

Interviewer: So you said you were in service how long?

Sinks: I was in two years ten months and twenty-one days almost three years.

Interviewer: Two years ten months and twenty-one days. Were you drafted?

Sinks: I was drafted yeah.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: Back in 1942.

Interviewer: Forty-two you were drafted in 42.

Sinks: Yeah because I just turned 19 in March, March of 42 I believe.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: And then I got drafted and went in sometime in February I believe.

Interviewer: Were you living here in Clarksville when you got drafted?

Sinks: Yeah I was born here well I was born down below Clarksville down Palmyra but it's like Clarksville now but.

Interviewer: Yes sir now it may as well be downtown. Been here all your life except

Sinks: Yeah except that two years ten months and twenty-one days. And I like it I like Clarksville it's got everything.

Interviewer: Sure it's a fine town.

Sinks: Suits me fine.

Interviewer: It's a fine town yeah. Now where'd they send you right away when you first got drafted?

Sinks: Well of course I went to Fort Oberthroe to get you know that's where they take you the induction center.

Interviewer: Yeah down in Georgia sure.

Sinks: And then stayed up there about two or three weeks and done their PK and their coal hauling for them. Then they put us on a troop train and headed us for Kearns Utah.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: I was in the air force.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: Air core

Interviewer: Air core

Sinks: Air core yeah right and they was I don't know there was several of them. Then when they got us to Kearns why they found out what we could do and what we couldn't do. Of course that didn't have to do what they put us in. I had been a butcher in a meat market you know we used to have a meat markets you know where you'd go and you cut the meat the people wanted and wrap it up for them.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: So I was a meat cutter I guess you would call it a butcher or meat cutter I think you call it. So they put me in the mix I guess that was the way you done things. But several of the boys went in there several of the boys had worked as meat cutters. And then they sent me to after we finished our basic there we didn't stay long they sent us to Camp Barkley Texas.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: And there they sent us to a little ole water purification school. They changed my MOS then and made me a water purification mate.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: Then they moved us around several times after that. We stayed there long enough to finish that school and sent me to a little place in Georgia ____ Georgia they sent me there.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: And they moved me from there to a place up in North Carolina and I believe that's the only two places they sent us. Then they sent us to that New York that Fort there New York where they shipped overseas from.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: And then we landed in England and they trucked us on down to oh the middle part of England I think close to some air bases down there. We stayed around there awhile rested up and eat then they sent me to put me in the 8th air force 92nd bomb group stationed in Pottington England.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: It was heavy bombers.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: And then I went from there I got to be a medic. They didn't need no water purification men so they made me a medic put me driving an avalanche.

Interviewer: So they got you all the way over there just changed your job.

Sinks: Yeah well every once in a while my water purification thing me and this friend of mine he was a medic too but he was a I think he was a first aid man. Anyway we sort of paled together every once in a while they sent he and I out to test some water somewhere. Most of the time it would be down to the gulf down to the ocean I mean Mediterranean. We'd go down there and get samples the water I don't know whether they ever tested it or not but we carried what we were supposed to. But anyway no that wasn't the Mediterranean I was in England then.

Interviewer: You were in England then so.

Sinks: Yeah they would send us

Interviewer: It probably would have been the

Sinks: Yeah we tested where they could find some kind of water supply they'd send us over there and we'd have to go then ole vaster bags and set them up in there and put the chlorine in them you know. Of course I got the ambulance then and when they'd have commissions every morning they'd have to send one or two ambulances up on the line and we sat there until the airplanes took off. And when they came back why of course we could hear them and we know about what time they were supposed to get back. Why we met them up there and took the wounded off and brought them to the station sick quarters and from there they shipped them out to different hospitals if they needed to. But they give them a lot of care there at that station sick quarters they had about five flight surgeons there.

Interviewer: So you had surgeons right there at the air base?

Sinks: Yeah had a major and two or three captains and one well I guess the head man was a major. But they had about five there that they'd patch them up if they had to be. And there wasn't too many of them that was serious some of them you had to carry on to one of the general hospitals around the area. That was that went on for let's see I stayed there for oh I stayed there over a year. And then I guess the war got over I mean that part of the war over there. After the war was over why they took that 92nd bomb group and sent them to France.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: And we took over an ole French airbase there or something. But anyway then they started this here they was moving these people back that had got displaced they called it the Green Project I think or something.

Interviewer: Alright

Sinks: So I didn't have to do anything over there so they give job as sick book clerk something like that you know. Went around there until they come out with that point system and then I missed a spot in there. It was the highlight of my army. Me and this boy I talked about got they water they called me and him up when we were still in England.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: They called him up to headquarters there and give us these orders. A certain date report to down on the coast of England to a certain little base there I don't think it was it wasn't an airbase but it was little base there. So for duty on a LST so we went there and stayed around for about a month I guess and man they had all these troops down there then see they was lining them up for that big invasion.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: So we figured that's where we was going so they sent us down on the coast there one morning one day and we loaded on they loaded us on this LST. And they had the tanks that are all cleared into bunks hung all over the walls there. And then June the 6th about two days before June the 6th why they brought the troops on they brought a lot of they had some airborne but a lot of them was infantry of course. And so two or three days I don't know of course June the 6th that morning or that night they took off and on June the 6th morning we went in the hardest one over there. What beach was it I can't remember beaches names I can't remember nothing too good.

Interviewer: Well let's see if you were coming in from

Sinks: We left from

Interviewer: Do you happen to remember which unit you were with? That would help me narrow it had Sword Beach, Juno Beach, Utah Beach.

Sinks: Utah

Interviewer: Okay that's the invasions that the Americans went into.

Sinks: Yeah we went to Utah beach and landed there that morning. And they was doing all their things so we just stayed on and unloaded all the soldiers you know. After a few hours why they come bringing a lot of them back the wounded you know. So we helped load them on the boat and put them in those

Interviewer: So did you stay on the boat?

Sinks: Yeah I stayed on the boat.

Interviewer: And the boat became like a hospital ship sort of?

Sinks: Well yeah it was because they had everything set up and they could do some emergency surgery.

Interviewer: How big of a group were you with I mean the medical folks. Was that quite a large unit?

Sinks: I think there was about 15 of them.

Interviewer: About 15?

Sinks: There was only two of the air core me and this other boy the captain he was he wasn't a surgeon he was an orthopedic surgeon.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: And we thought well he won't have nothing to do but he found some guy that had a broke leg and he set his leg for him put a cast on it before we got back. And then we came back to England unloaded them and they reloaded the thing then we went back to another beach. I don't remember that of course Utah was the main that's where all the racket was that morning.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: We made four trips I believe. A friend of mine that went to I was talking about me and him went to the water tanks he was with me. Me and him and here about the must have been five years ago but the anniversary of V-Day he came down here he lived in Illinois.

Interviewer: The 15th anniversary that would have been 94 six years ago.

Sinks: Well he came down here he called me and I talked to him he said he wanted to come down I had went to his house onced before that. Chased him all over the country before I could find him. But anyway he said I want to come down to your house I said well what do you want to do when you get here Brock? He said set on the porch I had told him about see I had just moved here ten years ago I said okay we can arrange that. So he came on down here and most of the time we sat here on the porch too he like to do that. I carried him to Fort Campbell he visited the museum and everything. But then he sent the story in made the history of the 92nd bomb group that was my outfit. So this and sent me a copy of the book of the history of the 92nd you know I sent him a little piece about me. And he didn't get one of course he didn't order one in fact we was getting a little ole paper from the that they sent air force I mean 92nd air a little newsletter they sent. And he didn't get that so I gave him a copy of mine so he wrote to them then he sent them the story about me and him going on that. The only two men probably in the whole air force that got to go on the D-Day invasion.

Interviewer: Exactly

Sinks: Probably was I don't know they might have had some other.

Interviewer: You are the first gentleman I've talked to that had a experience during that invasion that was not you know from the air core that was not in one of the transport troops or one of the transport aircraft. I've talked to some of the glider folks but I haven't talked to any air core folks that went in by ship.

Sinks: Well it was something to see. I was a little nervous but those LSTs I'd seen a couple of them sitting right beside of you know just run over and I seen one of these her ducks they call it run out through there. And it hit one of those mines and boom they went and it was a lot of and the water was red that morning the water was red. And there was people floating around in it and if they was dead they didn't fool with them you know because they had too much other going on.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: But so we took all them back we done it I think three or four times made that trip.

Interviewer: Made the trip over full of fresh troops?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: And then bring wounded back.

Sinks: Wounded back yeah.

Interviewer: And then keep going back and forth across.

Sinks: I think three or four times we made it. He had it wrote down I didn't know I couldn't remember all this stuff so I had to read that every once in a while and see what happened. But he had a better memory than me. That was real interesting and

Interviewer: Interesting the first morning when you went in could you see what was going on on the beach from your ship?

Sinks: When we went onto the beach you could see all the shelling. They done all the shelling all the big guns and everything then the air force came over and one their bombing. And we were sitting there we could see that or hear it you know. Then later on of course our ship went up right on the beach and we tide went out we were sitting there and that's when we loaded the troops I mean loaded the

Interviewer: So your ship when the tide went out did your ship get stuck on the sand?

Sinks: It wasn't well it was sitting on the sand yeah but then the tide came back in and it was alright.

Interviewer: Right and in between you offloaded the solders that you brought in.

Sinks: Yeah well now at first when we went in they just got in as far as they could let that tank deck down and you've seen them I mean you might now.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: Anyway let that tank deck down and here they go right through the water see. That's where a lot of them got killed right there in that water.

Interviewer: Just walked off.

Sinks: Yeah Walked off

Interviewer: Trying to get on the beach.

Sinks: I was there later on we went back with another load and I was standing there I had a one of them soldiers had give me one of those boys that got off, he hadn't gave it to me but he left his binoculars. They used our bunk see we give them our bunks for the sick or whatever you know.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: And he left a pair of binoculars there and a 45 automatic army automatic. I hung onto that for a while but I got afraid to take that automatic because they said if you try to take something home you know.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: They wouldn't let you go and I knew I was going eventually. But anyway I left the automatic on there when I left, left it on that same bunk I guess that navy man got it. But after we got let's see they brought oh after that forth time they turned us loose told us to go home. So this captain you know I wanted to get back to base for some reason I don't know I was tired of traveling. But he wanted to go to London and mess around he was a Jewish fellow but he was a lot of fun though. But he wanted to somewhere up there and get something to eat in London so we went right him. Rocksmith and I told him I said now we didn't have any money they won all our money them sailors did on there playing blackjack playing poker playing poker or blackjack one they took all our money. I didn't have much because I was only a PFC but and they was going to put Rock and I on doing KP what do you call it whatever they call it something else which it wasn't bad but. So I thought well I don't need to be doing this KP they wasn't gonna put Rock on it they was gonna put me on it because I was a PFC and he was a corporal.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: So I went to Captain Messy that was I said Captain Messy I said you're my commanding officer on this trip right now I said how about giving me a promotion. He said well I used to right you up for promotion all the time but the TO was full. They wouldn't give me nothing see PFC was as far as I ever got I said yeah but I think you can do a battlefield promotion. Oh he said I can do that he said what do you want to be? I said well I'd like to be a Captain like you but I better stick to I said just make me a corporal. So he said okay you're a corporal. We finally got back one more exciting thing happened to me. After we got back why I was they were still doing those bomb runs you know.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: And I was on the line one morning it was still dark and we had to sit there beside the runway and keep an eye on the planes. So here come this here V17 down there and all of sudden the landing gear folded up and he went to fishtailing and it was loaded with floater bombs I don't know how many was on it.

Interviewer: This was on takeoff?

Sinks: Yeah on takeoff and he went to and I had the tech sergeant with me was my aid man. And of course he was administrative too and they sent him out to be aid man. And his name was George Berna I talked to him not long ago too. But anyway we were sitting there and George saw this plane coming. And it would come towards us and throwing fire and everything. And George opened the door and run he took off. I thought well now I better not run so I turned the ambulance around and followed the plane on down to where it went. It went and it pulled off somewhere over there off the runway and the soldiers I mean the it had ten people on there and they come jumping out. So I pulled up there and got them all but one and this man one of these staff sergeants said the pilots still on there. I said well let's go get him he said okay so we started up through that plane and he was coming out then I don't know what he had some reason he wanted to stay on there. But anyway we brought him on out so when we left them soldiers was all over my ambulance inside all they could get and hanging all over it. And we started back up to the control tower and here come that major I was talking about the major the flight servant.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: He come down there and he pulled right beside of me said he said have you got them all I said I think so major he said okay. So he went on that ole rascal went down there and went in that plane and it burning he had a nerve. But about two months later he called me up there and gave me the soldier's metal for whatever you call it. And then he gave me the bronze star metal for the work I done you know all that. That's about all then went on back and killed a lot of time stayed in town all the time.

Interviewer: Did that plane burn up or did

Sinks: No now the fire trucks cam on our and out it out.

Interviewer: They managed to put it out before the bombs went off.

Sinks: Didn't no bombs go off.

Interviewer: Good enough.

Sinks: But they generally do when they do that.

Interviewer: Yes that's what I understand. I have seen I've seen a lot of footage and read accounts but I've never talked to anyone who'd been at a bomber base in England during the war.

Sinks: I've got a VCR that one of them captains made of actual bombing runs and everything.

Interviewer: Really?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Wow

Sinks: If you want to look at it I'll give it to you and let you look at it.

Interviewer: I'd love to borrow it.

Sinks: I'll let you take it and look at it.

Interviewer: I'd love to but I wanted to ask you about your experiences. You said when the B17s took off and come in you'd be up on the flight line.

Sinks: I'd be up there.

Interviewer: What was it like it looks very dusty, very loud, very hectic on the news reels and things.

Sinks: Oh yeah mean like planes taking off?

Interviewer: When they're taking off and coming when the B17s are taking off and coming in.

Sinks: No it's not really it's loud of course you know. They line up way out there and then they take off then they circle until the rest of the outfit gets up there but it's not even well it's exciting some if you never have seen it.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: Of course I was an old country boy never had been out of Clarksville myself so.

Interviewer: You'd never seen all those airplanes.

Sinks: It was all different to me. But it was that early in the morning you know it's foggy over there all the time.

Interviewer: Yes

Sinks: Yeah I've seen days over there you didn't see the sunshine until 11 or 12 o'clock sometime not then.

Interviewer: Sure if at all England stays foggy.

Sinks: Yeah but they done the REF would bomb at night. REF would be coming back from their bombing run when our planes were getting ready to take off.

Interviewer: Right.

Sinks: So we'd see them every morning.

Interviewer: Were there a lot of accidents like you were talking about on takeoff?

Sinks: Yeah there was yeah he's got some film of some of them on that thing. And there was a lot of dead ones come back too.

Interviewer: That were killed?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: During the bombing runs.

Sinks: And they had all kinds and one morning Rocksmith and I we were down at sick quarters and the dispatcher come out there and told us go up to headquarters said a P51 had crashed in front of headquarters. He was up there and landed there to do something and I think when he started to leave he wanted to sort of buzz the tower or buzz something you know. And he came right straight down just plowed right in that ground. So Rocksmith and I had to go pick him up but there wasn't much to pick up. Now that man we got all we could of him you know because he hit head on and he went right into that cow you know and just cut him all to pieces. Every piece they told us to get everything we could tell was a piece of meat so we picked it up and I think we got about 30 something pounds of him weighted. But of course he was in there by himself he didn't have nobody with him.

Interviewer: Now was this one of the aircraft escort aircraft? You said P51 they were the fighters that were escorting

Sinks: Yeah but I don't think they escorted well they might have escorted some of our troops. But he had came down there for some reason to the base.

Interviewer: Right so they weren't based with you the fighters weren't?

Sinks: No we didn't have any fighters at all on there. But they would they'd come down there sometimes some of the people I don't know what they come for.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: But he was there that morning and when he left why he was gonna buzz it and he went right straight in the ground. It was oh man it looked like a bomb hit there.

Interviewer: I imagine.

Sinks: But we got all of him we could so I was telling my wife about and she said oh that was awful. And I said no I said you sort of get used to it because I'd pulled some burned ones out of some planes up there that you took a hold of them and just skin would come off because it was burnt.

Interviewer: Sure right

Sinks: I can handle all of that except that odor. Man for six months afterwards I'd go in the mess hall and they'd have some grease cooking well I'd get sick.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: That's the only thing that bothered me about that. But we was there and Rocksmith and I was one and had a nother friend there he was a soldier and he came by there and he was eating candy. And Rocksmith said Shorty you ain't gonna give us no candy? He said no said your hands are dirty. He said that's alright said you come over here and feed us, it was some kind of chocolate drops, so he come over there while we was picking up that he'd give us a bite of candy.

Interviewer: While you were tending to the killed.

Sinks: Yeah he'd feed us candy yeah. My wife couldn't stand that hardly. I said oh it was alright he hadn't touched them people it didn't matter anyway I said we was used to it. But it was I wouldn't take nothing for it but if they ask me to go again I don't believe I would go I wouldnt't volunteer again.

Interviewer: I can't blame you. I can't blame you a bit.

Sinks: Did you see any combat?

Interviewer: Well several different places and I dealt with a lot of burnt bodies I was a traffic accident investigator.

Sinks: Oh that's right you were an MP yeah.

Interviewer: I was in the MPs so both in peace time and overseas you know we'd see some unusual things and I can appreciate what you're talking about with the smell.

Sinks: Yeah the smell that burnt smell.

Interviewer: The smell of burnt bodies stays with you.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: It really does it's hard it's a hard thing to

Sinks: Well they had all kind of excitement over there of course every night you know I went to London two or three times.

Interviewer: Really how

Sinks: When they was dropping them buzz bombs.

Interviewer: Oh

Sinks: And you could hear them all night in fact you could see some of them when they come over. You know them little planes they'd send I forget what they call them now. But they sent them from France you know over that way. But and all that ruined. I was back over there at England it must have been I don't know it was a few years back. My wife and I and some friends yeah I lived here so it was in the last ten years. Some friends I knew wanted to go somewhere so they wanted to go on a trip over there and they wanted to go all up in Greece and up in there it was about a 21 day trip. I said no I will go with y'all of we'll take that trip that goes to England, Wails, Scotland and whatever the other is I said that's the only place I want to go. They didn't want to go but they went but I didn't get to see my old base because we were sort of close to it but it's not there anymore. They've got something there you can see that.

Interviewer: Right a lot of the temporary air fields

Sinks: I did see a lot of that blown down stuff that was still there you know they never did fix it. But I went to London a lot of times and it was completely ruined I thought.

Interviewer: You went to London on R&R?

Sinks: Yeah we could get a weekend pass every weekend if we dind't have no duties you know.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: So I went all over England.

Interviewer: How were the English people to you?

Sinks: Real nice they were nice people and they're still nice.

Interviewer: Yes

Sinks: We were over there and they will help you anyway they can if you can understand them.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: But they helped us yeah they'd see us walking down the street they'd say Yankee where do you want to go? This one old lady she was real nice, older lady you know. So we got on the bus we said we're just going back to our hotel down here it's around Hyde Park here somewhere. And she said what's the name of it and we told her I think and she said alright you just sit there until I tell you to get off cause you're gonna want to get off before you get there but said I'll tell you where to get off to get right to it. But this guy I was with he I don't know he every time he come to this thing said something about Hyde Park we'll he'd jump up to get off. The old lady said no just sit there don't get of sit there said I'll show you. But he last time she told him that he went ahead and got off so we went ahead and rode to where she told us to get off and the hotel was right around the corner from that see she know what she was doing.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: Anyway we laughed at him when he got back because it took him awhile. But I liked those people.

Interviewer: Good experience with them.

Sinks: Yeah good experience. And they would treat you real nice.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: Used to go to the ole pubs every night you know that's the only place we had to go over there for a GI I mean. Other places to go I reckon but we'd go to them ole pubs we'd have a good time there too.

Interviewer: How were your accommodations at the base in England? Was it pretty good living conditions?

Sinks: Yeah we moved in an old REF base there and they had permanent type buildings. They had few of them what do they call them mission huts you know with the

Interviewer: Quanza huts that wrap around

Sinks: Quanza huts yeah

Interviewer: Like the Marines you see in Marine movies?

Sinks: Yeah I stayed in one of them at some of them bases around there I like them too.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: But we had a permanent thing we had a bathroom in the building and had showers in the building and everything at that REF base. Them mission huts quanza huts that's it.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: But they didn't have any bathrooms in them.

Interviewer: No?

Sinks: Had a central one up there close to there.

Interviewer: So you had to put your shoes on at night if you had to go to the out.

Sinks: Yeah had to carry your flashlight too. No it was fair it was a right pleasant experience I was a little nervous there a few times but.

Interviewer: I would imagine on the TST things would have been you would have been pretty nervous when you went to France. The first time especially.

Sinks: Yeah because we knew where we was going but after we got there we could hear and all those planes they were all night steady they were bombing and coming back bomb and come back you know.

Interviewer: So while you were coming across the channel you could hear the planes overhead.

Sinks: You could hear them and see them too yeah and after they'd get so far why you could see all the bombs they were shelling the beach. That was at

Interviewer: You said Utah.

Sinks: I believe it was Omaha now it was the worst one but anyway the beach it was a flat beach there and then it had cliff right there.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: That's where they sort of lost a lot of troops trying to get up that cliff.

Interviewer: Map with me I think the cliff you're talking about is Point Da Hawk. It's where the rangers the 75th rangers went up the 75th ranger climbed that because there were German artillery emplacements on top of that.

Sinks: Yeah yeah

Interviewer: On top of that cliff I've been up there.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Of course that was in 92 so things were peaceful very peaceful. But I think that cliff that you're talking about is at Point Da Hawk.

Sinks: They had a lot of those 88's.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: Eighty eights' back in there and that's what was doing a lot of damage to them too because they just keep moving back and they done a lot of damage. They hit a lot of them boats out there.

Interviewer: So you folks were getting were they shelling the LST while you were dropping off troops and picking up injured?

Sinks: Yeah uh huh yeah.

Interviewer: You were under fire most of the time?

Sinks: Yeah well mostly they were shooting far out at those big ones you know. Big ones all around way out here doing the

Interviewer: So they had battleships out

Sinks: Yeah battleships out there letting them big guns go off.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: It was dangerous I guess.

Interviewer: Yes sir yes sir.

Sinks: We picked up a lot of the glider pilots you know they turned them glider pilots go in and they just went in they would land let the troops off. Well there job was to get back the best way they could.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: So if they got back to the beach and found one of them boats we'd pick them up. We picked up Germans too we had some Germans wounded we had them.

Interviewer: You had wounded prisoners that you took back over?

Sinks: Yeah had this one officer that sort of arrogant you know just a regular ole GI had one that cried just a little ole kid you know. HE was shot up pretty bad but he was with that officer I think he was that officer's servant I reckon.

Interviewer: Aid type thing.

Sinks: Yeah but them officers on that ship that LST he wanted him to go with him so he waited on him the officer wasn't hurt. I don't know what his excuse was just because he was there I reckon. But they took that aid of his away so they treated him but the ole officer he was I don't know he looked like a German officer to me. But I didn't have no contact with him.

Interviewer: Right you were concerned with the wounded not with the prisoners.

Sinks: Yeah that little boy that little soldier I helped wait on him. Bring him water and bring his food to him everything he was nice.

Interviewer: And you had pretty decent medical facility set up on the LST?

Sinks: Yeah they had a doctor an Inson I believe he was an Inson but he was a doctor.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: And of course we had that captain I don't believe he was a doctor but he did he set that boys, I don't think it needed set, but he wanted to do something so he done it. And he done a pretty good job with his leg but as soon as they got him back to England they cut that off you know. It stayed on there probably stayed on there overnight or something.

Interviewer: The cast stayed overnight?

Sinks: Yeah the cast did.

Interviewer: They did it when they got him back.

Sinks: I'm sure they did that was the first thing they did I imagine. Anyway he had to do something and this captain I said he was an inson he was a captain he was a doctor I believe no I believe he was an inson but he was a doctor. But he didn't like that captain doctor of ours because he was a little bit smart you know or something. Of course the first time in the little operating room we had there of course we didn't have room for much oh he said this is cute the ole captain did you know. And that didn't sit well with that navy guy.

Interviewer: I can understand that.

Sinks: But them ole sailors they treated us good. They took our money but that was our fault.

Interviewer: They treated you like one of their own on the

Sinks: Yeah that's right.

Interviewer: Right and I would imagine that you stayed pretty much with the medical sailors

Sinks: Yeah we did yeah. In fact we slept in the well at first they put me in a I had on a had borrowed this here corporal's jacket. Of course I didn't have I lost my field jacket and never could get another one so I had that on and I believe it had I believe he got it from somebody it had some sergeant stripes on it. Anyway they put me in with that chief the chief over all the boys.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: I didn't care for him either he was sort of smart and I thought wait a minute I don't need to be in here. I said how come you put me in here chief? He said well we've got to put the noncom I said well I'm not a noncom.

Interviewer: Because of your field jacket he thought you were

Sinks: He sent me out right quick and I was glad of it I didn't want to stay in there with them. SO he sent me out so I was glad of that because they sort of go with rank a lot in there.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: In the army they did in the air force they don't. I pulled KP with master sergeants a lot of times.

Interviewer: The navy's more rank conscious more traditional than the other services tend to be.

Sinks: Yeah they fed good too.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Sinks: They fed us.

Interviewer: You fed well on

Sinks: When the troops came on they put their food away and they ate them ole k-rations and all that stuff and that's what we had to eat. But as soon as they unloaded the troops started back boy they broke out that good stuff. And they had good food too ice cream at every meal and stuff like that we never did see.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Wow that must have been a treat for you.

Sinks: It was yeah.

Interviewer: I've been told the navy eats well.

Sinks: The navy eats good I can tell you that.

Interviewer: That's the rumor. The air force has comfortable beds and the navy eats well.

Sinks: Yeah well them navy beds are not too comfortable but.

Interviewer: That's what I being crowded there on the ship there has to be some consolation.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: As I understand even in peace time the living conditions for the crews are pretty crowded on navy vessels.

Sinks: Yeah when I went over why we was on a liberty ship I forget the name of it but anyway they had well they was supposed to have twice what they had beds for.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: You were supposed to one night you slept on a bunk and the next night you had to find your own place no bunk. But and it was down under man them things it smelled awful where they had them you know. So me and two or three guys I was with Rocksmith and this little short boy and all of them we went down there and before we found out our number, we had a number. And before we found out we decided we don't want to stay down there anyway. Hot and man it was sweaty and close you know.

Interviewer: This was on the ship from New York?

Sinks: Yeah on that going over. So we went back up deck and found us a place, we slept up there every night. It got a little rough at night because that North Atlantic over there you know had some high waves over there.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: But we made it better than being down there where the. I went over I come back on the Queen Mary.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: You came back on the Queen Mary. From England to?

Sinks: From England to New York.

Interviewer: To New York City.

Sinks: And a few years ago I went to I visited the Queen Mary out in California. Had it out there and done made a restaurant out of it.

Interviewer: Yes

Sinks: We eat on it that night.

Interviewer: So the trip back was a little nicer than the trip over.

Sinks: Yeah it took me well it took us 14 days to go over there 4 to come back.

Interviewer: Four?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Wow that's quite a quick crossing.

Sinks: Yeah we went you know that zig zag stuff.

Interviewer: Well going over sure during the war they had to.

Sinks: Had all them U-boats out there.

Interviewer: You had the convoys and you had to run your patterns.

Sinks: That was the scariest part for me where I got more nervous when they talked about them U-boats.

Interviewer: Is that right.

Sinks: Because you know them things we never did see one but they kept saying they were out there.

Interviewer: And they were.

Sinks: I imagine they were yeah.

Interviewer: They were they were out there.

Sinks: The war had been started a couple years going on a couple years I guess but they were getting heavy then because they knew the ocean was full of ships coming over.

Interviewer: Right now were you still in you were still stationed in England when the war ended?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Okay and how long did they keep you overseas after the Germans surrendered? How long did they keep you over there for a while?

Sinks: Well they didn't keep us too long because they had that points system.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: And I had more points than most of them most of the boys that went because that soldier's metal give me five extra points see.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: And give me five dollars a month extra pay. They ought to still pay me that but they don't. But anyway I had enough points.

Interviewer: They don't still pay you for the soldier's metal.

Sinks: No they don't pay you they should though I guess because I've still got it but they don't pay. And I only made \$55 a month see I was still a PFC.

Interviewer: That's plenty of money.

Sinks: You think well if I hadn't drank all that beer and done all that ole blackjack stuff I'd had plenty of money too.

Interviewer: But you still had three hots and a cot.

Sinks: That's right. Yeah the accommodations was good on that air base.

Interviewer: So they mustard you out pretty quick after the war ended?

Sinks: Yeah it wasn't long and see I left and Rocksmith left. He didn't have as many points as I did so he stayed and I didn't know it well I didn't know it at the time but after I got back home why when he came by to see me once. He came by he was going to out in Missouri to get his girlfriend he was gonna get married and she lived in Missouri somewhere and he lived in Akron Ohio. Anyway he come by and stayed all night and went on out there and got her and got married and then he went back to Ohio. And then he got to moving around and I kept trying to find him and I couldn't. In fact I went to I went up there once where his where his place was (a woman came up talking to Mr. Sinks). Do we have enough tape left?

Interviewer: Yeah so you were saying that you were traveling around Ohio you were trying to find your friend Brock.

Sinks: Yeah I had an address for him.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: You know one of the old addresses so and he worked for the Greyhound Bus Station. So I went to I went I found this house where he did live and pulled up there and this man next door said no he moved said he moved to oh where was it up there I had to go. Well he told me where he moved to so I went ahead and went on up there and he didn't live there he had done moved. And they said they thought he went to back to Cleveland Ohio.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: So I came on back I went to the bus station in Cleveland and they said no he transferred to somewhere else. So I give up on him then and two or three years later why I kept calling that Greyhound people up there in Ohio the office trying to find out if he had retired or anything but I never did get no answer. So how did I find out where he was at? Oh he came down here once after he got to Arizona he moved to Arizona and his wife had died and he rented him a he moved in that Sun City out there. Anyway he came to visit me one night called me from down here on Second Street. And said he wanted to come said he didn't know how to get out here. I said well just stay there I'll come get you. He was down at the fried chicken place down there so I went down there and picked him up. I didn't know then his wife had died you know and my wife with me and she said well you go ahead and go with him show him how to get over there and she drove on back. And I asked him about his wife and he said she had died lung cancer, she wouldn't quit smoking. And he had two or three kids so they all moved out there and didn't get married anymore. He had him a girlfriend out there in the old folks home had two or three of them old women you know. Yeah an old girlfriend up there and she went out with us a couple

of nights we went somewhere. We went to a little gambling place at the edge of Nevada went over there and she went with us you know. But it well then he came to see me twice after that he came to see me and stayed a couple days. He had some folks in Ohio and he went up there to see about them. But he went back and I came in from somewhere once I came home and went in there had a message on the answering machine and his daughter told me he died of lung cancer. And he had stomach cancer and they had about cured that up he didn't know he had lung cancer. So she told me he died with lung cancer. I didn't get to go out there of course that's a long way to go and I didn't go but I wish now I had but I didn't so.

Interviewer: Well

Sinks: And I had several friends around here. In Nashville there's a preacher up there a Baptist preacher that retired here about a year or two ago. He still lives up there and then there's I had a friend that lives in Pennsylvania I went to see him a couple times and three of them lived in Florida. I went to see all of them well I went to see two of them one of them died before I got to see him.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: But I keep in touch with a couple of them down in Florida and the one in Nashville and but he was 80 something years old when he retired.

Interviewer: Does the 92nd bombers they have an association I assume.

Sinks: Yeah I get a newsletter from them.

Interviewer: Do they do reunions at all?

Sinks: Yeah but I haven't been to any because none of the folks I know go.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: None of the support staff or whatever you call them but the crews do yeah. Let me show you some of them. Well you're not through yet. How long are you gonna do this?

Interviewer: Well sir I'll be working on this project for probably the rest of my life. Honestly you had asked earlier about the different projects. This particular project I explained is for the county museum.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: We're also furnishing copies of these interviews to the Fort Campbell Museum. They're building a historic archive of videotaped interviews at the they're opening a new museum next year.

Sinks: Yeah I read about that.

Interviewer: The Don Pratt Museum is going to close and they're opening a new museum called the Wings of Liberty Museum which is primarily going to be devoted to all the air borne troops.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: But it will still have other archives and other displays aside from just the 101st and the 11th and 511th PIR and those folks.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: And these interviews these tapes will all be transcribed so that historians can go in and read the transcription of me and you or they can watch the video tape and they also will be on computer data base. So if someone was researching like the 92nd bomber squad and they wanted to find out about the 92nd they would be interested of course in looking at your tape and see what you had to say about your experienced in England and France. You know it's going to be a very valuable tool not just to the education of the youth here in the county but also for researchers and historians and for families also.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Something I forgot to mention we will make a copy of this video for you.

Sinks: Oh that would be good.

Interviewer: I'll bring it or send it.

Sinks: Okay

Interviewer: You will get a copy. It's going to take a while because before they're before your copy when I turn this in several copies are made. Each museum is gonna get a copy I'll get a copy and of course we'll send one out to you and somebody will sit down, not me, with a headset and a typewriter and listen to this and transcribe it all.

Sinks: That will be good.

Interviewer: So it I think it's a very important project.

Sinks: Well it would be in 50 years from now if any people want to do some research or even longer than they well they've got it there and they can tell a whole lot about what was going on back then.

Interviewer: Yes sir because it's very important to get the prospective from my research it's very important to get the prospective from people like yourself who were the operators on the ground.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: You know a lot of the ranking folks told their stories in memoirs have been written and books have been written and movies have been made. But to get the perspective of the average enlisted man the medic the infantry man the water purification tester. Whatever somebody might be to get their prospective is a valuable learning tool.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Valuable learning tool.

Sinks: Oh yeah you can pick up a lot of information after you just wouldn't just go ask somebody wasn't nobody around probably didn't know that particular thing.

Interviewer: Exactly

Sinks: Because in a few years I probably wouldn't know it either be done forgot a lot of it because I forget a lot of things.

Interviewer: I did want to ask you about prewar Clarksville. You said you were 19 when you went in the service.

Sinks: Nineteen

Interviewer: And I wanted to jump way back to the beginning. Before you went in what was Clarksville like in the early 40s?

Sinks: Well have you ever been to Dover or Cumberland City?

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: Something like them maybe a little bit bigger but not much.

Interviewer: Not much bigger than downtown Dover which isn't much bigger than a wide spot in the road.

Sinks: Yeah well they had I think the population the best I can remember it was 12,000.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: The city limits stopped way down here coming out Madison. You said you came out

Interviewer: Yes sir I live in that area.

Sinks: Okay when you got to do you remember did you come as far as from Porters Bluff Road through there?

Interviewer: Yes sir.

Sinks: Well right there at Porters Bluff Road is where the city limits ended.

Interviewer: That's darn near right in my neighborhood. I live you know where the big funeral home is McReynolds, Nave and Larson?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: I live across the street.

Sinks: You live on Madison but across the street them apartments over there.

Interviewer: I live on Madison across the street from that big ole funeral home.

Sinks: Alright well it's only a block farther up and you'd have been out of Clarksville yeah. And then later on they moved it up to about Porters Bluff Road.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: Then they keep moving it keep moving it now it goes I don't know exactly where it's at up here but its way up here. This was just a farm this was a farm back them wasn't nothing here. And well it wasn't even a farm then it was just woods I think. And they see what else.

Interviewer: You said you grew up in Palmyra?

Sinks: I grew up in Palmyra. I moved up here in about let's see I must have been about eight or ten years old I moved on up to Clarksville. Which now if you're in Palmyra you're practically in Clarksville.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: Back then it was a train ride to come up here. It was an experience we came once or twice a year or something.

Interviewer: Going to Clarksville was an experience.

Sinks: Yeah but they had street cars back there then. Of course they've still got the rails.

Interviewer: Sure some of them are still downtown when they tore up, I used to work on Franklin Street, when they tore up repaved down there and put in the brick crossings and things they pulled up some of those things.

Sinks: Came all the way down Franklin Street to 10th and then went down I think cut back and went Greenwood Avenue out to the cemetery.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: Didn't come on out here because there wasn't anything out here. But it was I wished the downtown never would have got torn down. I liked that old of course they can build it back but it won't be the same.

Interviewer: Won't be the same it was a shame.

Sinks: I lived right at the end of Franklin Street. You go all the way to the end down where well the City Hall's down there now.

Interviewer: Yes sir

Sinks: I lived right to the left of that. They had a big apartment house there that was there during the Civil War was a hotel Franklin Hotel. My daddy worked for the old lady that owned it and she had rented

apartments made it into apartments and he took care of the apartments for her. But it burned up years ago.

Interviewer: That's just a parking lot down there now.

Sinks: Yeah a parking lot down there now.

Interviewer: There are parking lots down at the end of the street for the city.

Sinks: Yeah we lived there and I went to school.

Interviewer: And you said you were a meat cutter before the war?

Sinks: Yeah I worked at a little ole meat shop down on Commerce Street down on close to Commerce and 3rd down there.

Interviewer: Now how did an honest country boy get involved in meat cutting?

Sinks: Well I started out riding this bicycle delivering meat you know he took people would call him you know want a dimes worth of calf liver. I'd bicycle and carry it to them didn't matter what they wanted he delivered it, an old country man. I worked there and done that for a couple years I just got in there when I wasn't doing anything. I'd go back there where the guy cut meat and just sort of caught on I knew one part of the calf from another you know.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: Could cut a roast or chop or certain kind of steak or something just caught on. So I just started working inside no from that bicycle I graduated to a truck delivering groceries in a truck.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Sinks: And then I got in and took over inside there. He had about eight or ten working in there and on Saturday morning Friday or Saturday you couldn't get in that place. People from across he lived across the river over here in well String Town they called it then Cumberland Heights.

Interviewer: Oh yes sir.

Sinks: He had a farm over there that old man did and half the people over there was kin to him. And he had half his kin folks working there I was the only one there working at one time that wasn't kin to the man.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Everybody else

Sinks: Everybody else that worked there were cousins or brother-in-laws or something they was all kin to him. Of course he was a Yarbrough there were a lot of Yarbrough's over there. But he had a man that man had a business he couldn't read and write he got in trouble when they started this rationing meat you know rationing food.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: Of course he couldn't turn nobody down and he just got in trouble. He didn't you had them red points or something and he to selling without them points. They called him to Nashville had a big trial up there. I don't think they fined him or anything because he played dumber than what he was you know.

Interviewer: Well he wasn't trying to make money illegally he was just trying to keep folks fed.

Sinks: Trying to keep them fed that's right. He just couldn't understand having meat and couldn't sell to people.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: If they didn't have them ole ration books or points or whatever you call them. He'd sell them anyway.

Interviewer: Well that's I can understand and appreciate his logic.

Sinks: Yeah he was a smart old man but he didn't have no education. He couldn't hardly write his name he just barely could.

Interviewer: He didn't want to see his neighbors go hungry when they had money to buy meat.

Sinks: He wanted to sell it to them.

Interviewer: I understand. What was the mood like in Clarksville when the war first started you know around the time? I'm sure there was quite a bit of upset over the bombing Pearl Harbor.

Sinks: Yeah

Interviewer: Y'all knew at that point that war was inevitable.

Sinks: Yeah that's right and then they started drafting. When they started drafting all of the young men eligible men they left. And when Fort Campbell was built here I was working across the street from that meat market I used to a man quit there once in a while and my wife's cousin had a little ole restaurant over there like a fast food place but he sold beer too. So I'd get mad at Mr. Yarbrough I'd go over there and he'd hire me you know I'd work for him. Because when that the first air borne troops come out here and I think the first was an armor division. But this little ole restaurant over there had a counter up here where you had stools and wasn't no seats out here there wasn't enough room for them. Had pinball machines out there but it run as far as from here to the end of that porch down there. And they would be in there if they come in and a man was on a stool and they wanted to get something to eat well they'd stand behind him, when he got up they'd get the stool, sometimes it would be three deep. But that man he sold he sold beef stew and chili and a sandwich or so cook an egg or something but that's

all he sold just about. But and the man across the street that I worked for he cut his beef stew bought his beef stew from him you know.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: So he'd keep when I worked over there he kept me busy running chili and beef stew over to Mr. Yarbrough so he could cook it especially during tobacco season. But they'd crowd in but then at night and on the weekend these GIs would come in there.

Interviewer: Right

Sinks: And man it was a mean bunch too.

Interviewer: Really?

Sinks: Yeah they were rambunctious of course they were just like everybody when they first get in the army. But I was big for my age well I guess I was 18 you know.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: But they'd look at me I worked in there some then and they'd look at me and wonder why I wasn't in the army. And it would make them mad and they'd start something you know. Had a big ole MP sergeant out there at Fort Campbell when Lacy the man that owned it would call him he'd come on down because Lacy hunted birds and quall all the time. And this old sergeant could eat 50 of them I imagine if you'd cook them for him and Lacy would cook them for him about once a week. Anyway he'd call that ole big sergeant he'd back his van up to the door had swinging doors and he'd back that door up right up to the sidewalk in front of the door and he'd come in there, he couldn't hardly get in, great big ole fellow. He'd grab them soldiers he didn't care who it was because he didn't look for trouble he found it. He'd grab them and he'd carry them out there and they'd open that door and he'd slam them in the back of that van get it loaded haul them off. But they was gonna one night they was gonna whip me and this other boy working there. And of course we took off had a little apartment upstairs we took off up there and locked the door they couldn't get up there. But there was an old man sitting there stayed there all the time that knew us. So the next day he came down and brought an axe handle he said lay this over there beside that banister there. Said lay this axe handle over there and said if they go to starting that anymore go to swinging it. And when they'd get rough I'd get my axe handle out of course I wasn't gonna hit none of them I'd be afraid to.

Interviewer: Sure

Sinks: But they calmed down after a while. But that ole MP he took care of them.

Interviewer: He helped keep the peace.

Sinks: Yeah Lacy knew how to do it you know he fed him you know. But that place stayed off limits half the time. The night I got out of the army I went down there. My daddy had moved and I didn't know where he lived the bus station was right close to it so I got off and walked down there and it was still open late at night. And I had my uniform on of course and had that ruptured duck on it you know and had my separation papers. I hadn't been in there two minutes and this MP come in there gonna run me

out. I said I'm out of the army. He said where are your papers? I should them to him he said well said I don't think you're supposed to be in here. And of course the man who owned it said he can be in here if he wants to, said this is my house. Of course the MP could have done it if he'd have wanted to I reckon but he said oh okay. So he went on out so I didn't have to leave but

Interviewer: But you had come home.

Sinks: Yeah but I didn't know where I lived and this boy was back there that young boy he was younger than me. But he knew where I lived he said I'll show you where you live, I said good. He carried me over there.

Interviewer: Carried you over to your daddy's house.

Sinks: Carried me to my daddy's house.

Interviewer: Okay

Sinks: Yeah I can remember going remember coming back.

Interviewer: Very interesting. I'm gonna shut this down.

Sinks: Okay

Tape ended