

I don't mean to disappoint you but I think we lost most of our interview just now. I want try to go back and get everything that we just talked about but what I will try to do if you can just say your name and where you are from again and a little bit of your history.

Mr. Dalton: _____ J. Dalton; call me AJ. To bring Steve up to date on my Army career, when the war was over with, we were in Czechoslovakia. I was one of the first ones to get to come home because I had more points. Being one of the advanced parties that went over there on the 1st of July, I got extra months points. I was included in one of the first ones to come home. I got back to the states on June 15, 1945.

I don't want to jump ahead too far. I wanted to ask a lot of why questions about what you did after the war. You are in England and you are waiting on the big invasion. You had just taken part in North Africa and you had just taken part in the Sicily Campaigns. You get back, what are you doing? Are you resting? Are you taking it easy or are you training?

Mr. Dalton: Being as calm as could be knowing what was coming on. The division had orders to land on the 5th of June, 1944, but the weather was so bad that they delayed it a day. That is why they went in on the 6th. It was still rough and terrible.

What is the division doing? Are they split up in different camps all across England or are they all pretty much in one area?

Mr. Dalton: They were all scattered all around but we all moved down to Liverpool, Bournemouth, right down there on the southern coast of England. That is where I left from.

There were some pretty large scale maneuvers going on at that time.

Mr. Dalton: Oh yeah.

Can you kind of like, in your point of view, tell us what was going on there in England when everybody was getting ready for the invasion. You knew something was going to happen; they didn't have to tell you. What was going on?

Mr. Dalton: We weren't in on that particular invasion. It was several days later when we went in, but we knew by everybody gathering that something big was about to happen. So we took it as easy as possible. They all worked in our area. They were scattered around so we couldn't see anything but a big bunch of troops.

Did your section take part in any of the maneuvers? Did it go out and set up operations in the field for preparation in the training?

Mr. Dalton: No.

Were you still conducting day to day business for the division and keeping it running?

Mr. Dalton: No, we just had to sit tight and be ready to take care of the influx of paperwork that actually was to follow; financial records.

Prior to the 1st Division receiving replacements, were you part of in processing those replacements or taking care of their pay records?

Mr. Dalton: They all came in to us. Each unit would have a personnel section. They had kept the financial records and then they would transfer them to us at the finance office. Come payday we would have to compute the monthly payroll and have the money fixed up on payday. Their agents would be appointed to come in and get the money from the finance office and then go back and pay the troops, when they were paid. Some paydays were not met then.

You were one of four brothers, or did you have four brothers, I can't remember. One of four brothers?

Mr. Dalton: There were four of us that were in the service. There were seven brothers total.

That is a lot of mouths to feed.

Mr. Dalton: Seven boys I should say.

So four brothers in the service and the rest of the war is going on, did you try to keep track of what was going on with your brothers and where they were?

Mr. Dalton: No, we were all scattered.

Did you know where they were?

Mr. Dalton: Later on we would hear from mother, yes.

But you had no way to follow where they were by listening to the radio?

Mr. Dalton: No, later on my oldest brother, he was on a submarine and no way of knowing where he was at. The next brother older than I, he was in the Navy. He was in mechanics. My younger brother that was in, he was in the airborne. He went in to Japan. But no, we didn't associate any writing with those at all. I didn't have their address. I guess mother would have sent it to us if we would have asked for it. Relating to that, when I came back we were all separated; the ones that were going to be discharged would go here and the ones that were going to reenlist would go over here. Later on I went to Camp Grant, Illinois, and reenlisted there and got my ninety day leave. That was right at the end of 1945. All my other brothers were home at that time so I got a ten day extension

on the ninety day leave to be home with them. So that was a hundred day leave right there at one time. You don't have too many of those.

So back in England while you are waiting for the invasion, did they have a movie room set up for you, or a theater set up for you on the camp you were at? If you ever watch any old war movies you always see them going into a theater and they will watch....there is a news clip at the beginning of the movie. Did you ever get to see any of those news clips?

Mr. Dalton: Not that I can recall. Those probably came along later on in the conflict.

You didn't get a lot of exposure in the news as you would have liked. Do you have an opinion of the President? Was Franklin D. Roosevelt, was he the leader to the private like he was to the American people?

Mr. Dalton: We knew that he knew that Japan was going to attack ten days ahead of time. That was reported. My oldest brother who was in the submarine over there in Pearl Harbor knew that there was something going to happen right shortly. I'm glad he was in the submarine underneath and was able to make it. That was the main thing we had to deal with.

Were there a lot of troops that were....was that a feeling that was shared with a lot of the soldiers that they really didn't care for him?

Mr. Dalton: I would think that it was wide-spread, wide-felt. If he knew, he certainly wouldn't tell the truth. Instead of having them all accumulated in there together, they should have been wide-spread, I would think. I'm not a strategist but that is the way I would look at it anyway.

So hanging out with your buddies in England, what did you guys do at night? Were you able to stop work at night, go out and maybe go have a beer at the bar, go to the chow hall, or play cards? What did you guys do to pass time?

Mr. Dalton: That is just about it. You hit the nail on the head. As I said, over in England the British pubs around town, the sergeant's mess, they would invite us over there. There at Langford, they had a place downtown where they would have dances and so forth. We used to go down there. On the way back, one night walking back we passed by soldiers who had scuffled and British ____ and pretty soon shots rang out over our heads and we took off for the barracks.

Was that one of the English or was it a GI?

Mr. Dalton: It was a GI.

Were there any inter service or senior unit wrangles like that or was it 1st Infantry Division guys mixing it up with other units or was it just drunk GI's having a good time?

Mr. Dalton: It must have been that. Different units were scattered all over. They weren't close in proximity so we didn't have any conflicts with them at all. Maybe just a few of this outfit and that.

So come May of 1944, what is going on there with the 1st Infantry Division? Are you getting to know that something is going to happen? Are you moving around? Are you getting new equipment that you never had before? What is happening?

Mr. Dalton: We weren't. I don't know if the fighting forces got any new equipment or anything like that. We had our old that we took overseas with us; typewriters and adding machines.

Did you draw French money there? What kind of money were you going to pay the troops once they hit France? Were you going to keep paying them in dollars or pounds?

Mr. Dalton: We had military script Francs. It wasn't true French Francs that you see. It was just like later on it was script that we had in Germany but we printed it here in the states and had it shipped over.

A guy could save up a lot of money I guess while he is deployed. Were there any problems with soldiers carrying a lot of money over there? What did they normally do if they had saved up a lot of money? Did they have to get paid?

Mr. Dalton: No, they could save it up and have some deposits. They could buy bonds with it. They tried to get us to have monthly savings. It was systematic so they could get used to that. Some of them would spend or drink or this or that so they naturally would deposit more into soldiers deposits. Back then they were paying 4%.

How much did the average soldier make? I'm just curious, how much did a private make?

Mr. Dalton: When I went in it was a dollar a day. When I got Corporal I made \$54.00 a month. That was a lot of money. A Sergeant, I forget what it was. The scales went up along with the raises and so forth. With a couple of nights out, you didn't have too much money left. There was a lot of card playing going on. There was ways of getting rid of your money if you didn't save it. Naturally along with money we had people get in trouble with trying to devise some system where they could get extra money. It took time but they finally were found. Right after I got my commission over in Germany, I went down to Stuttgart and a Warrant Officer he was all the time signing the soldier's deposits. He noticed the signature of entry before was of his name but it wasn't his signature. That is when he had to report it and found out that the fellow was signing that and putting the money in his pocket instead of turning it in to finance. Things like that were happening. I know when I went back over in 1947 I joined the 7752 Finance Center in Friedberg, Germany. That is what they called the central disbursing office. They would get a hold of

the new script from the states and send it to our office and we would divvy it out to finance offices at various units across the country; Italy, France and so forth. We had, at one time, a shipment of \$640 million worth of script that we had in our vault in the basement. I can remember that figure so clear.

That is a lot of money today. Then it was even worth more.

Mr. Dalton: Yeah. A \$10 bill was the highest denomination they had in script at that time. It covered quite a room.

Just prior to France or just prior to the invasion you knew something was going on. You were a Sergeant. Did they tell you anything about what was about to happen or did they tell you to get the guys ready and to be ready to move by this day?

Mr. Dalton: No, it was just getting uneasy. We knew something was going to take place. Naturally we didn't go on D-Day, it was a few days later but we had heard what the outcome was.

Do you remember the Eisenhower speech? Did they pass that around to the unit commanders? I know that they did pass around a few letters to some to the airborne troops and the troops that were ready to make their initial first jump. You don't recall anything like that?

Mr. Dalton: I don't recall it at all. I could have been but it was so long ago that it doesn't stick out.

Was there any kind of notification or did you hear anything on the radio from the President. Did he say anything about the...how did you find out? What way did it get to you guys?

Mr. Dalton: I'm sure the company commanders kept us informed the best that he knew how. We didn't have radios. The signal outfits had radios. They probably got the news and could report it.

What were you hearing about it?

Mr. Dalton: It wasn't good. But the best that I can remember is that all of the landing craft, they had spikes out there in the bay and the water was up. The carrier would get stuck and they were just sitting ducks then. They had caves up in cliffs and they were firing from there. Later on when we went in they had removed those and we were able to make it in alright.

How long after did you get in there?

Mr. Dalton: I think we went in 22 days later.

Where did you land?

Mr. Dalton: In France, I forget the place. It was the main landing zone.

Did it still have the landing craft where the defensive positions and the works and all that other stuff?

Mr. Dalton: All of that had been removed.

Were those the big harbors at that time? Had they made the mulberry harbors or the artificial harbors or did you land right on the beach?

Mr. Dalton: We got close enough that we could land on the beach when we went in. Back then they couldn't get in that close on account of those spikes and so forth. It was cleared out so we could get right up on it.

Was it raining or was it sunny then? What was it like? Were the waves pretty high or were they pretty low?

Mr. Dalton: It had calmed down when we went in there, considerably, compared to what was reported on D-Day. That was why all the difficulties they had. I guess it had calmed down somewhat compared to the previous days when they were supposed to have gone in. But we have no control over that weather.

What was the beach, was it busy? Was there a buzz of activity or was there just not a whole lot going on?

Mr. Dalton: When we went in there wasn't too much going on. It had already moved out.

All the fighting, but was there supplies coming in? Were there a lot of people standing around hanging out or working or setting up facilities?

Mr. Dalton: We weren't in there too long. We got in there and got out. I don't remember. I know there were other ships there, unloading.

Could you hear the noise from the battle? Was that something you could hear still, the fighting inland or was it just the ocean?

Mr. Dalton: It had advanced considerably.

By that time I imagine they were pretty far inland.

Mr. Dalton: It was three weeks time so had gone on inland.

Where did you guys go from the beach then? Where did you set up or did you ever really get to set up for long?

Mr. Dalton: We didn't set up until we had got on inland. We had gone in. I don't remember hiking or if we had vehicles to move our equipment and the bodies on out. I think we got off away from the beach as far as possible and as soon as possible because others were coming in and as you said supplies too. I don't recall how far we went in before we halted and set up.

Were there German prisoners coming up the road? How were things going at that time? Did you know what was happening with the attack? Was it slowing down or was it picking up?

Mr. Dalton: It had already gone on by. We weren't that close to it.

You were just relatively; at that point you were pretty secure where you were?

Mr. Dalton: Yes.

Were there civilians around at that point? Were you able to start seeing the French civilians coming out?

Mr. Dalton: I don't think we seen any at all. By the time we got up to Meaux later on we seen Bob Hope and the other people. They were over there together.

You went to a USO show then?

Mr. Dalton: Yeah.

Did Bob Hope bring the girls or any movie stars over?

Mr. Dalton: He was a character I'm telling you. Still to see him and Dale Evans, what is...?

The singing cowboy, that guy. I know who you are talking about.

Mr. Dalton: He and Bob Hope were there together.

They brought up the pin-ups. He had some movie stars and some girls there and all that?

Mr. Dalton: Yeah, from time to time we would see them. They had quite a big audience, I assure you.

Do you remember anything from his show or just seeing him?

Mr. Dalton: There were so many of us there. The ones that were lucky got up close; the others were far enough back. It was interesting to have somebody like that come over there in that kind of a zone. We went through France, Belgium, Germany, and like I said we wound up in Czechoslovakia.

I know about the Bulge, you told me you were at the Bulge.

Mr. Dalton: Herve, Belgium, we were already packed up and ready to move out. Right at the last minute they gave us the green light to stay right there because they thought they were being overrun down there and thought it was time for us to get out. We halted and stayed right there. They broke through and made it out alright.

Was it pretty cold that winter?

Mr. Dalton: It wasn't too far from it. Like I said, we seen the wings go over and _____ and so forth. We were that close.

What do you remember from that time? What did you do for Christmas that year? Did you even have Christmas or realize that Christmas had gone through?

Mr. Dalton: I don't recall what we did for Christmas that year because that was right there at The Battle of the Bulge. It was in December.

No hot meal or nothing like that huh?

Mr. Dalton: I don't recall.

While you were in the division rear, was artillery a problem; the German artillery? Did you ever have to sustain artillery?

Mr. Dalton: No, not for us.

You were able to make it through without ever having to sustain one of those? Did you dig in though?

Mr. Dalton: Those buzz bombs were our problem. You could hear them coming, that racket they made. There were some that landed not too far from Herve, the little town that we were at, down between there and Liege. Right after the Battle of the Bulge broke out we moved on out from up toward Germany then because Herve is not too far from Aachen, Germany.

You spoke about Malmedy. You worked in the rear area mainly and here are these Malmedy Massacre, there were medical personnel. How did that affect you guys? Did that kind of shake you guys up a little bit?

Mr. Dalton: We had a job to do and we did it. We were on the alert all the time. Just like when we had our office blown up, we were worn out at that time. We didn't stay right there back then. We didn't know what would have happened if we wouldn't have moved on out.

Were you guys on the alert for German infiltrators? I know they had a problem with Germans dressing like American soldiers and MP's. Was that something you had to be concerned about?

Mr. Dalton: Our finance officer was of German decent and he could speak German. The officers lived up town in buildings up there that they had for the officers. I guess he was a German. They knocked on their door or something, where they lived anyway. I forget what he said they did. We were on alert from then on because we knew they were in the area.

What were you guys using for; you watched the movies where passwords were baseball games and things like that; who won the World Series. Did you use anything like that or was that just something on TV that you saw?

Mr. Dalton: We didn't have any contact at all that I can recall. We were concerned with the election when the war was going on why Roosevelt stayed in. He stayed in too long and then he passed away. As far as radios and so forth, we didn't have any. Maybe other units did have, but we didn't.

You said you moved from Belgium to Aachen. Was that combat that the unit had to go in there or was that something where it just moved through?

Mr. Dalton: They had to clear out. They had a line of defense there around Aachen which was right on the border of Germany and Belgium. They had pill boxes in the concrete set up there. They had to remove all of those before they could get on up.

Was that the Siegfried Line? Did you pass through the Siegfried Line?

Mr. Dalton: Yes.

Was that much of a line?

Mr. Dalton: They had already demolished it. A little town of Duran, Germany, I guess it was the stronghold. It was completely demolished, the entire town. They got rid of it, similar to that mosque that was just bombed yesterday.

By this time, I know you have talked about seeing some of the American planes being shot down. Were there any large scale bombing operations? Could you hear the bombers coming over at night and hitting Germany?

Mr. Dalton: They had big flying fortresses; big formations just kept coming. We knew something was getting hit and getting hit hard.

By that time you pretty much felt it. Did you realize and did the soldiers realize, hey we are winning the war? We are kicking them. It's almost over.

Mr. Dalton: Oh yeah. When they took off from England way back, we knew somebody was getting hit. But when over there we could see the big formations. They were big. They were going toward Berlin and some of them other big industrial places down in there. The main town starts with an S. Sulingen or something like that where they make ball bearings. They had hit that. I should say hit it good.

When you were in Aachen, how far toward the end of the war is it? Were you pretty close to the end of the war?

Mr. Dalton: We were back there at Herve, Belgium, during the Normandy Invasion in December so it was May 8th when the war was ended.

So you were not far away from the end of the war?

Mr. Dalton: We weren't too far. It was getting closer and closer because we kept moving.

When you heard the war was over, or VE Day, where were you?

Mr. Dalton: We were in Hof.

What happened?

Mr. Dalton: I'll tell you what happened. They had run over a big whiskey warehouse and we all had our share then. Needless to say, we consumed it. Right after that, the ones that were going home moved on up to division headquarters in Czechoslovakia. When they found that big warehouse and they were getting so close it was moving so fast.

You were in that first bunch to go home you said?

Mr. Dalton: Yes.

How long did it take you to get back to the states?

Mr. Dalton: It was a timely process back in France. We lined up in ships for transportation home. I got back to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, on the 15th of June; so from May 8th to June 15th.

That was pretty quick. You said you were going to stay in the Army so you just got a leave is that the way it worked? You were just going to reenlist?

Mr. Dalton: Right. They brought us on the train, the ones that were going to stay in and go to the mid section of the country and put us on a train to Saint Louis.

Now were you ever worried about going to Japan or going to the Pacific? Was that something that ever crossed your mind?

Mr. Dalton: No. I reenlisted to go back to Germany. But I didn't get back over there until January of 1947. I went round and round and a lot of the times I was waiting at Camp Kilmer when I got up there.

You were in the states then when they dropped the bombs on Nagasaki?

Mr. Dalton: In 1945, yes.

What about that? How was that? Was that just well, good, or was that something that was pretty shocking at that time?

Mr. Dalton: We knew it was a good thing because of what they did to us at Pearl Harbor. It was one way of getting even, so to speak. We were glad to see it happen. We knew it was just a matter of time then.

Most people, I think, feel that it saved lives. Was that the common?

Mr. Dalton: Well when we heard that there were 100,000 killed from one big bomb, it wouldn't take long to call it quits not long after that. It sure didn't take too long either, did it?

No, it didn't. While it is on it, I kind of missed something and I would like to know, when Roosevelt died how did America react?

Mr. Dalton: I'm sure we were all sorry for it.

Most people don't have a President die in office. That is something that is pretty uncommon. Here is a President who just, regardless of how you feel about him, he pretty much led the country through a war.

Mr. Dalton: Yes, and got the country back on its feet. Right after that period of when everybody was broke and going broke, the war came along and put everybody to work and the economy picked back up. If you look at it that way, it is the only way of getting it back on its feet. During the Depression, everybody was out of work and didn't have any money; the banks were always broke.

Today what are your feelings on World War II? I know people, there was a book by Tom Brokaw and called it, "The Greatest Generation" and there is a book called, "The Good War". What do you think about the time?

Mr. Dalton: It affected so many people that it's hard to say that it is the best thing for it. I wouldn't have any personal feeling to say for myself.

What about when you heard about the Holocaust and American prisoners in Japan? Was that something that touched you?

Mr. Dalton: Knowing Hitler as we did, I would say it was synonymous with Saddam in that they didn't have any feelings for people what-so-ever. I guess he was trying to make a master race by destroying one and creating another.

So did you feel that he had to be stopped while you were in the Army? Did you believe in the cause of why you were over there? Was it important to everyone?

Mr. Dalton: I'm sure we all had that feeling.

I could see why someone would feel why they were just there to get by but I am just wondering did you feel like, "You know what; we need to win this war. This is something that needs to be done."

Mr. Dalton: When they hit Pearl Harbor, it just put a feeling in all of us that we never had before that. We knew something had to happen and had to happen quickly and sure enough it did. If that wouldn't have happened, well no telling what would have happened to all of us. It sure changed our lives 100%.

Mr. Dalton, when you got back to the United States; did you lose friends at home that you knew in the community and people that you went to high school with? Did you lose anybody close during the war?

Mr. Dalton: I wasn't around home too much at all. When I had my ninety day reenlistment leave, I got a job and worked for two months down at the glassworks in Dalton, Illinois. Most all of them were women or real old men. They were glad to get a young man in there and help out.

It seems like you touched a lot of people. I was wondering if you knew how it touched the community.

Mr. Dalton: By the way, my class reunion is coming up September 4th of this year.

Just curious, did your mother, she had four sons away at war, did she keep a flag with the stars in the window? That was a World War II thing wasn't it?

Mr. Dalton: I don't recall.

You know what I am talking about though, right?

Mr. Dalton: Yes.

You see those now, some people have them out today.

Mr. Dalton: I don't recall if she ever had one or not.

You went back to German after the war you said in 1947. Was it different?

Mr. Dalton: Oh yes. I know it wasn't quite a bit about 26 miles from headquarters down to Frankfurt for them to go downtown and walk along the streets. There was still demolition there. You could smell a human body. You know there was someone down in there. That was in 1947. They just hadn't cleared it up. I guess that beats the flying fortress formation that they took care of in Frankfurt. But surprisingly it never hit the IG ___ building; that is where they had headquarters. He was at his headquarters later on.

Did you ever meet any German soldiers after the war? Did you get a chance to talk to one?

Mr. Dalton: No. when I went back over I did a lot of wild boar hunting. I got out in the countryside with the Germans and was talking to them. I had one major that had lost an arm and he could speak English. He seemed like an awfully nice person. I got friends with the old ___ and a lot of them get friendly with the American GI's. They are good people. They are just like some of them that didn't go to war; they had to stand behind their men.

I know we have been talking for quite a while and I think we got a really good interview so this would be a good time to stop. I appreciate your help; you gave me a lot of insight.