artillery as we use to soften them up. But it is all American-led leased. They go 1000 yards. Now Americans if they can take another 50 yards or 5000 yards they would do it. These guys stop to survey the circumstances. Montgomery was a pain in the ass. We almost lost the war because of Montgomery. The American public doesn't know that he was in charge of us in Holland both Airborne units. He was in charge of us at Bastogne. He didn't know what the hell he was doing. That whole fiasco going up there on that ____, Patton would have had fuel to continue. We stopped between that Limey and DeGaul. We stopped to have a parade in Paris and Patton was out of gas. The Germans regrouped and we had a headache. I swear to God that if Patton would have had the gas they were putting aside for that damn Montgomery; Patton would have been across that Rheine by Thanksgiving. They didn't know what the hell was taking him. But Eisenhower didn't like Patton. He was going with the game plan. He was worried about ruffling feathers. Screw the feathers, do the job. There was too much politics.

After Market Garden, once that fiasco as you put it was over, where did you go?

Mr. Manely: I went back to just outside of ____; Marmalaun was the name of the town. We were there I guess 10-12 days. Then we got the word.

You got the word to go to Bastogne?

Mr. Manely: Yeah and we got 8 hours notice. It was the first time I have ever seen them open supply. You could grab any damn thing that you wanted; usually you sign for everything. They just opened it up and if needed ammo you could just get it.

I have to ask you about this. On the way to Bastogne you were a paratrooper but you were not dropped in by parachute so you took the convoy of trucks. As you were heading to Bastogne were there American forces coming the opposite way in retreat?

Mr. Manely: No, none. When we got up into that area there were probably some Americans but I wouldn't know where. But we came up on a road and got some small arms fire. We had to _____. It was just our trucks and a couple of trucks that were with us. We finished the business and then went on and went into the town itself. It was small arms fire it was nothing heavy. To tell you the truth I don't remember anything about American troops that were in the diversion. I'm sure there were. I know it was cold.

It was the coldest winter in 50 years.

Mr. Manely: The snow would warm it up.

December 16 is the day when the Battle of the Bulge officially when the German counter offensive began. By the 19th you were pulling into Bastogne. In the interim somewhere during those three days there were a couple incidents, the Normandy massacre, were you aware of that?

I was told about it. It was a grapevine. It went through the troops. It wasn't a formal announcement.

Were you aware of the size of the force that was bearing down on Bastogne?

Mr. Manely: No. When you are in combat all you are interested in is peripheral vision; all you have to handle. You don't give a shit about anything else. You are too busy doing what you are doing. The only thing I was worried about was ammunition and resupply. They kept telling us it was going to come by airlift. The weather was inclement so they couldn't fly.

You didn't have air support?

Mr. Manely: That was our Christmas present was ammunition and food.

Can you describe a day for me at Bastogne; any day a typical day from waking up to going to sleep?

Mr. Manely: All we were worried about was what was in our peripheral vision. You try to stay warm. I had a whole and I have valves (?) in the bottom. All I had was two sleeping bags and two Army blankets. That was it.

Did you share a foxhole with anybody or was it your own?

Mr. Manely: No, I had my own foxhole. It was just so damn cold. All you worried about was your sliding and worried about it not freezing on you and keeping your weapon clean of course. I was in demolition and we had this C-2. You could make it into like a Bouillon cube and in three seconds you had boiling water but enough smoke. The front office was going crazy. We would use that stuff to heat the coffee. They weren't out in the whole they were back in buildings. We had been relieved to go back, F Company was going back and D Company was coming into the line and we were supposed to get our Christmas dinner. It was the 3rd of January. We were going to get a hot meal. So we just get back there and the guy was supposed to tell us to get our _____. We had to move forward. What had happened we had two outposts down below our foxholes down at the bottom of this grade. Up on the top where I had been was like a swell and then the grade went down. There were only a couple of trees that went across the base of it; like a row of trees at the top of this hill. But you go on down and at the bottom of this hill was a river

but it was frozen and right in there were these two foxholes. The D Company guys relieved F Company on the outposts. This was the night before we went back the night before and was supposed to get our meal the next day. There was a swirl like a mist comes in and it is like clouds on the ground and it lifts back and forth. The air will move it. So any way these two guys the one guy hollered over to the other, "Hey you got any coffee?" The other guy says, "Yeah come over and get it." So the guy gets out of the hole and he starts across to go to the other foxhole and he turns and he says, "Hey did you see that boulder there last night?" The Krauts had pushed it by hand right there where the river would be. The guy says, "I don't see any boulder." The mist was coming down again. When it lifted again there was a tank a Mark IV sitting there. These two guys take off like bandits up the hill. They threw three rounds and never hit them, an 88. That is how that battle had even ever started; these two guys running up the hill from the outposts.

How did you react when you knew it was coming?

Mr. Manely: I was pissed because I never got my meal. I never got that hot meal. So we went up this was on the 3rd and reinforced D Company. We were working together. They had four Mark IV's. When we went into this position I remember that the Krauts were great at zeroing in on something and marking it on their chart. Our whole damn company came up this one side of the road and they laid it on the barrage on the other side. If they laid it on our side of the road we would have had casualties. We would not have survived. It was that heavy. They knew exactly where we were but they were on the wrong side of the road. The only thing that saved us was the embankment on the road. That saved our ass.

What kind of weapons did you have and how effective were they against the German tanks?

Mr. Manely: I had an M1 but we had these damn 57's and our 57's never fired. I don't care because you could throw a 57 with a pea shooter. That tank is going to come around with an 88. The other guy that was at this monument installation last July and this other guy were from one of these tank units. He got hit in the morning. But he claimed to have knocked some tanks out. I'm not aware of that. But of course it wasn't in my sector. It was probably D Company that was there. But a 57 against a Mark IV is not an equal balance. But they were hitting on the nose. If they were hitting it on the side it is a possibility or underneath.

How many days of fighting were there before you were captured?

Mr. Manely: It was the 3rd of January; so you started on the 17th.

What happened on that day when they captured you?

Mr. Manely: they came up with four Mark IV's. Cheatham and I were riflemen. Our crew got killed on a 60mm mortar so the Sergeant who never got hit was standing out in

the snow next to a tree and he is our aiming stake. We didn't do any aiming. The sergeant says, "I am going to go out there and lay some rounds out there." I said, "Okay." So we set this damn thing up. I'm the gunner and Cheatham is ammo. So we throw a round and he shook his head and motioned further. So we took the legs and I made the trajectory a little steeper and Frank drops a round. He then motioned more to the side. We lifted it up the front end of it and moved it over. The faceplate was still sitting where it was and moved it over. Frank drops a round and it was perfect. We were doing great. We were so excited with this we never saw the four tanks, Mark IV's, come up. The first one stopped about 150 yards from where I was and this was a ditch. So it quieted down. I told you I was in like a swell and it was like 4 feet high. I started to come up so I could see infantry coming because they had infantry on their tracks. The thing that saved me was I was lying alongside the weapon and then I moved up and when this tank fired it was like in slow motion. The pine needles were coming up out of the snow. I was facing the tank when he was shooting. I never even thought of my hand being up there. One went above and one went below. It never touched my hand. I turned to Frank to say, "Geez that was close." He must have come back down the ditch. It caught Frank across the back just like a lipstick. It just went through his uniform shirt and marked his back. It drew blood but had it been another hair pinch lower it would have broken his spine. It would have gone right through my ribs because I was closer to the tank. The angle would have been closer, sharper. It got me through the legs. It went in one leg and out and in the other leg and back out. I was lucky that it exited. When I was captured gangrene never set in. in the prison camp lice got in the damn thing.

Where did they take you to the prison camp?

Mr. Manely: It was 12A Limburg (?)

Did you receive any medical treatment by the German doctors?

Mr. Manely: the only thing I got when we got down to the tank park I had to walk...that was the thing when we got hit that was the last burst. When I got hit they didn't fire any more. The Captain gave up his position. He had got it between his muscles in his arm. _____ had pieces of shrapnel from a tree burst and I was the worst. If the guys couldn't walk they shot them. Even to this day, tomorrow I can't go to the ceremony; they have candles. It's too heavy, I can't handle it.

Was it just the three of you that they took?

Mr. Manely: No there were 22 of us. There were thirty of us; we had to call for Patton. I don't know what happened but it took him 45 minutes to throw this round. But in these 45 minutes, all this stuff had happened and we were captured. If you couldn't walk, if Frank and the Sergeant hadn't gotten me out of that thing, I would still be there. I would not have been able to make it up that little embankment. They helped me up and when I got up to the top I found that if I bent my knees I would have went down, so I was walking like Frankenstein. I was hanging on to Frank and the Sergeant. I had to walk by myself so they had to get away from me. That is when I locked my knees and I walked

almost a half to three quarters of a mile down this grade in the snow. I'm telling you that was a long walk. If I would have fallen I wouldn't have been able to get up again by myself. I got down there and they had thirty men captured. There were three rows of ten. They pulled the Corporal out, I guess because he had the sulfur or something. But anyway they pulled him out and I am laying on the ground now and they each committed to put sulfur in my wounds. That was the only medication I ever got. So he did that and while he was doing that Patton's round came in and killed 8 of our guys right where he was. It killed 8 of our guys and 3 of theirs. If I hadn't of come out with sulfur he would have been the one that would have been directly hit. That was 22 guys left; 240 men in D & F Company plus the guys that have been evacuated. That is why this year they put up that thing for the 2nd Battalion.

How long were you there in the prison camp?

Mr. Manely: I was there 90 days. I went from 187 lbs. to 134 lbs and I didn't have to work. The other guys had to work. Every morning at 7 o'clock....

Which was against the Geneva Convention was it not?

Mr. Manely: Convention...are you kidding me? They had a Red Cross booth with Red Cross supplies. We were still in the same uniforms when we got back to the Americans as we were captured in them in the same condition. They had an International Red Cross building there. They had the process. They gave it to the English. The English were out there doing exercises. They had double bunks that they were sleeping on. We were sleeping on tile floors with six inch tiles two feet off of the ground because they were railroad storage buildings; 1200 men in one building. There were double doors at both ends and no windows and no lights. At 6 o'clock at night they did a head count. We were in they would close the doors and that was it. We had 15 inch walk ways. We had 24 men in a block and 15 inches from feet to feet. I was in a corner and a little mouse..The first night was a little wild because it ran across this guy in the corner right across his neck. But after awhile you got used to it. You didn't pay attention to it. Each guy got half a blanket so we were all up against one another. But we would each lie on our side and each guy would fit up against the other guy with the body heat. They had two five gallon pails for toilets with 1200 men in it and we never filled them. We used to get 2/3 of a canteen cup of __ tea in the morning and 12 men to local black bread. It was a rigorous ceremony. The guy who put the knife and the guy who cut the last piece of bread so you know it was equal as he could get it. The first thing that went was the four corners because that was solid. It was like black bread. There were about five different grades. We got the lowest grade.

So after the 90 days of... first of all did you ever develop trench foot?

Mr. Manely: Frostbite yeah. But they never recognized it. This year they finally put it in my pension. I put in for it when I first came home. They wouldn't recognize it because I was a prisoner of war and I was ashamed to be a prisoner. Now all of a sudden you are a big hero today if you are a prisoner of war. But if you went through something like

McCain went through...but they never broke any bones on me they treated me with what they had.

You weren't physically abused?

Mr. Manely: No, they treated my civilly.

After 90 days, was the camp liberated or did they take you further back into...

Mr. Manely: No they put us on a train. They were going to make a human wall of Russian and American prisoners around Berlin. They put us on the train and on the first day out parked it up on a to use us a decoy. They had an ___ train over on the side and we didn't know that. You could set your watch. At 7 o'clock in the morning a P-47 500 pounders. Every day that is what these guys were doing. At the camp before this the Americans would bomb the rail junction and our guys on the same food I was eating would be out there laying rail. It was a mess. We knew at 7 o'clock that this damn airplane was coming. So they would only send one guy down and he fires through the cars. The tracers go through they don't bother anything if there is nothing in it. They go after an engine. What they had done was they had taken the engine away from us and they just left us as a decoy. There was no way they were going to know that there was POW's in this damn thing. Just one airplane comes down the rest of the flight stays up stairs. When an airplane comes down and because we are up on an embankment I am looking right at the pilot and his head kept getting bigger. You could see the 50's, the wings had little flaps to protect the muzzle and that thing was vibrating. These damn things are coming. It killed 22 officers. They keep the officers separate. In the last car they had 22 officers killed and on the end of my car 7 of our guys in my company. I don't know if you have ever seen pictures of when 50's hit but arms and legs are flying and blood is splashing all over us.

In the car that you were in?

Mr. Manely: Yes. There were two German land Army type ___ or whatever the hell they called it. They weren't regular Army. They tried to open the doors for us and both of them got killed. Maybe that is why the guys fired those two cars because they came; an old man and a young kid and they opened our doors. Of course our guys went down and opened the other doors. We took toilet paper and put it on the top and my mother knew I was a POW and she saved that out of The Times. It was a picture of this. I still have the newspaper. It was a picture of POW. We did it out in the field too with toilet paper. They tried to get us all together, now there were 1200 of us on this damn train. They wanted to take us in groups so they wanted volunteers in each group to carry the food. So we volunteered because we had planned it. We took all the boxes and broke them up and put them down in our pants. I still had my boots on. I put it down my pants and all the guys did that. Then we proceeded to get to the end of that and they had groups of 100 and then they would be a couple hundred feet and a couple of yards. They had 12 groups out there. In our group we were almost a third away from the front. We got in the back line and they had two guards and one in the back. For 100 guys they had 3 guards. We started

falling back and this kid in the back, he was a young kid something like 16 or 17, and he is getting nervous because we are pulling back. I could see he was pretty shook up about the train being shot up and all. He didn't really know what to do. Those guys unless they get an officer with them they don't _____ or a good Sergeant. So anyway _____ had his arm band because he was a medic. He was next to me so he was taking care of me. This German came over with his spizer and Joe points to his _____ and we both don't want to get killed, blood and crap was all over my pants from being shot. We kept dropping back; there were a total of six of us that were dropping back. We had all the food. We came around this bend to a retaining wall. We went up and laid on the ground on top of that thing and everybody marched past us. We came down and marched the other way. We couldn't hear footsteps anymore. We could hear the cannons in the distance so that is the way we went toward where the firing was. Then we could hear small arms fire so we knew we were getting closer. We were marching down this road and here is this armored car. What it was, was a radio like an armored radio with big wheels but it had a hatch on top. This guys pops out with a big heavy aerial. The officers must have been in a building and the communication was in this thing and he had to take a message I guess. We were walking toward this thing and when we got about 30-40 feet away from it the hatch pops open and are thinking we are dead. The guy jumps out and never pays any attention. We look like we were slave labor. We didn't look like military. He ran into the house with a message I guess. We just walked right past the damn vehicle. Now we are getting down into the bridge and they got armed guards. They were using horses and wagons and they were deep trouble. So they go of course on the little bridge and they have like a 10 X 10 on each side to separate the pedestrians from the main road. We went to walk across this thing and a guard comes up with a goddamned rifle. We were thinking we had had it. "Mine, Mine!!" They had mined the bridge except for the centers where the vehicles were coming. We would have walked right into the mines and blown the whole thing up. It was absolute luck. If that Kraut hadn't of stopped us we would have blown the whole damn bridge up. We weren't challenged.

So these German guards were just watching you walk across?

Mr. Manely: They must have thought we were slave labor. We did not look like Americans. We were living three months in these uniforms. They were filthy, absolutely filthy. They had other stuff on their mind. They were making sure nobody blew this damn thing up. We get to the other side so we figured we would get the hell out of here and cut through the field. We came to a ravine. It was starting to get dark. The ravine is like this and you know grass always grows over the edges of those things. So we got underneath the damn thing and there were leaves so we threw leaves over us. This guy Frank I don't know why but he went down a little further maybe about 30 yards in front of us down this thing. Well there was small arms fire and automatic weapons and we don't know what the hell to do. This is daylight now. We don't know what to do we are afraid to move. We know the Americans are in that direction but we don't know anything about the Germans and sure enough the German 42 was right up the lift on the other side right opposite of me. You could see the guy's silhouette. They are firing and all of a sudden they jump up. If they would have come directly across down and up, they would have hit us. But it was easier for them to go at a 30 degree angle and they set the gun up just above us. They

couldn't see us because we were under the lift. There were five of us underneath and Frank was down there in front of us under the leaves and the Americans come through, black. It was the first time I ever seen black American troops armed. It's the 2nd and I will never forget the insignia for the rest of my life. They came through and they all bunched up. I can't imagine who the hell was in charge instead of being strung out. They didn't have a point man. They all came through in the ravine together and Frank for some unknown reason jumps up and yells, "American!" and he started to run down to them and the Krauts knocked him over. He went all through this crap. In two minutes he would have been okay. That hit the papers. I put my arms around one of these guys and I said, "Man am I glad to see you!" There was a big thing about the black troops coming through. My mother saved it. I said something ridiculous like I always do. I have the quote inside the newspaper. I don't even have it in books I have it in boxes. I have pictures you wouldn't believe. I don't know what I have. My youngest son is interested so one of these days I am going to get him to come and go through all of this stuff. He has introduced me to the teachers out there and you think these young people aren't interested? I go to senior high school classes and I have done it two years; I go out there every year in November to celebrate my birthday and one of my grandsons. I go to the class and I speak from the shoulder, no books, no nothing just personal stuff like I am talking to you. You could hear a pin drop in that class and I get letters and Christmas cards that the whole class signs. These are seniors in high school. It's unbelievable. People say that young people don't believe it. I don't believe that. It's from an unexpected source you know. It moves me. I have had other people ask me to come to their schools and whenever I can do it I do it. They wanted me to do it in D.C. I was in D.C. a couple of years ago. These teachers wanted me to come to their schools but I couldn't do it I lived in Florida.

Looking back on you phenomenal experience, is there anything that you look back on and just smile?

Mr. Manely: From the military?

From the military; from being in the war and seeing all that horror and destructions.

Mr. Manely: Well I think the thing that makes me really laugh and I didn't tell you before but have you ever heard of anyone going AWOL on a ship? I went AWOL on the ship.

How in the world do you do that?

Mr. Manely: That is what the Captain wanted to know. We were on an Army ship and we were eating these damn kidneys for breakfast. They made their own bread of course and we were having kidneys for breakfast and untasty food for Americans troops. I'm up at the rail being a good soldier and bitching about what the hell is going on. I'm standing next to the gun crews for Americans; the anti-submarine gun crews. They had five man crews on each gun and they had their own food; American Navy food, rations. They were eating three times a day. So this guy says, "Hey Ed, come up for lunch." So I go up for

lunch and I stayed for the rest of the trip until we pulled into England. I go up there and I am getting three squares a day of Navy grub, good grub. They even had eggs. They think I have fallen overboard down below. So nobody was too upset about it. When the ship was coming in the pilot got on board when we were at Liverpool. The pilot gets on board and I am from around New York Harbor so I know all about boats. These guys said, "You should really get back with your unit." I said, "When they throw that hose there on that pole there and then they pull it," and it still takes a half hour to pull a damn vessel that big up to the dock. So I stayed with the guys. Then I go down below and this sergeant sees me and his eyes get huge. He says, "The Captain want to know where the hell you were." He said, "We all hoped you fell overboard." I don't think anybody else has ever gone AWOL on a ship.

Is there anything that we haven't talked about or anything that you would like to add?

Mr. Manely: You will leave here and I will think of this or that and the other.

What was your impression of Eisenhower?

Mr. Manely: I hated his guts.

Is that right?

Mr. Manely: He was a politician from the get go. This guy in the way he played Montgomery...Patton was the best General we had over there and because Patton slapped the guy and the god darn media; the freakin media screws us. We had the best General. He was so good the Germans were worried about him on D-Day. Yet, Eisenhower hated his guts and used him as a decoy. He knew he was hurting Patton because Patton wanted that so bad. Patton saved his ass in Africa; Patton saved his ass in Italy. Just because he slapped the guy, I wouldn't have cared in he shot the guy. We were talking about hundreds of thousands of lives. We are talking about billions of dollars. We are talking about extending a war and tearing countries apart because he slapped the guy. When you put it all into the scale man it doesn't make any sense; enough to make sure that Patton should have had priority on fuel and that jazz about going into Paris; DeGaul hated our guts and DeGaul was the marginal line. He is the frame behind that crap and it didn't work worth a hell. They take him and put him in front of a bunch of guys and they march into Paris which is an open city. DeGaul did nothing. He ran away to England for the war. Then he goes in a claims Paris. We were putting the troops in and we were putting the materials into the field. The British had how many people in the field and when they had people they were all on _____, they were on the signal corps, and they had pilots but other than that nothing. The Americans were doing the whole damn thing; Americans, Canadians, Australians. We were the ones. You look into it. The Brits were going to _____ and they were in charge. The only one I really admire and I was fortunate enough to meet him was Major John Howard. He was in the gliders that went in their first. Two years before he died; he died the year before last; I was fortunate enough to be down in the area. I was in a group when he did the every fifth. He would cut loose at midnight and he would narrate the whole damn thing and tell you everything that happened, how they

turned and everything they did. We had a little champagne to toast. I'm getting ahead of my story. I am in this group and most of them are Brits. He looks through and he sees the Eagle on my hat. He said, "Hey we have a yank in the crowd." The crowd opened up and let me in. He let me come in. He shakes my hand and I let him know where I was and what I did. After he finished his spill we had this champagne and I helped him get to the car. He shouldn't have even been there. He could hardly walk and they had him on these loose stones. Another guy and I and a buddy of mine that brought me down there he took pictures. I got pictures of me helping him get in the car. That is priceless. Yesterday I was in a line for food for breakfast. I said to the guy, "This is just like the fare as a POW. The guy turns to me and says, "Oh you are a POW let me shake your hand. I'm retired Colonel so and so from the 506th. Whenever you go through Booth, North Carolina, look me up." This was a retired Colonel. He is a truck driver now. He's probably got his own rig. I walk into a room; I'm shaking hands with the Queen of Holland. Prince Bernard, Willie Hannigan and myself are drinking beer together. I used to think that everybody lived like I did. I have been so blessed. When I buy clothes I walk in and I look at racks; not the fanciest clothes but I always get the damn most expensive.

Mr. Manely, this has just been an incredible interview.