

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH SIDNEY B. BISHOP

FOR THE
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INTERVIEW BY
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KUPSKY: This begins an interview with Mister Sidney Bishop on March the 18th, 2004 in Jefferson City, Tennessee with Greg Kupsky and...

DENTON: Braum Denton

KUPSKY: And Mister Bishop I'd like to thank you for meeting with us today, we appreciate you taking the time to talk with us.

BISHOP: Thank you.

KUPSKY: Just to start out I was wondering if you could talk just a little bit about your parents and growing up.

BISHOP: Well, I was the only child. My father bought a farm on time, as a lot of them do. Paid for his farm then went to Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee. Met my mother and they were married and he was forty-eight years of age when I was born. I was the only child. We lived on about a hundred and twenty acre farm in [the] north east corner of McNairy County. A little town, the village of Milledgeville. Said the reason they say they named it Milledgeville was there was a mill on the edge of the creek. So, they said the "mill" and "edge" and added "ville" to it.

KUPSKY: Hmm, makes sense, had your ...

(Tape paused)

KUPSKY: Well anyway, you sort of told us a little bit about your parents. I was wondering if you could tell me, your mother's side of the family? You mentioned she was from Pinson, Tennessee. Had her family been her family been in East Tennessee for some time?

BISHOP: Well that was West Tennessee.

KUPSKY: Oh, that's West Tennessee.

BISHOP: Both, each of them were in West Tennessee and she had seven sisters. There were no brothers in her family and her father was a farmer.

KUPSKY: Okay, and she helped out on the farm I guess growing up and things like that.

BISHOP: Yes.

KUPSKY: What did she tell you about growing up? Do you remember sort of her memories?

BISHOP: She just told me she just worked on the farm with her sisters and her mother and dad and they made a living that way. I don't know how my mother and father made

it. I never did ask them and never did, don't ever remember them saying how they met. But dad always, course that was back in the days when they didn't have automobiles back at that particular time and, or very few. So he always had the reputation they said of riding one of the best looking mules in the county. (Laughter)

KUPSKY: He was known for the mule. Probably the mule. Did she have a pretty tight-knit family? I mean once you were growing and things like that were her sisters still around?

BISHOP: Yeah, they were all around. All of them had large families. It was a very close-knit group. We always made it to my grandmother's and grandfather's house several times during the year and there was a big congregation. When all of them were there with their children.

KUPSKY: Oh, I am sure, yeah. And your grandparents, they remained in Pinson or?

BISHOP: Yeah they remained there until their death. Both of them were in their eighties when they passed away.

KUPSKY: So it was a very tight-knit family?

BISHOP: Yes, it sure was. Very much so.

KUPSKY: What about on your father's side? Did he have brothers and sisters?

BISHOP: My grandfather was married three times. He had I think about seven children and his wife died with child birth, the first two did. My father's second marriage and I think there was seven. Maybe three girls and four boys. They were very close. My uncle and my father bought the farm together and after they got it paid for, then they split it. My father bought the eastern half of it and my uncle took the western half. But they were very close-knit. In fact, they still have, they don't call it a reunion, they have a Bishop gathering. (Laughter) In Milledgeville each year now. We attend that or have attended about the last four of the last five years.

KUPSKY: So I guess that is a pretty big group then, probably.

BISHOP: It is. Maybe seventy-five, eighty, people there. Something like that.

DENTON: What was the size of the farm?

BISHOP: We had about, well he bought a smaller farm when I was four, five, six years of age. He had one hundred and twenty four acres in one and forty nine and a half in the other one.

DENTON: What was your prime crop?

BISHOP: It was tobacco and corn, row crop. Because it was in bottomland, overflowed and you couldn't run cattle on it. And then later got to growing soybeans.

KUPSKY: What had your mother's family, what was their, what did they farm?

BISHOP: Theirs was upland farm and theirs was mostly cotton.

DENTON: Did you help out on the farm a lot as a child?

BISHOP: Yes I did. I worked until when I got through high school and when I got finished with high school then I started at college and I wasn't home much after that.

KUPSKY: I think you mentioned, yeah, it says on here your mother also worked at the farm. So I guess it was just the three of you or did you have any other help?

BISHOP: Well, we had the employed people to help us work it. Hoeing of the cotton and harvesting the cotton and also harvesting the corn.

KUPSKY: In terms of growing up, I was sort of wondering if you could, if you remembered a little bit, just about, you know, what you did as a kid for fun.

BISHOP: Well, being in a rural area, we were at that time, and not too much transportation. What we did we'd, just meet at each others house and play. And we played quite a bit of baseball and played quit a bit of basketball, different seasons of the year. We did a little rabbit hunting and squirrel hunting and that was about the full extent of it.

KUPSKY: Okay, so a fair bit of hunting and some sports.

BISHOP: Yeah.

DENTON: Now, what was the size of the community at this time?

BISHOP: There was a little school, a junior high, at Milledgeville. It was where three counties joined and they called it "Tri-County". And I guess in high school it was all eight to ten grades. Maybe in high school there might have been twenty in each class. It was a small community, compared to what schools are now.

KUPSKY: I was wondering if you had, in grade school, if you had any favorite subjects or anything like that? Or teachers who stick out in your mind?

BISHOP: Well yeah, I had one favorite teacher that I liked very well. She was a very good teacher. Her name was Osa, O-S-A, Smith. Before she married. I don't remember her madden, I mean her married name. She was very, very, strict and a very hard teacher. But she was a very good teacher and very easy person to work with. I always enjoyed math more than anything else in high school and then when I started in high school I had

an opportunity to take Ag, or agriculture, and I enjoyed that very much with the farm background of course.

BISHOP: When I first made up my mind I wanted to be an engineer because of the math. Then I later switched, changed my mind, and went into the field of agriculture.

DENTON: As far as your farmer being a farmer, did he have any military service?

BISHOP: No he did not. My grandfather was in the Civil War.

DENTON: Oh wow. Can you tell me a little bit about your grandfather?

BISHOP: Well, I never met him. He was dead before I was born, but I've read an article about him that when he came home from the war he had lice in his head. (Laughter) And he threw his clothes away and they burnt the clothes and he got him some old lye soap and took a bath in it, trying to kill the lice in his hair.

DENTON: Now he was in West Tennessee?

BISHOP: Yes, Mm hmm.

DENTON: Did he fight for the Union or the Confederacy?

BISHOP: He fought for the South. He fought for the South of course, yeah.

DENTON: That is really interesting.

KUPSKY: Yeah, oh wow. And that was your, I'm sorry, was that your father's father?

BISHOP: That's right. That's correct.

KUPSKY: What about your mother's father? Had he served?

BISHOP: I never met him. I don't know anything about him.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay.

BISHOP: You said my mother's father? You mean my grandfather ...

KUPSKY: Right.

BISHOP: Oh yes, no, he wasn't in service. I was thinking about his father. No, he was not in service to my knowledge.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay.

DENTON: Did you have any cousins? You mentioned you had a large family.

BISHOP: Yeah I had, well, on my mother's side I don't know how many. But of the six of the sisters, all of them had children. All of them but one, and some had six and seven, eight children.

DENTON: A good-sized family.

BISHOP: The same way with the Bishops. I was the only child on each side except my mother's youngest sister didn't have any children, but all the others did. Well I can remember when I went up to my grandmother and grandfather's house, on my mother's side, there would be maybe thirty or forty people there when they'd all attend, sometimes more.

DENTON: That is a good-sized family.

KUPSKY: Yeah, oh yeah.

BISHOP: Yeah it was.

DENTON: Did any of your cousins serve in the military?

BISHOP: Yes, yes. Some of my cousins did serve in World War II now.

KUPSKY: I was sort of curious about your parents in terms of politics. Were they, you know, did they have a party affiliation?

BISHOP: My dad was a very strong Democrat.

BISHOP: I don't know about my grandfather. But my father was a very strong Democrat. But we lived in a Republican county in West Tennessee. West Tennessee is predominately a Democrat, it used to be at the end of the state. But McNairy County at that time was a Republican county, the way it voted most of the time. And it was fun listening to them argue around the country stores, politics.

BISHOP: When they'd get together they would have a fiddling' contest, a musical contest you know. I mean, no awards to it, just get together and play, you know. They'd do that and talk politics. That was the entertainment on Saturday afternoon when you'd go to the store.

KUPSKY: Was your father fairly outspoken?

BISHOP: Yes he was. He was.

KUPSKY: He had his fair share of arguments with the company. (Laughter)

BISHOP: Yeah, he did.

KUSPKY: What about your mother? Did she pay much attention to politics or ...

BISHOP: No she did not.

DENTON: You mentioned that they used to gather around and play music. Did you play an instrument yourself?

BISHOP: No

DENTON: You would just listen?

BISHOP: I just listened.

KUPSKY: Did you get involved in politics when you were younger?

BISHOP: No, no I didn't.

KUPSKY: Well, I guess your father was probably, what was his opinion on F.D.R.[Franklin Delano Roosevelt] then?

BISHOP: He was very much an F.D.R. man. When F.D.R. was running for the first time they rode a mule. The dirt road, there were a lot of dirt roads in our area at that time, they weren't gravel. We had, the main road through there was gravel, but the back roads were mostly dirt. I remember him riding his mule to a certain railway station. He caught the train and they went to Cary, Mississippi to see him when he came through there and spoke off the back of a train.

KUPSKY: And what were his impressions of meeting him in person?

BISHOP: He just saw him, of course he didn't ...

KUPSKY: Well, he didn't meet him, right.

BISHOP: He was very much impressed with him.

KUPSKY: Sort of related to that, how was your family affected by the Depression or what do you remember about the Depression?

BISHOP: We, as I mentioned earlier, we grew quit a few acres of cotton. I remember the tax assessor would come by checking the farms each year, horseback riding, and he'd spend the night at our place. And my dad, often times, would offer him the money that we got out of the cotton crop to pay the taxes. My father died in fifty-four and on up through in the late sixties the taxes were about the same number of dollars then as it was back in the Depression years. In other words, our cotton crop wouldn't pay the taxes. And

what most of the farmers would do, and teachers would do, the teachers were issued a, what was called a school warrant, for their pay. But the county didn't have the money to cash them. So they would trade them to some farmer at a discounted rate, maybe eighty percent, and take that money. Then the farmer would take that at full value and pay his taxes.

KUPSKY: That's kind of an interesting system.

DENTON: Yes, I've never heard of that.

KUPSKY: Right. And did your family sort of, was it a struggle during the Depression? I would imagine this sort of ...

BISHOP: Well, we had one of, my dad, the farm that we lived on was, at the time, considered one of the better producing farms in the county. Because it was the river bottom and very fertile land and we did produce quit a bit of corn and cotton. But, you know, he was a good manager. We got by okay. But of course we didn't have anything. When grew the big garden, and I'd say truck crops, my mother canned a lot so we didn't spend a lot but we got by okay.

DENTON: Now, you left for college in 1940?

BISHOP: Yeah, I graduated from high school May the 10th, and I think it would have been June the 10th, or maybe a little before, I started at college at the University of Tennessee at Martin. They called it junior college at that time. It was a two-year college at that time. The way things looked we'd be in war and I wanted to try to get as far ahead as I could, far along as I could, in college. So I started going to summer school and regular. Took the three quarters in the regular year. And I went six weeks in '40 and I went three months in '41 and three months in '42. I tried to get into the Navy, in the V-7 program they called it. It was the officer's attendant program and I failed the physical. I was underweight. I weighed one hundred thirty nine pounds, supposed to weigh one hundred and forty two minimum. So then a few days later I joined the enlisted reserve, the Army enlisted reserve in October, 28th I believe it was. Then was called to active duty on April the 6th along with about four hundred other students at the University of Tennessee. In fact, Ed Boling was in the same group. Charles Breakbull who was, we always kidded him later, he said he was in the giving department at UT. We told him "No, he wasn't. He was in the receiving department." (Laughter) But, we had basic training together and Mister Elkins, I believe his name was Elkins, was football coach over at Karns for a while. We all had basic training together. But I wasn't back home much except a couple weeks along in June and maybe a week or two, ten days, at Christmas. And then about a month in August and September of each year.

DENTON: Now was this your first time away from home for an extended period?

BISHOP: Yes, yes.

DENTON: How did you feel about that?

BISHOP: Well, it was lonesome. I was ready to get back home of course.

DENTON: Alright.

BISHOP: Yeah, very much so.

DENTON: What type of things did you do at college on your free time?

BISHOP: Well, attended most of the sports events at Martin. Was all they had there was football and basketball. They had one movie in town so, that and go to some functions, dances and so forth.

KUPSKY: I am sort of curious, what movies do you remember seeing either in high school or in college? You know, well, first of all did you go fairly often to the movies then?

BISHOP: Well, not too often, no too often. But I don't remember to be honest with you.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay. Well, I was just sort of curious if you saw you know, maybe some of the war movies that were coming or anything like that.

BISHOP: I don't remember, I really don't.

KUPSKY: You had mentioned that you sort of, you know, you were trying to get through college. You know, you were doing the summer classes and trying to move through college quickly. I was curious why you had decided to go, to start at college, you know, to enroll.

BISHOP: Well, I really don't know. (Laughter) I guess I thought that was just the thing to do because I didn't want to be on the farm like my dad was and I thought I could improve my standard of living maybe if I got a college education. That was, that's what my grandmother used to tell me. And I just had that idea that that's what I wanted to do and I really liked my Ag teacher in high school so I thought "Well that's what I think I want to be, be an agricultural teacher." So that is what I started training for.

DENTON: What type of courses did you take while in college? Some that stand out more than others.

BISHOP: Well I, as you know, at that time things were laid out with required subjects that you had to have. You didn't have too many electives at that time. Especially during your freshman and sophomore year in which you had to have math and have your English classes. Of course if you majored in Ag there were certain Ag classes that you did have a chance to take, or elect, and take those classes. But other than that it was between those three basically. Of course you had to take some science, chemistry, and have an organic

chemistry class. That was kind of a rough class. But most of it, the freshman and sophomore year, were pretty much set what you had to take. And then when you were a junior and senior you did have more electives. But trying to get through on a schedule like I was trying to get through, sometimes you had to take what was offered, rather than maybe what you really wanted to get. When I came to Knoxville, my faculty advisor asked me to, and required it before he'd let me register, was to make out a schedule of what the courses I was going to complete in order to get a degree. And what quarter I would take them and make them fit into the schedule that was in force at that time. That was like working a crossword puzzle, to get all that put together.

KUPSKY: Yeah.

DENTON: Now, when you came to college did you work anywhere?

BISHOP: No I did not. Well, I didn't my freshman year. But at UT I did work, at Knoxville. I did work for a Dr. Avent in grading these test papers that high school students would take. And I would grade them on a machine. Put them in a machine, push a button, and it would give you the grade and I would write it down and pass on through. I did do that type of work.

KUPSKY: What did you think of the Ag professors in college, in either college? I mean, did they have sort of the same impact that the high school Ag teacher did?

BISHOP: Yes, they did, they did. They were very, I thought, very good.

KUPSKY: Who were some of your favorite ones? Do you remember?

BISHOP: Well, the head of the department was Eddie Fitzgerald. He was head of the Ag education department and when I went into service and came back on my first furlough, thirteen months later, I went by to visit him and he was dean of the college of education at that time. So I went over on the hill to visit with him and I remember he told his secretary, he said "he had some appointments but he would let her know when he wanted to see someone else." So I went into his office and I stayed I guess an hour and a half. I kept trying to get up and get going and he said, "No, I want you to stay more and visit with me." (Laughter) He was that kind of a fella. But the later years, when I went back to the University of Tennessee, Ed Boling and Charles Breakbull at one time were inviting all the people in the Knoxville area that went into service on April the 6th of '43 from the university in the enlisted reserve and we would eat at the faculty club and talk about our experiences and visit and so forth. So one year they invited Dean Fitzgerald. He was maybe ninety at that time, to be there, and it was a pleasure for him to be there. But since he was there they decided they would invite; what was the former band director's name? Julian? I believe that was his name.

DENTON: I'm not sure.

BISHOP: They invited him there for one reason because as dean, one of his responsibilities was to help hire or to hire some people in various departments. We didn't know that when we were in school. And Julian who ended up being the band director for years there was the first person that he employed.

KUPSKY: Were there other professors? I'm just curious if there were any other professors in addition to the dean?

BISHOP: Well, I had one in Martin who was an Agronomy professor who had an unusual way of grading me in a way. I learned one thing from him I'd say. A lot of times it is studying the teacher. What kind of grades you'd get, what kind of questions are they going to ask, and what kind of answers do they want. He ...

(Tape paused)

BISHOP: If I could answer a question in one word I would answer it that way. We enjoyed him because he was a very nice fella and easy to work with but he just wanted a true and short answer and that satisfied him.

KUPSKY: In the '30s, if you, by that point, were sort of paying attention to the news as what was taking place in Europe?

BISHOP: Would you believe in the early '30s there was only one radio in our community? There just were not any radios. Not many people had one. Well, maybe there were, in a five mile radius there, I believe there were two. And then they started picking up longer in about '36 or '37. Then more radios there in their homes to listen to. Yes, we did listen to the news quite often. I mean, each night, in wondering what was happening. I think that what prompted me to want to go on and start school and try to get through. Get as much work behind me as I could before I had to go into service. I did go in the service.

KUPSKY: So, you were fairly sure that the war was coming.

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPSKY: And did your father or your mother have any opinions about that? About what was going on in Europe?

BISHOP: I think they did, I think they did. Because we'd listen to the news each night.

DENTON: Were they concerned for you? As far as, you said they knew.

BISHOP: I think they were. They didn't express it though but I think they were. I mean, they didn't express it to me.

DENTON: Do you remember them talking about anything?

BISHOP: No I don't. I really don't.

KUSPKY: What about in college? Were there any professors who sort of, you know, voiced their opinions about Europe? I guess by that point it was much closer to the breaking point.

BISHOP: I don't remember it being discussed in any class I was in. I don't remember any professor expressing themselves. Now in '42, early part of '42, well, after December 7th of '41, Dean Hoskins, as we referred to him at that time, who was president of the university. He would call a meeting, or they would call a meeting, and he would speak from twenty or thirty minutes telling what all he knew and what the possibilities were that the males I'd say, staying in school or being drafted or being called out of school or whatever the situation might be. He was, I think, very, very honest with us. He gave us what information that he had. We could miss class to go to that meeting and we weren't counted absent.

KUPSKY: So was that a pretty big deal on campus?

BISHOP: It was, it was. We would go down to the old Alumni gym. That was where we'd meet and everything would be packed when they'd have those meetings.

KUPSKY: So I guess it was very much a concern then on campus?

BISHOP: It was. It was a concern. Well I was in the, we called it the Ag Club, and some of the boys that were juniors in R.O.T.C. [Reserve Officer Training Corps] would come wearing their uniforms. What was impressive about it, the ones that were infantrymen, they'd have their belts on and their strap that, a leather strap, that went around their shoulders from one side to the other you know. They would always come wearing those. Because I think they'd have a meeting before they'd come to that meeting see, or a class. They would have to wear their uniform most every meeting we had.

DENTON: Did you ever talk to any of the R.O.T.C. members and ask them any questions as far as service since you knew you were going to go in?

BISHOP: You mean about what would happen?

DENTON: About military service.

BISHOP: They did not have R.O.T.C. at Martin. So I didn't take R.O.T.C. my freshman year. Had I entered UT in Knoxville, it was a requirement that you have it two years. So I didn't have it my freshman year and when I came to UT and started in the fall quarter of '41, I had four and a half quarters behind me, but I was still classified as a sophomore. So I did take R.O.T.C. one year. Then the next year I went from classification from a sophomore to a senior and didn't take it that year. Now, some of the fellas that went into the enlisted reserve had had two, and some three, years and several of those fellas went

on to officer candidate school in infantry and some of them were in Italy and didn't get back because they went into battle in the mountains over there.

KUPSKY: Well what did you think of R.O.T.C. for that year when you were in it?

BISHOP: I learned a lot in it, in my opinion. We have traveled a lot since then and I think it helped me even when I was in the Army and in combat. Because, I don't remember how it was taught exactly, but reading map and directions was a very important thing. They really tried to drill us on that. I picked up a lot then and traveling, even today, reading maps and all, I think it had a very big impact on me and it helped very, very, much. And the discipline too, of course, that's always there.

DENTON: What other types of activities did they do in R.O.T.C.?

BISHOP: Of course we had to march quite a bit. Parades and so forth, that was the only activity we had outside of the classroom, was marching. Because as a freshman, they didn't have any other, as I recall, anything else. Any contests or anything.

KUPSKY: You had mentioned, very quickly, December 7, 1941 and I was wondering if you could sort of talk about what you were doing that day. What you remember hearing and what your reaction was.

BISHOP: You know in college, at that time, you'd take your classes according to whenever they were offered and when you had teachers. It just so happened that when Roosevelt made, well, back up. On Sunday afternoon when I had a nap and I woke up they were out selling papers on the street in Knoxville about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor. Then the next morning Roosevelt spoke to the Congress and I didn't have a class that morning so, I stayed at the boarding house where we were staying and I heard his speech. Then of course it was played over and over and over the next few days for a little while. I would have thought at that time that we'd be in the service before too long, but I didn't know exactly when.

KUPSKY: Had you known where Pearl Harbor was?

BISHOP: Yeah, yeah. Because one of our friends, who lived two farms from where our farm was, son was stationed there.

KUPSKY: You said this sort of, you know, clued you in that you'd be serving fairly soon but I was wondering if you had any other general reactions.

BISHOP: No, no. It was interesting. There was some club I was in at the University of Tennessee that we, don't remember what it was now. But we met at the cafeteria there at the new girls dormitories and once a month, maybe it was once each two weeks, for a meeting. And they had two men that were conscientious objectors to speaking at the meeting and it was interesting to hear them tell why they didn't want to be in service and didn't believe in it.

KUPSKY: What were their reasons?

BISHOP: I think they were just scared more than anything else. That's what most of us thought. Cowards. (Laughter)

KUPSKY: Is that, that's how they were pretty well received then?

BISHOP: Yeah, everybody respected them. I mean, at the meeting they did. But they talked about them when it was over.

KUPSKY: When did you say you enlisted then?

BISHOP: I enlisted in October then of '42.

DENTON: And you were sent to Fort Knox?

BISHOP: No, we went to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. We reported there. I know they would pay us mileage from our home there even though we were at UT. I went down, back then [to] West Tennessee and they paid me mileage from there back to Fort Oglethorpe, which was just across the line into Georgia there at Chattanooga. I guess there was four hundred of us that reported there on April the 6th of '43. We stayed there. They sent some of them out fairly quick. Part of us I guess they couldn't decide what to do with us and we stayed there about over four weeks before we were moved anywhere and when they decided what to do with us they put us on a bus and transported us down to Fort McClellan, Alabama. We had basic training and heavy weapons infantry. And those old tripods we had to lug around weighed fifty one pounds. I know we went on maneuvers for one week. Went away on Sunday afternoon and came back in the next Sunday morning and I weighed, I'd lost ten pounds that week.

BISHOP: But, most of us or several of us tried to get into [a] different part of the service. Like Ed Bolin and Charles Breakbull and several other people got into what was known as ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program] program and several others got into the Army Air Force, into the cadet program. Even though we were accepted before basic training was over, we had to stay there till basic training was over. We had seventeen weeks of that.

DENTON: What were some of your memories of basic training, as far as drill instructors?

BISHOP: Drill instructors, we had a lot of instructions on how to take the M-1 rifle apart and put it back together. Survival situations and had several road marches. I think the longest one we had maybe, I'm not sure, I know there was more than one, somewhere around twenty-eight, twenty-nine, miles. We'd leave late in the afternoon and make that road march and come back in and they'd feed us breakfast of whatever we wanted to eat

the next morning. Didn't have to do anything then till maybe one o'clock that day. And that was with a full pack.

KUSPKY: Do you remember your drill instructors by name?

BISHOP: No, I do not.

KUPSKY: What did you think of them at that time?

BISHOP: They were very honest and sincere people, very helpful. They really were. They were nice to us. I guess if we hadn't been nice to them they probably might not have been to us. But we didn't have any problems. None in the group that I was in, of course all of us were former UT students. Well, when got to Fort McClellan we didn't have anything to do and we knew how to march 'cause we all had R.O.T.C. and they like to march their legs off down there. (Laughter) They had some PFCs [Private First Class] and we nicknamed those fellas "PFC four stars generals." (Laughter) Because they did take a little advantage of us sometimes, we thought. Of course, we were new in service, maybe they didn't, but we thought that anyway.

KUPSKY: Right. Well you mentioned that these were a lot of UT students. Did you have sort of a group of friends that all volunteered at the same time?

BISHOP: Well, no. I wouldn't say at the same time but we all talked about it and did over a period of time.

KUPSKY: But you all sort of moved to basic training together though?

BISHOP: Well, I guess there was maybe three or four hundred of us that went in down there at the same time. And I guess there was two hundred or more of us that had basic training pretty much together.

KUPSKY: In addition to the people that who were from UT where were some of the other people from that you knew in basic training?

BISHOP: I don't even remember anyone in that group that I was with that was from anywhere except from UT, the company that I was with. Because all of us I think were UT students, former students... I know one weekend one of the fellas wanted to come to Chattanooga to visit some of his people and we couldn't get a pass to come to Chattanooga but he hired a taxi to come to bring us up there. We worked it out ahead of time where we leave Saturday evening and be back in, you know, when we get off we could get a pass, three or four o'clock, and then be back in before bed check time on Sunday nights. So he brought us up there and picked us up at a certain time on Sunday afternoon. We went back, never did say anything about it. We didn't have a pass but we came up there anyway. (Laughter)

KUSPKY: A quick visit, yeah.

DENTON: During basic, when did you realize that you would be deployed to the front lines, to the war? Did you hear of any news during basic?

BISHOP: No. I don't even remember thinking about that. Of course, they talked to us about it, that we needed to be prepared. But most of us were trying to get out of the infantry and get into something else. (Laughs) I think that was more important to us at that particular time than anything else.

KUPSKY: So what happened at the end of basic? Where did you go?

BISHOP: It was about, I guess, fifteen or twenty of us that had some very pleasant experiences for a few days to start with. They transported us after most all the others were gone. We were there about a week after everyone else left. They transported us over to the rail station and we got on a Pullman [sleeping cars]. None of us had ever been on a Pullman before. We had our upper and lower bunks, you know. When it comes chow time, as we called it, the next morning, to go eat breakfast, we had to go to the diner to eat, dining car. Went and ate in the dining car. And I know we were going at lunch time, I think we were down in Florida by that time, we were going through the orange groves looking out at those oranges and thinking how much difference that was then what we were in the infantry. "I wonder if the Air Force is that way on everything." So we really enjoyed it. Got on to Miami, and I had never been in that part of the country. Seen the movies you know, palm trees and moonlight. So they took us from the railway station over to Miami Beach in the back of a truck. And the moon was shining, the wind was blowing, those palm trees, it was a beautiful place that night. Very, very, interesting.

DENTON: Was that your first time to the beach?

BISHOP: Yes.

DENTON: What did you think about that?

BISHOP: Well, I really enjoyed it. We were out there every afternoon when we got out of training. (Laughter) The hotel was on Oceanfront or Ocean Boulevard. You just had to walk across the street and we were on the beach. The last six weeks we enjoyed it very, very, much. Six weeks more of basic training. We had seventeen. That made twenty-three weeks of basic training.

DENTON: Now this, in Florida, was this specialty training?

BISHOP: It was basic training that the Air Force gave you. Air Force corps. Well, see, before you became a cadet, Air Force cadet, you were an aviation student. And then we had to have basic training and then we were aviation students.

KUPSKY: I was wondering if you could compare the two forms of basic training and talk about what the differences were.

BISHOP: They were very close in a lot of ways. Except the infantry was training you on their weapons, their machine guns and on, I mentioned earlier, their rifles. The training in that line of work and the Air Force was just training on getting along with people and doing things of that nature.

KUPSKY: And you were closer to the beach which was nice too.

BISHOP: That's right. (Laughter)

DENTON: When did you know that you would receive your job or did you get to choose your job when you went in enlisted? Or they assigned it to you?

BISHOP: No. Going into the army, wherever they might have sent you or whatever they might ask you to do. Of course, when we got to Fort McClellan, they gave us a lot of tests. I remember taking one on, what would you call it? Morse code. You know, to see if that was your line of work and things of that nature. I don't remember the other tests but I remember that one in particular.

DENTON: Do you remember when you received your commission?

BISHOP: I never received a commission.

DENTON: I'm sorry, when you received your job basically. When you went into the armored ...

BISHOP: Oh, when I went to the armored? Well, when we went to the armored group, when we arrived there they met with us, maybe a group of a hundred. Then they narrowed it down to a smaller group and then they interviewed each of us. Of course since they had the armored group made up as far as the fighting people I would say, they made up a armored infantry, artillery, and tanks or armored. Well, I was afraid I was going to get back in infantry and I really didn't want the armored infantry. The man I interviewed with picked up on my interest in math and he wanted me to go to artillery. But I asked for tanks and they gave me tanks. Then when we got to the tank battalion, the battalion commander interviewed each of us. There were six of us the morning that I entered the company of the Eighteenth Tank Battalion, and I was the fourth of one of the six to be interviewed by the lieutenant colonel. Of course I went in like I was taught to do, you know. I walked in and saluted him and he returned the salute and give you "at ease" and asked me to sit down. He started talking to me just like we are talking now. He was a graduate of the University of Tennessee and his wife grew up on Cumberland Avenue. So, I stayed in there I guess. The other fellas had stayed about ten minutes and he kept me close to twenty-five minutes. When I got out of there the boys wanted to know what was wrong, what kind of trouble I was in since he had kept me so long. But he was talking about Knoxville. He knew a lot of people, some of them I knew and some of them I knew something about, that was in the Knoxville area. He had R.O.T.C. in Knoxville and got his degree in education, was going to be a teacher, and then decided to

stay in the Army. He was a lieutenant colonel at that time. He was a very, very, nice individual.

KUPSKY: It sounds like it. I wonder if, I was just sort of confused, if you could clarify kind of how you got from the Air Force Cadet to armored?

BISHOP: When we got to Miami and had the six weeks training. They loaded us on a troop train, I don't know how many there were of us, and they started dropping us off at different places. A friend of mine ended up on Massachusetts. I ended up, they let us, some of the people I was with, I guess it was about three or four, that I had basic training infantry with. We got off at Columbia, South Carolina and they transported us over to Erskine College at Due West. We were there for five months taking courses. A lot of it was geography, you know, playing with the earth and everything you know. The rotation of the earth, the stars, and so forth. And math courses. When that was over, they transported us to San Antonio, Texas. We went through a lot of exams and all out there. Mental and physical. Then when we passed that, we were supposed to draw our, what we call our cadet equipment, and started out training as a cadet. Then when we all were disappointed, they told us that they had developed drop tanks on the bombers, I mean on the fighter planes, like P-51s. They were following the bombers on into Germany and knocking off the fighters, German fighters, and they were not losing near as many planes and people as they had in the past and they had too many in training. We were told, and I have heard it and read it since then, about thirty-six thousands of us that were in training that had been in the ground forces were sent back to the ground forces. So, it was disappointing for us, but that's the way it happened.

KUPSKY: You were in San Antonio you said?

BISHOP: Mm hmm. We went out there on a Pullman and rode back on the opposite end of the train and the situation when we left there and came back to Louisiana then, with our C-rations. (Laughter)

KUPSKY: A little different treatment. When was that then? You were in Texas and you moved from Texas to Louisiana?

BISHOP: We were in Texas about a month and we came back. I think I've got a copy of the orders over here. We ...

(Tape paused)

KUPSKY: Oh, okay. So, it would have been April '43 then.

BISHOP: No, '44.

KUPSKY: '44, oh that's right.

BISHOP: And then we were assigned to the 8th Armored Division and they processed us and put us in different areas there.

KUPSKY: That's in Camp Polk that that happened ...

BISHOP: Yes. See, most of us had been in since April the 6th but we had never had a furlough. Because we were always in training. So most of us then received a furlough. Well, I received mine the second of May, started the second on May.

KUPSKY: And how long was it?

BISHOP: It was ten days. Had to report back by the sixteenth.

KUPSKY: So, what did you do?

BISHOP: Got married!

KUPSKY: I guess this was someone you had known for some time then?

BISHOP: Well, we met at UT in '42.

KUPSKY: How had you met?

BISHOP: We met at a social in the summer. At the Alumni Gym in '42. We started dating and we got engaged when I went into service and married on the first furlough. Geneva was a senior. We married May the 5th and she graduated June the 10th and missed ten days of school just before she graduated. (Laughter)

-----END OF TAPE ONE-SIDE ONE-----

KUPSKY: What was her major or what was she doing at UT?

BISHOP: First she went to Johnson City to East Tennessee State and I think about after three years plus maybe in education, she came to UT and decided she wanted a degree in home economics. They wouldn't let her register the first day, made her think about it because she lost seventy-two hours by changing her major. But she changed it to home economics. They told her she could have her doctorate in education by the time she would graduate in the field of home economics. But she wanted home economics so that's what she did. She graduated in June of '44.

KUPSKY: So did you go or did you come back to Knoxville then or Johnson City to get married?

BISHOP: She met me in school in Knoxville and her parents lived in the Jellico area, Elk Valley, a little ways out there and then we came back here.

DENTON: Where did you get married at?

BISHOP: In Knoxville. Broadway Baptist Church... On the fifth of May '44. I always remember that's the combination I used to use, 5-5-4-4. May fifth of '44.

(Laughter)

KUPSKY: So then I guess that would be kind of a shock then to head home real quick, get married, and then head right back to Camp Polk.

BISHOP: It was.

DENTON: When you got back to Louisiana that when you began maneuvers?

BISHOP: No, we really never went on big maneuvers. Colonel Goodrich had us out almost every weekend on mini maneuvers, training, which I guess that was the best thing that could happen for us. Then in May, later on, oh about sometime I guess we left, I returned on furlough. Our outfit had been a cadre training division pretty much. But they had been told that they were needed to prepare for combat. So we were told then that we would be going overseas in a few months into combat. So we knew it in May before we left down there in October and sailed in November.

DENTON: Now, at this time you were learning a lot about tanks and their operations?

BISHOP: Well I was a bog gunner. I was riding down at the front with the driver on the right side. All I could learn about the operation of a tank. I drove some. I could drive and repairing different things about the tank. Also, they had us out on the gun range shooting all the different guns on the tank. The seventy-five [gun] and fifty caliber [machine gun] on top; and they had thirty caliber mounted parallel with the seventy-five and then the bog gunner had a thirty caliber. Which he could move it any direction he wanted to, but nothing to look through since all he had to look at where the tracers, where they were going. Since every fourth round was a tracer, you know. The back of it was red to where you could see where it was going. We had to keep them fairly clean inside and out, you know, for inspection, and that was a job. But we learned a lot about the different parts of it and how it operated.

DENTON: What was it like inside the tank? As far as comfort.

BISHOP: Well, it was like we are sitting here now. It wasn't a rough ride in it. If you were on rough terrain you would have it up and down or something like that. But, the movies, I don't know how they made those movies to make them look like they did, but it wasn't actually that way. You couldn't run over trees with them and things of that nature.

KUPSKY: I'm curious, were you able to tell you family and your wife in May, when you found out you would be heading out?

BISHOP: I think most of us did.

KUPSKY: Did you get their reaction? Do you remember their reactions?

BISHOP: No, actually I did it in a letter at that time. I had a furlough in May and then I had another one, got lucky in one part. When we were told that we were mostly ready to go, anyone had a furlough ending on or before May the 15th had another furlough, and mine ended on the 15th. So I had another fifteen days then.

KUPSKY: When did you get that, the second furlough?

BISHOP: Well, it had to be the latter part of September or the first of October.

KUPSKY: I was just sort of curious in a letter, or something like that, if your family or your wife said anything about the fact that you'd be heading out? If they'd expressed any sort of ...

BISHOP: No, no. Not that I know of.

KUPSKY: It was a few months then after May that you actually went. What did the next few months consist of? Just more training?

BISHOP: More training, more intense training. Geneva came down and we had one room rented at eleven dollars a week. She shared a bathroom, or we did when I was there, with three other couples. When we were at the base I could come in and spend the nights there and come back in early the next morning. But, I guess I was gone sixty or seventy percent of the weekends after field training.

KUPSKY: So, pretty busy then on the weekends. When did you say it was that you actually moved from there to the port of embarkation?

BISHOP: We left down there in October and went to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. Then we sailed on November the 7th down in New York Harbor. That was the day that Roosevelt was elected president for the last time.

KUPSKY: Did you get any chance to see New Jersey or New York?

BISHOP: Yeah, we got a couple passes to go into New York City. I had never been there before. Each time I called Geneva while we were, you know, away from the base, I couldn't tell her anything but she knew about it. Pretty much what was going on. I mean I couldn't tell her anything really definite. We had a visit in two different nights while I was in New York. I was wondering how long it might take the phone call to go through, but it went through just about as quick then as it would now. I was surprised.

KUPSKY: Yeah, that is surprising. I was wondering what your impressions were of New York, when you got to New York.

BISHOP: Well it was altogether different from anything we'd ever seen before. We ate a little and walked the streets. I don't think any of us in my particular group went to a movie at all. We just walked around to see what all we could see.

KUPSKY: Just took in the sights?

BISHOP: Yeah. But we weren't there over three hours I guess each time we were there.

KUPSKY: Right, so you couldn't do too much anyway.

BISHOP: No.

DENTON: Do you remember the trip over? What was it like on the ship?

BISHOP: The ship we went over on was named the *Marine Devil*. It was built for a troop carrier and it wasn't balanced correctly. They designated our company, or our battalion, as MPs [Military Police] on the ship. That was to stand guards at head of the mess hall and other places around over the ship, on a rotating basis. So we got on first and they told us where to go. They had this one room where the room was kind of V-shaped, you know, where the ship was pointed, and it had five bunks. I don't know why but I selected the top one. I was one of the first ones in there, up in the front on the port side at the top. Four people under me. That thing, we could hear it come out of the water and hit back. (Laughter) It'd almost leave you when it started back down. You know, when it'd go up and started down. It was that way most of the way over. I'd say out of the people in the room, I'm going to call it a room, that were in there, ninety-five percent of them were seasick.

KUPSKY: I would imagine so ...

BISHOP: All the way over.

DENTON: How did it make you feel?

BISHOP: Same way, all the way through, yeah. I know they had me standing at the head of the steps going down into the, you call it a mess hall in the Army, whatever they call it in the Navy. The food and everything that had been dropped off the table and water on the floor down there, if you wasn't careful it would come up over the top of your shoes when you'd go down there to eat. The eating conditions weren't very good. But this colonel came up to me, or a lieutenant colonel, and he said, "Soldier, how do you feel?" and I saluted and I said, "Fine sir." And he said, "This is an order, don't lie to us, get up on deck and get some air. I'm going to pull duty for you for a few minutes." I said, "Sir, I can't leave my post." He said, "I gave you an order to go." (Laughter)

KUPSKY: That was nice of him.

BISHOP: Well, I mean, he could tell I was having a rough time. I went up and I didn't know what he'd do to me when I got back, but I saluted him and thanked him. He left and I stayed with him. He was very nice to me, very nice.

KUPSKY: That was actually my next question, was how much time each day did you actually get to spend on deck?

BISHOP: Well ... we didn't spend much time up there because, I don't remember why, but I think they, as rough as it was, didn't want us up there. The way I remember. They didn't want us on deck. They were afraid that someone might go overboard and I know we were up there very little.

DENTON: Was it pretty rough weather the whole way over?

BISHOP: No, it really wasn't the weather, it was just the ship wasn't balanced properly.

DENTON: How many days did it take for the trip?

BISHOP: We sailed on the 7th and then arrived at South Hampton on the 19th. Twelve days. And we had to stay on the ship an extra day because we got on first. We were MPs and we had to be the last ones off.

KUPSKY: That late in the war was there any sort of zigzagging or were you in a convoy?

BISHOP: Yes, yes there was. They dropped several depth charges while we were maneuvering cause the submarines. I'm sure they wouldn't have wasted those depth charges if they hadn't thought they needed to.

KUPSKY: Did you ever have any sort of alerts or anything?

BISHOP: Yes, uh huh, they did.

KUPSKY: What do you remember about those?

BISHOP: I just remember it was those horns or bells sounding off and you knew what they were. You had to stay where we were, in our bunks in that room.

KUPSKY: So, you got into South Hampton on the 19th.

BISHOP: Yes.

KUPSKY: Did you get any chance, you know, any leaves, while you were in South Hampton?

BISHOP: No, we didn't. We just got off when we de-embarked the ship. They loaded us on the train. It was about dark then, on the 20th, and we went through the countryside to Tidworth. They transported us to what was known as the Queen's Cavalry Barracks. They were small rooms. They were from a tank platoon. There were twenty-four enlisted men and one officer. That meant five crew members in each tank. So, twenty-four enlisted men stayed in a small room. They had an isle maybe thirty inches wide down the center and they had the bunks on each side and a little fireplace at the end of the room. They gave us some coal to use and we couldn't get it to burn so we got us a five gallon oil can and rigged up a copper tube and got some oil that would drip on that so it would burn and that was our heat. Of course, they had it blacked out in there so no lights would get out at night. But we stayed there from the 20th till about the 4th of January. Got one pass to London, an overnight pass.

KUPSKY: What did you do in London?

BISHOP: We walked the streets, went to some movies, and sight-seeing.

KUPSKY: Did you get much of a chance to interact with the people in London?

BISHOP: No, we didn't, no.

KUPSKY: What about in Tidworth? Did you have any chance to interact with ...

BISHOP: Very little there because there were not many. It was a very small village. It wasn't as large as Jefferson City, I'd say. Just one little street of it and very few of the people were natives there at that time, and it was covered up. But see, we were in the barracks, but a lot of the infantrymen; they were out on the hillsides in pup tents.

KUPSKY: I guess where you were, did you have encounters with, you know, the German rockets coming in?

BISHOP: No, not at all.

DENTON: Did they have any air raids when you were there?

BISHOP: No, didn't have any.

KUPSKY: When you were in London did you see evidence of those ...

BISHOP: Yes, we did. Yeah, where the buildings had been destroyed, and so forth, we sure did. But we didn't have any scare the night we were there. From the afternoon and then the next morning up until about two o'clock we didn't have any scare, or any warning, of any kind.

KUPSKY: How wide spread did it seem from where you were in London? The parts of London you saw.

BISHOP: It was scattered throughout the area we were in, yeah.

DENTON: How did the British treat you when you were there? I know you said you didn't have much interaction.

BISHOP: No, we didn't have enough interaction to really know at that time. Now, we'd go by the army bases, I mean air force bases, when we drew our new tanks there. We'd go out and road march somewhere, for one reason or another, and we'd go by an air force base and all you'd see there was ladies pushing a baby carriage. (Laughter) A lot of them did. A lot of the English girls married their fellas, or they had babies anyway.

KUPSKY: Something I forgot to ask, I was curious, I guess you would have been in, let's see, were you in Texas when the Normandy invasion took place?

BISHOP: No, we were in Louisiana at that time.

KUPSKY: Oh, you were in Louisiana already. How did you hear about that and what was your reaction?

BISHOP: Well, when I got back from my furlough, I was in training a couple of weeks or so, and then they had an area where the air force was bombing, practice bombing. I was sent out there, a group of us were, at different points, to set up road blocks, not let anyone through. I was out there when it happened. So there wasn't any communication with anyone at that time. We went back in and ate at a different place, none of our regular group were made, feed us the evening meal and we'd get back in about seven thirty or eight and then we'd leave out about daylight the next morning. We'd have our lunch with us, see. So we lived a life of our own. I read every magazine in the place. But, no, we got very little news except when there was an invasion and we got that.

KUPSKY: It sounds like you didn't get much news, but did you find out fairly quickly like within a day maybe that this had happened?

BISHOP: I think we found out the night that it happened. When we came in that night, they told us. When we came in, seven or eight o'clock, it was probably one or two o'clock the next day over there.

KUPSKY: I was wondering what sort of reaction there was among the people you were with, upon hearing it?

BISHOP: I think everyone was expecting it at that time. They just knew it was coming and that's all that had been going on. From what we heard all the buildup. See, what happened, and we didn't discuss this, we didn't mention it, the 8th Armored came down to Camp Polk, or north Camp Polk, in March of '43 and started training. Cadre came, then in about February they shipped out all the privates and PFC's [private first class] overseas as replacements. So they knew then, even in Italy, that it was going on then and

then in Sicily, Italy and all in that area. Those people were shipped out to there and then we were shipped in their place to replace those people. Then when we were told, you know, get ready for combat before there had been a training mission. Then we knew that something was really up. We had to get ready. Everyone accepted it then. You went backing up on me.

KUPSKY: Oh, it's okay I'd just forgotten to ask and I just wanted to get your reaction to that. So you were in Tidworth and what did you do? Was there more training in Tidworth? I don't remember if you had ...

BISHOP: Very little training. We had to spend quite a bit of time, I don't know about the other units, but the tanks that we got in, they were all covered up with grease, cosmoline, and all. Opened the guns whereas we had to get all that cleaned up and get everything in working order and we probably drew those a couple of weeks after we arrived there. All new tanks. That was a considerable amount of time and work to get all that taken care of.

KUPSKY: How long did that take? You know, how many days or weeks?

BISHOP: Well, we arrived there on the 20th and say we got on the first of December. Then we shipped out, the fourth I guess it was, third or fourth of January.

KUPSKY: And what was the next stop?

BISHOP: Well, we went down to some port, it wasn't Le Harve though, I mean it wasn't South Hampton, and loaded on a LST [Landing Ship Tank] on the sixth. Went down there and got on the fifth of January. And the sixth then we crossed the channel, we were going across it. Arrived over at Le Havre about four-thirty on the seventh then on Sunday morning. Got our ships off and started in through France. All of those kids called out on the side of those streets, "*Chocolat et chocolat!*" Candy. (Laughter) Then the worst winter in France's history at that time happened, and we had a lot of snow storms and it was miserable for some of those fellas that drive those tanks. It depended on the type of track. The tank I was on was a seventy-six millimeter tank gun and it had a wider track, which was kind of like a horseshoe. The others had a straight piece on each side and one in the middle was straight, you know. And those things, there was nothing to keep them where they wouldn't slide sideways, but we weren't sliding. So we never had any trouble but some of those fellas, they were in the ditches on each side of the road with them.

KUPSKY: They were all over the place.

BISHOP: And we went there to Metz and then went down south of Metz to [the] Pont-A-Mousson area.

DENTON: You mentioned some men were stranded on the side of the road. How did they get those tanks back out? Did they just hook up another tank?

BISHOP: Hook up another tank or they had an ordnance along with us. Well we had a maintenance, well, headquarters company had an extra vehicle. But some of them would pull them out. Buddy help a buddy, get out and get started.

DENTON: Now I have heard that some men named their tanks and painted logos on the side. Did you do that with your tank?

BISHOP: Well, yes and no. (Laughs) We did and then when we got down to Pont-A-Mousson around the 23rd I guess, I believe it was. They called a meeting the 22nd or 3rd and they nicknamed our division the Tornado and we had to take all numbers and names and everything off the tanks. We even had to quit wearing our Army patches. We had to take those off for identification. They shoved us in the Battle of the Bulge then and they didn't want us to be identified. [Note: Bishop and the 8th Armored Division took part in pushing back the German attacks on southern France, codenamed Operation Nordwind. This operation was a feint intending to draw Allied troops away from the main attack on Belgium] We went up there in tanks to help the 94th Infantry. In the Moselle area, just south east of Luxembourg. At that time we didn't, but they did have a name and I remember ours was "Iddy girl". (Laughter) I don't know who came up with that name, but that was it. It was "Iddy girl".

KUPSKY: Was there a logo with the name?

BISHOP: No, I didn't see logos on any of ours. Now, of course we had 8th armored, eighth and then a triangle, and over on the other side we had eighth, space and an eighteen. Of course were A company and I was the second platoon. We didn't have anything about the platoon. I don't believe we had the tank number on it. We had seventeen or eighteen tanks. First five were the first platoon, six through ten was the second platoon, eleven through fifteen was the third platoon. Officers rode on one, six, and eleven. Staff sergeant rode on the four, nine, and fourteen.

DENTON: What was your tank number?

BISHOP: Well, when I first went in combat it was number six. In our platoon, the driver on number six and number nine were T-4s. The sergeants drive on a T. The others were T-5s, corporal stripes, and tank number six was the lieutenant's tank. I was in his tank, I was bog gunner. It was staff sergeant in charge, or the non-commissioned officer in charge, he was on number nine tank, the commander.

DENTON: Now, you said you had a lieutenant. Where did he sit in the tank? Did he sit in the back in a certain area?

BISHOP: Yeah, see the driver's down at the left front, the bog gunner's the assistant driver. The bog gunner's got a thirty caliber machine gun that can be moved around. He's down at the right front. And up in the turret, that turns, the loader was on the left side behind the driver, the gunner was behind the bog gunner, with the gun between them. In fact, there was seventy-five or seventy-six in our case and thirty caliber machine gun was

mounted just to the left of the gun. Then the tank commander stood behind the gunner, or he had a seat he could flip down and sit there. When he had the hatch down he had those little glass pieces about two inches wide, we called them glass, and about a four or five inches of space around the turret. Where he could pull it down and look through that and see out that way. Of course the gunner, he just had his telescopic sight that he could see through, so he didn't get to see much. But the others did have a thing that they, it was about five or six inches wide and an inch high, you know, that you look in down here in the mirrors and they go up and sight that way they could be turned around where they could see.

DENTON: Like a little periscope?

BISHOP: Yeah, that type of thing.

KUPSKY: I was wondering to this point if you had any interaction, you mentioned the French children on the side of the road, if you had any other interaction with French civilians?

BISHOP: No, we didn't. They were all out that Sunday and I remember it was a warm day we landed there, but it didn't take long before we had cold weather and we didn't hardly see anyone through there. It was miserable driving. Got down to thirty degrees below zero and we liked to froze. The air coming through those tanks, it was miserable. The driver and the bog gunner had the advantage because they were down around the transmission and it was a little warmer down there.

DENTON: Now you said you about froze. Were you not prepared for the type of weather?

BISHOP: Well, let me tell you what we were wearing. We were wearing long flannels that the army issued. We wore our wool trousers. On the body, they issued a sleeveless wool sweater and we had that next to our long flannels and then we wore a wool shirt and then we had a turtle neck wool sweater, we wore that. Then we had our field jacket and then our overcoat. Then we couldn't keep our feet warm. That was a problem. So someone came up with the idea, in a little while, to take a blanket and make a pair of moccasins out of it. Then we started wearing five pair, and they gave us some four buckle overshoes to wear. They gave us a pair of those each, and we'd wear those buckle overshoes, five pair of socks and those moccasins. We'd keep our feet warm that way. But most of our feet got frostbit until they did that.

DENTON: Was there any serious damage from the cold?

BISHOP: No, not with our group. Some of the people, you may have heard about it recently. I understand now the ruling is that if a person could prove, they had the medical record at that time, that they were frostbitten, they were awarded the bronze star. That happened in the last year or a year or two years ago.

KUPSKY: Has there been, do you know, had many people sort of redeemed that or ...

BISHOP: I don't know, I really don't know.

DENTON: I had not heard that.

BISHOP: Maybe you've heard this. Have you heard about that they've started in a few states, and I think it is pretty well adopted in most states from what I hear now, that if a person dropped out of high school and went into service, whether it was World War II, Korea, or Vietnam, that they could get their high school diploma.

KUPSKY: Oh, really?

BISHOP: Yeah, I received a notice of that and announced it at our meeting, our annual meeting three or four years ago. Told them that they just needed to get their forms and present it and told them that could be awarded at graduation. One man told me one day, "I wanna tell you about my graduation last night." He said there were eighteen hundred graduated from high school, from the civic auditorium where they had the different high schools in that area have their graduation. He said they had a camera there and a big screen where people could get a big view on the screen. He said, "When I got to mine I got the largest round of applause of anyone."

DENTON: So, he graduated with the regular, younger high school students?

BISHOP: Yeah. I believe it was, what's the name of this school out there in Fountain City? Anyway, beside the point. I believe that was the school that, that same year, there were twenty-three that graduated that had been in World War II that got their high school diploma.

KUPSKY: So they all became members of the class of '01 or '02 or whatever it was?

BISHOP: Yeah. Let me mention something else. We were at Buffalo at our annual meeting on '02 and the man that was supposed to be our speaker had to go to the hospital. So they got the former sheriff who was the president of the military park there, memorial park, to speak. He was a very good speaker and he told me about his time in the Marines and all. He says if you want to tell something funny in one of the introductions when you introduce me just use this: that I'm mixed up. He said, "I got my BA degree in police work, I got my Master's Degree in communications, and I got my high school diploma three weeks ago." (Laughter)

KUPSKY: He did it backwards, yeah.

BISHOP: I told them when I introduced I told them that he was kind of mixed up I didn't know what we could expect. (Laughter) Everyone got a big kick out of that.

KUPSKY: That's kind of a nice service they provide then, that they'll do that for veterans. The diploma.

BISHOP: Yes. Well, why not? None of them amount to anything except a sheet of paper, so to speak, except they add a few things.

KUPSKY: Yeah, it's nice to do for them, exactly.

DENTON: Now, back to France, as far as the winter, what were some of your other experiences when you started the march on the Rhine?

BISHOP: Well, we went on down to Pont-A-Mousson we got down there, I guess we were there maybe ten days. Along the way, about half way there, we were at some place where we stopped, we loaded our tanks with all ammunition. We were ready to go into battle then. Then we went on down to the south of Metz, Pont-A-Mousson area The entire division was down there. I don't think we had any training except just meetings. The tanks weren't moved as I recall, because of the heavy snow on the ground. Then we got our orders from there to go up into the Mosel area, just south east of Luxembourg. We went up there and stayed there about a week behind the front lines. We could hear it going on before our group was actually called on up.

KUPSKY: And where was that then that was your first experience with that?

BISHOP: It was on January the 26th I believe it was. There was a little town across the Mosel from the Luxembourg area. There was two little towns of Berg and Sinz and the meeting was at a pretty good-sized castle there. And Berg had been captured by both sides three or four times. The Americans would run the Germans back Then they would recapture it. There were just hulls of buildings there. It wasn't anything at all. It was a small village. I know we went through that town and went up a quarter of a mile or so and then that's where we, actually when we got the orders we went over a hill and got into the battle then. But then we were hit the first day up there, our tank was. When we got the order to go over the hill, when you were talking about the names of the tanks, our platoon was called The Tomcats. The lieutenant says, "Tomcats follow me." So, we went up over the hill and the Germans, [we] had caught 'em by surprise. The infantrymen and all, they jumped up and started running away from us. Of course our shells that we had in the tank, we had three kinds of shells for the seventy-five millimeter gun. One was a high explosive; it had a screw in the end of it. One was the delayed action and one was instant. If you were going to be shooting at ground troops we would put it on delayed action and it'd hit the ground and bounce up and explode see. If you were going to be shooting a building or something it would be instant. When it would hit something it would go off. Then we had armor piercing if you tried to shoot at a tank. The other one was phosphorous, where we'd shoot at a building and it would explode and set it on fire. So our gunners in the tank was hitting the ground and it was firing up and the bog gunners had the thirty-caliber machine gun spraying. So things quieted down and we stopped. The tanks are usually out in front of the infantry. Then infantry follows. They were headed up and the other two platoons of the company, one was supposed to be on one side and one

on the other, So Lieutenant Cling asked the tanks to scatter out, get out further apart. He was going to move our tank, or had our driver, move down closer to some woods. He said it looked like a safe place and he could see those Americans down there. Well, they weren't Americans, they were Germans with American uniforms on. So they got us in the side of a tank with a bazooka and Lieutenant Cling had damage to his left shoulder, he was in the hospital I think 19 months. The gunner had the left side of his face torn up, lost his left eye. I'm not sure how long he was in the hospital. The loader got shrapnel in his stomach, I don't know how long he was in the hospital. The driver didn't get any scratches and I got shrapnel in my right arm. But the driver, and Lieutenant Cling, the gunner, and I, had been together several times since then. We never did find the other fella. We talked to his widow, after he passed away, but the injuries didn't have any effect on his life. He lived till he was about seventy, I think. But, the driver, he's dead now. But Lieutenant Cling and the other fella, Fiorio, we were together this past fall. We usually get together once a year at what we call it a mini reunion.

DENTON: You mentioned that there were Germans that hit you with a bazooka, but they were wearing American uniforms. Were they in a jeep or on foot?

BISHOP: No, they were in the woods. Just moved down next to the wooded area. But a lot of them were killed or captured that same day. There wasn't anywhere for them to go except do one of two things up there with people moving in. We captured that town ...

(Tape paused)

BISHOP: There between Berg and Sinz one man wasn't in our company, that was in a tank, he was a gunner and the tank was hit and he was injured and he couldn't get out of the tank and he was groaning and hollering. So some infantryman came along, two of them did, came along and lifted him out. Put him on the back of a tank and gave him what morphine they had. Then the medics picked him up and he's had one leg removed. He's been very active after he got home, played softball. At a reunion, years later, they each recognized that one of them was a tanker and one of them was an infantryman, and they became very close friends after that. But that happened there between Berg and Sinz, the infantryman and the tanker. The tanker was Joe Couples, and his name was Radcliff. Radcliff performed as a cadet and did all his college training at UT when we lived in Minnesota.

DENTON: Now between Berg and Sinz this is when you encountered some of your most difficult fighting.

BISHOP: Yes, that's right. They called that a very bloody battle. In fact that area was captured by each side five or six times. Now President Bush, the former president, "Daddy Bush," he authorized a monument to be erected at the top of the hill just going from Berg, and the Berg area, past Sinz on top of the hill up there in honor of the 94th infantry. Which was the ones that really had it rough that area. We'd been there and made pictures of it the last few years.

KUPSKY: Your injury to your arm, how serious of an injury was it?

BISHOP: It wasn't serious. It was just flesh wounds was at it was. Yeah, I went to the medics with it but I stayed in the outfit. They bandaged me up and I stayed with them.

KUSPKY: So you were right back in?

BISHOP: Yes. Well, our tank was on fire, the driver got the fire extinguished, and then we went back to the rear with it. We picked up a couple of fellas, one was a driver and the other was a bog gunner from another tank, and they'd captured a prisoner. Five of us went back down into Berg and turned the prisoner over to the people. He was a Polish man, we were told later, and they got quite a bit of information from him.

KUPSKY: What was his demeanor when you were near him?

DENTON: He was just very quiet. With the four of us, he didn't have a word to say. Of course we couldn't understand anything, he couldn't speak our language and we didn't speak his. But he didn't say a word. We motioned for him what to do and he did it.

KUPSKY: He wasn't taking any chances I guess?

BISHOP: No.

KUPSKY: So then you brought him back to, I guess to where ...

BISHOP: To Berg.

KUPSKY: To Berg. Okay.

BISHOP: And then we left him. Stayed in that area another three or four days in then the whole outfit went back down to where we were. They pulled us back out of combat.

DENTON: You said that you put the fire out on the tank. Was the tank still operable?

BISHOP: Yeah, Mm hmm. It was just wiring and everything burning back up in the turret of it and we got it put out. In fact, the driver wanted me to drive and then ride in the commander's [seat] and there was a ditch there and had snow on it. Well, we backed off a little ways and I opened the thing wide open and I got it in second, from first to second [gear], and I never could get it to climb over it. I tried it about three or four times so he said, "Well, let's just swap." He backed way on back further, you know, trying to get back up over that hill. He finally got it over the hill with it because we had a ditch to go over in all that snow, and then you got to pick up enough speed. Then we picked up the other two fellas with our prisoner and went back to the rear. In fact, they ordered us to get back to the rear off our battle post. We couldn't do any shooting up there except for our thirty caliber machine gun. Then we were just a sitting duck as a target up there.

DENTON: Now as far as encountering Germans, about how many do you remember seeing in that area?

BISHOP: It would be hard to guess. I guess somewhere between fifty and seventy-five jumped up and started running when we come over the hill, you know. Surprised attacked on them. We went back to the area where we had been staying for four or five days, it was three or four miles back in a little town. The captain and the driver came back that night and talked to us to see what we knew. He had it estimated after talking to the others that they'd probably killed, our group killed, maybe a one hundred fifty Germans that one day. Bad to talk that way but that was his figures he came up with.

DENTON: Now, you mentioned about the Germans that hit your tank were dressed as American soldiers. Did they expect for that to happen? That they would infiltrate like that?

BISHOP: We had heard that it had happened at times, yes.

DENTON: Did that shock you when that happened?

KUPSKY: Well, we didn't know it at that instant. We found out a little later what it was. We thought they were Americans but we couldn't figure out why the Americans would be shooting at us, but we suspected that.

DENTON: Could you see them out of your tank?

BISHOP: Yeah. Mm hmm. Well, when we got hit we couldn't see anymore there then. They got gone, they accomplished their purpose.

KUPSKY: And this other tank it was obviously still drivable, I mean, you were able to get it out of there. In a tank sort of damaged to that extent, how easily would a tank like that be patched up?

BISHOP: Yeah, it went back to ordnance and they put a piece about, maybe a six inch square, welded the same type of metal on it. Then rebuilt the inside of it. It went through the radio and all that's what it got, the radio and wiring and all. Didn't affect the guns at all. But had to put a different radio in where it would be operative. And the tank came back. They sent the tank back and it was used again.

DENTON: Did you have the same tank?

BISHOP: No, nope. When that happened, see the gunner, the loader, and the commander all went to the hospital. They were never back with us. I was transferred to tank number fourteen as gunner, as bog gunner down front, on fourteen tank. That was the sergeant's tank of the third platoon. Sergeant Gray, lives in Gray, Maine. I stayed with him for about a month and then I went back to number eight tank.

KUPSKY: Were you then, I think you may have said but I don't remember, did you then come back to this area?

BISHOP: No, no. When we left this area they had already captured these towns and all and the 94th had moved on.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay so they were further along.

BISHOP: So, they moved us in there to help clear that area out. And our particular company was right in that one area, now, let me mention this. The division, when you get over there and got into combat, they divided the division into combat command A, combat command B, combat command R. Well see, there were really three tank battalions, there were three infantry battalions and so forth. So they put one tank battalion and one infantry battalion and other units like that with them. Which included artillery, the reconnaissance, eight or nine different units went into all combat command A. This was only one, of the eighteenth tank battalion, that was in the Battle of the Bulge, was combat command A.

DENTON: Now, as far as when you started the move forward, how long did the battles last, or the skirmishes?

BISHOP: Well, that one lasted, from the time we got in on that that morning, it lasted the rest of that day, that night, and into the next day before they captured Sinz, about two miles on up the way. And then when they captured that it was pretty much over in that one area.

DENTON: It started to get calm?

BISHOP: Mm hmm. Well, I don't know how much it started to get calm. We left, see. We were just sent in there to help them.

DENTON: Okay.

BISHOP: I had the privilege of going to a meeting of Louisville each year for several years to CADA, the Council of Armored Division Associations. We'd get to Fort Knox or have a commanding general or some high ranking officer speak to us. One person asked him how he would rate the Battle of the Bulge and he said, "More people, more equipment, and more injuries than any other one battle."

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO-----

KUPSKY: This continues an interview with Mr. Sidney Bishop on March 18th, 2004 in Jefferson City, Tennessee with Greg Kupsy and ...

DENTON: Braum Denton

KUPSKY: Anyway we had just talked about you entering the Battle of the Bulge. And I was wondering if you could kind of take it from there.

BISHOP: Well, after we were there for two days, or three, we went back down to Pont-A-Mousson, France where we had been staying or billeted before we were sent up there. A few days after that we were sent up into Holland and our particular group, ended up in a little village called "Belats," that's the way we pronounced it. Its right down in the southeastern corner of Holland and the people there were very, very, nice to us. The Germans had stripped them of nearly everything. They didn't have much of anything. But, we stayed in, a fella that transferred into the 8th Armored with me from the air force and I, we lived with this family, man by the name of Matt Palmer. They let us have their bedroom upstairs to sleep and they had hardwood floors and beautiful lace curtains on the windows, but they didn't have hardly anything to eat. We'd get them something from mess truck and take them to eat. All the other fellas did the same thing. We were there thirteen days. And then we moved on up and the 8th Armored was given their orders to start their drive toward the Rhine river, trying to clear it out through there. So, this was on about the 25th, 6th, 7th, and 8th of February, and we hit into Merbeck and Tetelrath and we had very rough fighting in that area. The first platoon was in lead that morning, of our company. There was a boy that was the bog gunner, and he saw something and stuck his head back, or put his head back through the tank, to tell the gunner and the commander. The lieutenant was the commander, and they saw it about the same time. Each one had a pistol grip sight where they could turn the turret and they caught his head and just crushed him to death. That was our first casualty for that day.

KUPSKY: That was in your tank or ...

BISHOP: No, it wasn't in my tank it was in tank number one of the company. I was gunner on number fourteen tank that day. Well, number fourteen tank was in third platoon. But anyway, first platoon got up and went through Merbeck and got maybe an eighth of a mile out of town and hit some road mines, land mines in the road, and damaged I think three tanks. Blew the tracks off. So the road was blocked until they could get those cleared. Number three platoon was asked to take to the left flank. We pulled up and were looking over the little town of Tetelrath, and on the mountain, up the hill on the other side. So our tank commander spotted something up over the hill away from us and we started firing at it. I think he told me thirty-two hundred yards. We went over that. At that distance, we missed it. We dropped back to twenty-four hundred, we missed it, then we went up to twenty-eight hundred, you know, splitting the difference until we get it. About the fourth shot, he called target and we put about three extra rounds, high explosive rounds, in that area. The next day when they got up there and checked it out, they found, some other fellas got to shooting at it too then they saw it and hit it. I think it was about five dead Germans. It was an eighty-eight [millimeter anti-tank gun] just waiting for someone to drive up.

(Tape paused)

KUPSKY: You were talking about where you had all sort of hit the same target at the same time.

BISHOP: And then we went on up in Belgium where we were living with this family. I mean in Holland. I believe that was last wasn't it?

DENTON: We were talking about Holland and you were staying with a family I believe.

BISHOP: And then I started saying that we were moved out and on a drive toward the Rhine. Okay, and I think that's where we stopped. So when we left Holland living with the family of the Matt Palmer's. I might say this about the Matt Palmer's. Geneva and I were back in Europe in 1980 and visited Mrs. Palmer. Had a very nice visit, about a two hour, or two hour and a half visit, and she had her priest there to be the interpreter. But it was quite interesting to visit with her. The house that we stayed in, her son lived in it, and everything looked about exactly the same as it did when we were there. But, anyway, about the 26th, 27th, or 28th of February we really go into a very bad situation. That's where we were in the town of Merbeck. Started out toward Tetelrath and the first platoon hit some land mines and we pulled over to the left of the road. I was on a gunner that day and the tank commander saw something up on the hill over the town of Tetelrath and we started shooting at it. I think the third round we hit it about twenty-eight hundred yards. He thought it was an eighty-eight that had been placed up there waiting for Americans to move in that direction. The next day when some people checked it and sure enough it was and there was some Germans that had been killed some time previous to that. But the same tank commander spotted a little building down in the little town of Tetelrath and he asked me to try eight-hundred yards on it. So we set our sights, our crosshairs, on exactly eight-hundred yards. He told me though that there was something moving in the window, he wasn't sure what it was. So, we pulled the trigger, hit the building, it was a chicken house. There was chickens went everywhere. (Laughs) So, he was [a] very observing man to find things like that. A few minutes after that we backed up and crossed the road and thought we could go around on the right side going on and trying to capture the town of Tetelrath. We were ahead of the infantry so they could follow us and we hit a land mine and when we did he asked us all to leave the tank. When we were leaving the tank there was a sniper shooting at us and it sounded like, the bullets hitting the tank, was like heavy drops of rain, if you was in a barn loft when the rain starting hitting that metal roof. But luckily none of us were hit. We were laying in the ditches there beside of the road and we were all pinned down and later we found out that the reason that they were dropping mortar shells so accurate around us they had a forward observer that was still back in the town of Tetelrath up on the second floor of a building that was radioing to them where the targets were and guiding them how to shoot. Someone spotted him and that ended that story. But, there was a second lieutenant from the infantry that moved up to, and was talking with, and he said look at my helmet. He said, "I am going to keep this helmet, going to take it home with me." That sniper that was shooting at us had hit him right beside of his little mark of his emblem, of his steel helmet, and went in his helmet and went out the back of it earlier that morning. So, he was ...

DENTON: Just right over his head?

BISHOP: Right over the top of his head. And he even had it on at that time.

DENTON: And he didn't even know he got hit?

BISHOP: He knew that he was hit, but it didn't hurt see. He said when I get out of service I am taking this helmet home with me because nobody would ever believe that happened.

KUPSKY: Yeah.

DENTON: Amazing.

BISHOP: But anyway, our tank commander spotted, he was laying there in that ditch with binoculars, and he spotted the man that was shooting at us, the sniper. The bog gunner, when he got out of the tank, he lowered the hatch below his feet and he came out the bottom of the tank. The tank commander crawled back over and went up through the tank and then he got the sniper, you know, with the big guns on the tank and knocked them out then and that eased it some. I crawled on back to the rear then and one of the men on tank number nine, the driver on tank number nine, George Lenotte asked me to ride with them as bog gunner, so I did. About an hour and a half after that, or maybe less than that, we were down in the crossroads at Tetelrath. We got hit in the right gas tank with a bazooka. We had to leave that tank and we laid in the ditch while it was burning. Then we crawled back to the rear and got in another tank and went on. But anyway, someone thought that I should have some attention I guess by that and they awarded me the Silver Star for that day. We were all buddies of one another and one trying to protect the other one. But that was written up as one of the bloodiest battles I think that we were in, trying to attack the little town and capture the little town of Tetelrath. We were laying in the ditch and that tank was going, the turret was going around and around and shells were exploding in the tank. Two of the men got some shrapnel wounds because they were throwing shells in there around us. We're not sure which side it was, but none of us got hurt seriously. All of it was just skin wounds more or less. So then from there we moved on up toward the area before we crossed the Rhine.

(Tape paused)

BISHOP: We moved from there on up in an area and crossed the Rhine, a whole division crossed the Rhine river. I believe it was on March the 26th. Somewhere about that time. This was just north of Dorsten, Germany. We started in that area, cleaning that area out. Then we moved in through the Ruhr pocket. But on the first time we went into battle, our platoon was left out early one morning and got into this little town just shortly after daylight with a company of infantry. There was only four tanks of the five. The lieutenant's tank, something was wrong with it mechanically and he moved from tank number six to tank number ten. We had a new lieutenant and this was his first day in combat. Early that morning we encountered one German tank and it shot at the tank that he was on, number ten tank, and hit it in the turret. Killed the loader, the gunner, and

injured the lieutenant seriously. He died that afternoon. Tank number eight, I either it hit a landmine or it was hit in the track, and the track was damaged and it couldn't be used so that only left tank seven—no it was tank number nine that the track was blown off, and that only left tank seven and tank eight. I was gunner on tank number eight, and the radio went out on number seven, so we were the only tank that had the radio communications with the rear. But we had a tank commander that day that had never been in a tank before, he was a regular army man with the rank of sergeant, in the regular army. After the war started he worked his way up to master sergeant. For some reason he got busted back down to a buck sergeant and he was tank commander. Things weren't going, he didn't think, fast enough. He got out to see if he could talk to the infantry and get things moving and he was injured. So that only left four of us in our tank. We're the only tank up there and we couldn't get contact to the rear. We made it about maybe a mile advance before we got hit later on in the day. No one in our tank or any of the other tanks were injured except the one with the lieutenant and two of the people were killed in that tank. That was just before Saint Patrick's day because one of the boys that was a loader was supposed to come home just after Saint Patrick's day. But he of course didn't make it.

(Tape paused)

BISHOP: In a few day after this, three tanks of us was all that were left at that time. The company of infantry that was shot up and maybe a half of the crew were sent down into a certain section of the Ruhr pocket where we were located at that time, to try to clear out of the area. We were making it fine. We didn't have an officer with us. Again we had radio problems and our radio seemed to be the one that always worked and we were the only one that ended up with a radio that was working. Before we realized it, we were surrounded. Our tanks had push buttons on them; we'd push to get one frequency or get one person or push another button and get another one. So we couldn't find the captain so we switched over to the battalion frequency and a Lieutenant Colonel Goodrich answered. I told him where we were and what the situation was and very calmly he told me he'd have us some help in a few minutes. I didn't realize what kind of help we'd have but I believed him. When he signed off he said, "And I'll see you back in Knoxville." It wasn't but just a few minutes till there was P-47s [fighter aircraft] that were flying around, you know, strafing. We got rid of the guns and bank placements we had there. We moved on and accomplished what we had started out to do on that particular time. So that was kind of an interesting day for all of us, for something like that to happen. We've always talked about it when Colonel Goodrich said, "We'll see you back in Knoxville." (Laughter)

DENTON: When you were in the tank that day, could you hear the planes flying overhead?

BISHOP: No, we couldn't. No.

KUPSKY: I was sort of curious. I guess, you know, the Bulge was really the last time that there were any German planes used. I was wondering if you saw any German planes?

BISHOP: No, I never did see a German plane. When I was in combat now when we were at night when we were stopped they would use their planes flying over us. Trying to, I don't know whether they had a lot of cameras they could use or not, but we were always advised not to shoot at them because it might give away our location or something. Even though they would have been a good target but we were advised not to shoot at them.

KUPSKY: Oh, I see.

DENTON: I do have a question about the conditions in combat. Where did you sleep and where did you eat during this time period?

BISHOP: Well, you've heard of c-rations and k-rations and we slept inside the tank.

KUPSKY: Oh, wow.

BISHOP: I mean, unless they pulled us back. See, now we had to go back to the rear, you know, at times. The way we were up there then they'd move us back to refuel. Then we'd get a meal most of the time.

KUPSKY: What about the Red Cross?

BISHOP: No, well they were there in case of something disastrous or something or other but we very seldom ever saw those people. I don't remember ever seeing them up close to the front line. I'm not saying they weren't up there but we didn't see them. I didn't see them.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay. Well, I was just curious because I had heard that sort of, you know, people who were pulled back sometimes received coffee and things like that from the Red Cross. But I guess that was probably a little further back. Maybe you didn't have that.

DENTON: During the battles did you ever see any just common citizens? Did you help any or did you see any in the area?

BISHOP: No, we didn't see any. I'd say most of those were hid or something.

DENTON: I'd say they got out of there.

BISHOP: We had a speaker at our banquet a few years ago; he was Ambassador from the Netherlands stationed in Washington. He said during the war he was twelve years old and they hid in their cellar when the battles were around there. They stayed in the cellar and didn't come out.

KUPSKY: What about in terms of mail, how often did you get to write home?

BISHOP: Well, maybe once a week or something like that. I remember one Friday night they pulled us back and we had mail call, got all of our mail for a week. I received a letter from Geneva that said that she was, no, I received a round Crisco container that had a tape around it. I had told her that some of the letters that I had written her that sometimes when we stayed in the German houses most of them had potatoes in the cellar. We'd get potatoes out and fix them some way or other and if we'd find any grease or something, oil, we'd fry them and have French fries. So, when I got that I showed it, everyone showed everybody what they got and just divided it with one another you know. So I told them that the next time we'd get in a house where there was some potatoes, we'd have some good French fries. The next Friday night they pulled us back and we got our mail again and Geneva had me a letter. She'd usually wrote me a regular letter, sent me what they called a V-Mail letter. I think I got one of each and she said, "I am making you some chocolate fudge and I am putting it in a Crisco can and sending it while it is hot, I hope you get it." It got there a week before the letter did. (Laughter) Well, we was out in the gun box of the tank. I was gunner, so the next morning we were out somewhere policing up in the area and that thing kindly cooled down and I thought of it and I got that out and we took our pocket knife and we cut that and really enjoyed it.

KUPSKY: Oh, I'm sure.

BISHOP: Yeah, Saturday morning sitting up there.

KUPSKY: What about your parents? Did you get many letters from them and write to them fairly often.

BISHOP: Yeah, yeah. They wrote to me several times a week. Sure did. One mail call we had, Geneva's father was a merchant at a country store. I got this little box that was about four inches high and wide, maybe seven or eight inches long, nine or ten, and I couldn't imagine what it was. I thought, well, it looks about like what cheese was packaged in at that time, A little five pound cheese I believe in a little wooden box. I opened it up and he'd packed two Coca-Colas in there and mailed them to me.

KUPSKY: Oh, wow. I bet you appreciated those too.

BISHOP: Well, course it is just like everything else, I opened one of them got a good swig of it and somebody else got the rest of them. Everybody divided what they had when they received it.

KUPSKY: Well, I guess then you sort of had shared other people's packages but then what other sorts of things did people get?

BISHOP: Cakes, a lot of cakes, and things of that nature. I don't think I ever saw any other Coca-Colas except those two.

KUPSKY: Right. I guess that's a little harder to ship probably.

BISHOP: But anyway, from then on we went through a lot of little towns capturing those. Not as much resistance as we had in other places. I remember that we would usually leave one platoon in the back as back guard. The other two would go into town with the infantry. It got there nearly on the last where a lot of the people, we'd get to the town, and they'd all have a pole of some kind and have a white cloth tied to it. They were surrendering. They didn't want their place torn up and all. We saw that several times. And I remember one time we went into one little town like that and they asked us to check a certain house. Three of us went in this one house and had our guns out and this lady said, "Don't shoot! Don't shoot! I grew up on Chicago! I know about Americans!" (Laughter) She spoke very good English. But anyway, then we went on in and hit some resistance before we got to the Hartz mountains. We went into the Hartz mountains area and that was pretty hot fighting there for a couple days getting in that area there because that was backed up against the mountain and there wasn't any place for them to go. Then after we captured that, about three days after that, the division was ordered to stay there and more or less as an occupational force and supervise what was going on there. So then we were living in houses in that little town, the name of Bad Hartzburg, was the name of the house. We had two patrols that would go through the mountains during the day. They would send a jeep and a truck through the mountains with some boys on the back of the truck. They were trying to catch prisoners, Germans, especially a lot of officers that were trying to make their way back home going through the mountains. So, we captured several officers that way, more officers than they did enlisted men. We had venison almost every meal there 'cause somebody would get a deer almost every day and bring it in.

KUPSKY: Did some hunting on the way back. These prisoners you were taking in did you have much interaction with them?

BISHOP: No, I didn't. They were just brought back and turned into some other place, none of our people did. The Burgermeister there had some, well, it was a Frenchman that became very close friend with a lot of the boys in our company. He was an aviator and he was shot down. And the mayor, or Burgermeister, had him stripped and tied him with ropes he said, and marched him through town. Of course he had something he could get on the Burgermeister if he could so, they got the Burgermeister and, I don't know, they had a meeting. I'm not sure what all did happen there but I know he did get to meet with the Burgermeister. I guess he told him what he thought at the meeting.

DENTON: Did you speak with any of the prisoners or did they speak with you?

BISHOP: No, I didn't, I did not. I was never in a truck that captured one when we went up there. In fact, as many of us, there were just two trips a day. One would leave in early morning and one would leave after lunchtime, get back in after dark. But, we never captured any on the runs that I made.

KUPSKY: And you mentioned this one lady from Chicago, but did you interact with many other civilians?

BISHOP: No, No we didn't. They didn't want us to.

KUPSKY: I know there was like the non-fraternization order. I guess with the people you were with, that was pretty well obeyed.

BISHOP: It was I think. Pretty much so.

KUPSKY: I guess by now we're what up to about what? What time period?

BISHOP: Well, we were in Bad Hartzburg at the close, we knew three days before that What was it May the 5th? May the 8th wasn't it?

KUPSKY: Eighth.

BISHOP: We knew it three days ahead of time, we were told it was going to end on May the 8th.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay.

BISHOP: That agreement had been reached. Of course, we were not on the front lines but of course there were some people still fighting at that time on both sides.

KUPSKY: Well that is something I have heard a lot about is, you know, that was sort of the most tense time right at when, supposedly, the cease-fire was going to start. Because people wondered well, did people on the other side know that we're going to stop. That's something that a lot of veterans mention.

BISHOP: That's true.

KUPSKY: But you said you were kind of back behind ...

BISHOP: We were up on the edge of a mountain so there wasn't much chance of anyone getting to us there.

KUPSKY: And the people in the town they were keeping are pretty low profile at this time?

BISHOP: Well, we were ordered not to go down into town.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay. You were outside of town.

BISHOP: Yeah. So we weren't down in that area.

KUPSKY: How did you get the news a couple of days beforehand that this was pretty much ...

BISHOP: I don't know how it was passed on. It came through company channels though. It was passed on.

KUPKSY: I was just sort of wondering what the reaction was?

BISHOP: Oh, it was a happy time.

DENTON: I was just going to ask about the, now you encountered the 11th Panzer Division?

BISHOP: Yes, uh huh. That is what we had just before we got into the Hartz Mountains or around in that area.

DENTON: Now was the 11th still in the Hartz area?

BISHOP: Yeah, mm hmm, they were there.

DENTON: Did you get to see any of the German tanks?

BISHOP: No, not there. The only tank I saw moving or that was being used was the one when our lieutenant was killed that morning. Just after we crossed the Rhine just four days after that.

DENTON: Did you climb in any of the German tanks to look?

BISHOP: No. On that particular morning I saw the tank and I called it to the attention of the sergeant, and it was the buck sergeant that had been there his first time. I said, "What range?" and he said, "You decide." Well, I shot five hundred yards at it and it went way over it and I radioed the boy next to me, Howard D. Eddins, who was gunner on number seven, who lived just outside of Fort Knox, Kentucky. He was supposed to be the best gunner we had in the company, he had that reputation. I told him five hundred and it was way over and he shot and hit it at two hundred fifty [yards] with an H.E., high explosive round. Our loader threw an armor-piercing round in the chamber and then we hit it four times and he hit it four times with armor piercing, plus the one time he hit it with a high explosive. They kept going. Probably a good thing he did because if we'd blown his track off he could have turned around and wiped us out. Of course if we could hit him where that turret turned and it would have jammed it and he couldn't have turned it, see. But they couldn't maneuver as fast as we could and they couldn't turn the turrets as fast as we could ours. That's the reason that boy got killed with that pistol grip. That thing would turn if you pushed it all the way. The gunner had one and the commander had one and the boy was trying to tell them where there was something and he didn't get his head back.

DENTON: So, when did you start to pull back? Right when you got the news?

BISHOP: No sir, we stayed in that town. We stayed there and then continued to stay there a week or two after that. Then they sent us to Czechoslovakia in an area just north

of Pilsen. About nine or ten miles north of Pilsen. There was a five mile area between no man's land, between the Allies and the Russians, and we were supposed to maintain that five miles there. We were just afraid they might do something but they sent us down there for that.

KUPSKY: So you never came in contact with any of the Russians?

BISHOP: Yeah we did.

KUPSKY: Oh, you did?

BISHOP: Yeah, boys will be boys. (Laughter) Somebody found this pond and we started going swimming in that pond and the Russians started coming swimming in it. (Laughter) But the man that owned the farm tried to run us out. So one day I told my buddy, I said, "Let's take him a bar of soap and see what happens." I gave him a bar of soap and he was as happy as he could be and told us to go ahead and swim.

DENTON: Did the Russians come back too?

KUPSKY: Yeah, they did too.

DENTON: Did you interact with any of the Russians?

BISHOP: No, we couldn't, we didn't try to communicate with them except just laugh and have fun.

DENTON: What was your impression of the Russian soldiers?

BISHOP: They wasn't too much different, in a case like that, than our boys. They were just out having fun there.

KUPSKY: I'd also heard, another thing I heard was, other infantry units that were in Czechoslovakia that the Czechs there were very worried about the Americans leaving and the Russians coming in. Did you get that impression?

BISHOP: Yeah. Mm hmm. The little town that we were in, they farmed us out so to speak, and we stayed in the homes with the people. We didn't eat with them, but we had our baths and had our bedding there and slept in their beds and all. The family that I— Bledsoe, a boy from Texas and I who left the air force together, in fact he ended up on the same tank, number eight tank. He was on the number eight all the way through and I ended up being on six then on fourteen and then back on eight. We stayed with a family, the man and his wife lived downstairs, and they had an extra bedroom with a bath, and we were there. Upstairs was their daughter and her husband and a two or three-year-old baby. Then another family had four children upstairs in that house. The man worked in the mines there and equivalent to American money he was making ten dollars a month.

That was his income. I don't know what the other people did, the other men I mean. There were two families. But, when we were in Czechoslovakia, of course that was after the war, we didn't have anything to do. We played volleyball and pitched horseshoes most of the time except when we were on guard duty. We'd be on guard duty two at a time, you know, for twenty-four hours out at an outpost somewhere. So, we had a lot of fun at times doing that, but they would give us a pass at times and they started giving once a week somewhere. They'd put your names in, like in each platoon you put your names in a hat and draw it out. My name was drawn out for a pass to Paris, a three day pass. After I got there. That's kind of funny orders. Took us four days to get there.

KUPSKY: I was just going to say.

BISHOP: The old train that we were on, we loaded up before it got daylight one morning. I don't know who was in the same, I want to say little apartment in the train that I was in, but it had running boards on the side. Do you know what beaded ceiling is?

DENTON: Uh huh.

BISHOP: Well the seats and the sides and overhead were beaded ceiling with that material. A door on both sides. So, I think there was four of us in there, they wanted eight in there, and they come by to check it, "How many is in there?" "Eight!" Well, see we had our sleeping bags, we had to take those with us, they made us take those with us. Two of us slept in the floor and two of us slept in the seat across from us. We had it made pretty good. We took our rations with us to eat you know. You'd go through all those little towns, just creep through you know. There four days, and one of the men that I was at high school with, was an MP stationed at Paris. I had his address and we'd corresponded during the war so I sent him a letter as soon as I found out about it that I was going to leave a week later. I don't remember if I ever received one back or not. But I had already found out how to contact him so I got there and got in and checked into a little hotel and got in touch with him and he came by that afternoon. He was working, he said, "I'll pick you up tomorrow and you can live with me over in the MPs." And he said, "I'll work it out where I will be off the next two days." So, I went over there and the next day he dressed me up as an MP. (Laughter) Checked the jeep out and we toured Paris for two days. Two MPs. (Laughter) I told you when you get a bunch of boys together they'll do anything. But, anytime we'd stop those Frenchmen come up, "Parade? Parade? You going to have a parade?" So, we had a very good visit and I saw him several times after I came home, we got together.

KUPSKY: What was his name again?

BISHOP: His name was Warren Lott, L-O-T-T.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay. And you stayed in touch with him after the war?

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPSKY: This family who was in this house in Czechoslovakia, were they pretty friendly toward you?

BISHOP: Oh, very, very, friendly. Bledsoe and I roomed together there and when I was in Paris, Bledsoe got his orders to come home, because he didn't have as many points as I did. They were sending him home to train to go to the Pacific. So when I got back he was gone and he left some of his stuff and one or two of the fellas that had been injured, well one of the boys that had been killed on tank number eight, some of his blankets and all ended up over on our tank. So when I got my orders to leave I had more than I could take. So I got some, we call the O.D.s and blankets and things, I don't know what else it was, and I gave them to that man and he cried like a baby. Because of what he had. But what was most unusual, and most people probably wouldn't believe this, but it was the truth, they had one duck and there was a pond not too far from there. Well his daughter had the little small child, would take that duck out after lunchtime each day down to the pond and it would swim a while and she'd do something, holler or something, and that duck would come back and it'd walk back and go in the gate there at the house. Everybody used the back door because the front was right on the street and they had a gate here beside the house. He had one horse and a little one horse wagon that he'd pull. I don't know what he ever used the horse for. I never did see him use it for anything except get that wagon out and ride around in it.

KUPSKY: I didn't know you could train a duck.

BISHOP: I didn't either, but I don't know what happened. I'd say most people wouldn't believe that but she'd do it every day. She'd take that duck out to that pond, that little kid.

DENTON: Let it go for a swim?

BISHOP: Yeah.

(Laughter)

DENTON: That's funny

BISHOP: Might have been she fed it just right to get it you know, let him get hungry. When she wasn't going to feed it, it would come back for that. I don't know what it was.

KUPSKY: Yeah, could be.

BISHOP: But we were there and some of the boys got to running a contest and one of them came up with the idea to see who could name all the states and the capitals the quickest. And that contest went around for quite a while.

DENTON: Now when you got to Paris what were the French people like? How did they treat you?

BISHOP: They treated us very nice, very nice.

DENTON: What types of places and sites did you see that stand out in your memory?

BISHOP: Well we went down to Eiffel Tower and at that time they had several airplanes parked under it that had been used in the war. It was a kind of tourist attraction of course. Then Notre Dame, is that how you say it? We toured that. He just showed me everything. Those are the two outstanding things that I really remember.

DENTON: How was the weather there?

BISHOP: Well, we were there in, it must have been July. It was warm.

DENTON: Pretty warm?

BISHOP: Mm hmm.

DENTON: Now how long did you stay in Paris before you ...

BISHOP: Stayed there three days. Four days to get there and three days there and then it took three days to get back. We got sick of the train going back. I guess I could have stayed a day or two more and it wouldn't have mattered to them.

KUPSKY: In Czechoslovakia was there a non-fraternization order?

BISHOP: I don't think so. We didn't hear of that. See, we lived with the people.

KUPSKY: Right, well that is what I was wondering, if there was any other restrictions or anything.

BISHOP: No. But the family we lived with could speak, some of them could speak some English. But what had happened they told us that the German army come in there on an Easter morning, Sunday morning, and got all the youngsters, ten years and younger and killed them a few years before then. I went to the cemetery then to see a lot of the tombstones. In fact, Geneva and I were on a company trip to Germany and her sister and husband met us in Munich. We picked up a car there and drove to Prague. Then on the way back we stopped at Pilsen and went out to this town where we were stationed and went to the same house where I stayed. I went down to the creek where we had our tanks parked and all. But they've put a lot of apartment houses there now and when we were back up at the house on a hill a ways from there. An addition had been put on the house and we were standing there looking at it and I made some pictures of it. I told Geneva, my bother-in-law, and sister-in-law about you know, the room where we slept down, looked like it was, it was on the bottom floor but it was on the hill. It was kind of a basement it looked like from upstairs, I mean from the road, and this lady came up the street, a little road, with a little old two wheeled cart pulling her groceries I guess. So I had taken letterhead stationary with me you know, that had our emblem on it and when

she got up there she just kindly stopped and looked at us and I pulled that out and showed her that and pointed to my shoulder and she said, “Yeah” and I looked down at that room down there and did like this you know (makes sleeping gesture) and wrote down 1945. She kindly smiled and she got her pocketbook out and went through it and she did something like “wait a minute” and she went inside. She was in there I guess twenty minutes and come back out and shook her head. I have no idea what she was trying to find. It might have been that young lady that was there at that time. I don’t know and will never know. But we couldn’t find anyone there anywhere that could speak English.

KUPKSY: Oh that’s too bad. That would have been interesting.

BISHOP: It would have. Mm hmm. But then we went from there over to the cemetery. I guess we spent an hour over there look at the, you know, looking at the tombstones and the ages on them.

DENTON: Now, did this lady go into the house that you stayed in?

BISHOP: Yeah. Same house, uh huh.

DENTON: It might have been the woman with the duck.

(Laughter)

BISHOP: That’s what I’m saying. That young lady. It might have been. It could have easily have been the same one.

DENTON: That’s interesting.

KUPKSY: That is very interesting, yeah.

BISHOP: Well then we got orders from there and we were assigned to the, I believe it was the 50th Amphibious Tank Battalion, and we were sent up to on the north sea of Holland just north of Ghent, Belgium to train in the Pacific with the little old duck like things with these little old tracks on them. They would be used to go out to ships and then go back in on land. To send us to the Pacific doing that. That’s we were on V-J day. When the war was over in Japan. There were three battalions up there. Colonel Goodrich was the battalion commander of our group and. He didn’t send us out to train that day. The other two colonels sent their boys out training that day. So they had the mess kits, I mean they had the barrels set up to wash our mess kits. They had four barrels to wash them in, get them good and clean. So and I was rinsing mine through the last water and I heard somebody holler, “Bishop! Bishop!” I looked over and it was a Colonel. He waived at me to come over and I walked over and he said, “I want you to eat lunch with me today” and I said, “Well Colonel, I just had lunch.” “Come on you’re going to go in here and eat with me.” I was a Corporal and there he was a Lieutenant Colonel but he was the commanding officer of our battalion and I went in and sat with him and he talked about

eventually coming back to Knoxville and Nashville the whole time we were sitting there. Had a good visit with him.

KUPSKY: Now, he was the one who had kind of taken you in and talked to you for a while before?

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPSKY: Were those the only two times you had really talked with him?

BISHOP: No, I had talked with him several times. In fact, after Bledsoe and I had been in the 18th tank battalion – they transferred him down to Camp Polk—they transferred us to one of the infantry battalions. We stayed with them about I guess six weeks. We didn't have to train on weekends with the infantry we'd go back over to company A and talk to those boys. So, one day, I don't know which one of us thought about it, "Why don't we go over and ask them if they won't transfer us back to company A". So, we went over one night after we had our evening meal and cleaned up and we went into the company office there and our Captain Branigan wasn't there. But we walked out and just as we walked out we run into Colonel Guinn B. Goodrich and he said, "Hi Bishop!" We saluted him and he said "at ease" and we stood there and talked just like we talk now. He was that kind of fella. And I said, "Colonel, let me tell you why we're over here." I and told him, I said, "we'd like to come back. Bledsoe and I would. We came in the same day. You interviewed us the same day." He said, "You go in in the morning and ask for a transfer and I'll ask Captain Branigan to ask for you to come back." Now listen, we transferred back into the tank outfit. But that was another time when we were together and then I was with him another time or two. I don't remember now when, but the first reunion, the first time I saw him again, no, I saw him Knoxville after the war one day. Then in '88 went to a reunion in San Antonio and talked with him there, visited with him. His wife was in Knoxville visiting some of her people and he was coming back to Knoxville. We met them and ate lunch with them one day, bought his lunch, his and his wife's lunch at Regas one day. Visited with them there. Then the next year our meeting was in Louisville. Well, when we were in San Antonio he ate breakfast with Geneva and I a time or two. He wanted to eat breakfast with us. The next year was in Louisville and I think we ate breakfast, the three of us, ate breakfast together each morning. He was very, very, nice individual.

KUPSKY: And this was Lieutenant Colonel Goodrich?

BISHOP: Uh huh. Guinn B. Goodrich. He played football for UT and the year before last now, when Tennessee played Florida and they did so badly in Knoxville. (Laughter) Tennessee did.

DENTON: We remember that well. (Laughter)

BISHOP: I called him that afternoon when I got in my car and I, about for a while for a couple of years I subscribed to a Sunday paper and had it sent to him. He finally sent me

a note and said, "Don't do that anymore." He said, "I don't get it for about ten days after that and it's all torn up when I get it." (Laughter) But, I called him and I said, "Colonel, what did you think about the ballgame?" He said, "In all my long years I have never seen Tennessee play such a sorry ballgame." (Laughter). But we had a meeting out at this Lieutenant Cox's ranch a few years ago and Lieutenant Kling and his wife were going out and we were talking before we went out. He wanted to know what our plane schedule was and I told him and we were on the same plane from Atlanta to El Paso. So I rented a car and we went by and visited the Colonel and his wife, I guess for a couple of hours on our way up there. Then Lieutenant Cox invited him up there for a meal at his ranch one night for us, a cookout. He invited the Colonel and his wife and a daughter and her husband that lived there and they came up. So we visited with him quite a bit that night. I call him every once and a while, he's still living. Last time I called him he said he'd never thought he'd be living in a room that cost him three hundred dollars a night. He lives in a nursing home. He lives in one room and his wife's in another one. He's ninety, he was born in 1912, so he would be 92 this year.

KUPSKY: Oh, wow. Well, that's kind of neat. It seems like he took a real liking to you.

BISHOP: Well, he did a lot. He treated everybody that way I think. Well, a lot of people did. Yeah, he was very popular man, and a very good officer.

KUPSKY: Yeah, it sounds like it.

BISHOP: His ability was very good, very good.

KUPSKY: Well, I wanted to go back to August, if you remember how you heard about the Atomic bomb, both the Atomic bombs being dropped.

BISHOP: Well, we were training on the North Sea and we heard it when we come at night we'd hear it and wondering how much longer it'd be. Then we heard it at breakfast the morning that, you know it had been said V-J Day and we didn't have to train that morning, that day. It was just an announcement when we went to eat that morning. Of course we were living in tent city then.

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE-----

DENTON: As far as when the atomic bombs dropped, did you all know what an atomic bomb was?

BISHOP: No.

DENTON: What were some of the conversations and thoughts that you all had about that?

BISHOP: It was just a big bomb is all we knew.

KUPSKY: Did you realize what it meant when you heard about it?

BISHOP: No, no, no we didn't.

KUPSKY: I mean in terms that that was going to end the war.

BISHOP: No, we didn't right then but it was really a blessing from both sides.

KUPSKY: Now was there any chance that, you said you had more points, but was there any chance that you would have had to go to the Pacific?

BISHOP: Yeah. We were training to go to the Pacific. Out on the North Sea. We were training there with this amphibious tractor battalion to go over there. See, we would be used in to meet the ships and haul the things in so to speak.

DENTON: So, you were going basically into transport and supply?

BISHOP: Yeah, that's what that would have been. Yeah. Since we'd been in tanks using that, that was the next thing to it. Of course that's what they were training us for. There ain't no telling what they might have had put us if there might not had been the end of the war.

KUPSKY: So then what then was the general reaction on V-J Day?

BISHOP: Well, everybody was as happy as they could be. Happy go lucky. Yeah.

DENTON: Now, you were in Pilsen?

BISHOP: No, no, we were in Holland just north of Ghent, Belgium.

DENTON: Okay.

BISHOP: Out in "Tromosurt" or that wasn't exactly like it. It was a long name.

DENTON: Up in Maastricht? In the Maastricht area? Somewhere up in there?

BISHOP: I don't remember about that. No, I don't think.

DENTON: I am trying to think of where that might be.

BISHOP: See, Ghent, Belgium is kind of north of Brussels.

DENTON: Okay. Okay.

BISHOP: Not too far in that area. Mm hmm. And we were training on the North Sea I believe it was.

DENTON: Okay. That's where it is. I got a little side tracked.

BISHOP: And then they moved us, excuse me, go ahead. Go ahead.

DENTON: Oh, I was just going to ask when you got orders to go back, did you go back to England?

BISHOP: No, from there they shipped us down. I don't know how long we stayed there. Let me tell you an interesting story. Now, the stories are true. But, when we were in the Hartz mountains someone got this small deer, fawn, is that what you call it? And made a pet out of it. Started giving it milk and all and feeding it you know. Whenever they'd get ready to go somewhere they'd pick it up and put it in the back of the captain's jeep. (Laughter) Well, when it got big enough it they didn't have to help it, it jumped in there anyway and when that jeep took off that deer was in the back. Well, when we went to Czechoslovakia to Holland that deer rode in the back of the jeep. We'd go into Ghent, Belgium and the Germans had stripped Holland, [its] people of a lot of everything. They didn't have anything hardly, food or anything. But the people in Belgium, they had their watches in the window like you'd see in the store, anywhere you know, and like that in the windows. So, we'd go down to Ghent, Belgium in the evening for an hour, two, or three. Maybe twelve, fifteen, miles down there. Some of the fellas brought back some kind of booze with them one night and gave it to that deer and it went blind. So they got the people after them and they sent that place down there and what they were selling in town. That deer would go around through the area and just walk in your tent or might walk up over you or anything at that time you know. I don't know what ever happened to it. When we left there they moved us to Mons, Belgium where they made us MPs or guards, [of a] supply place there, when we contacted the colonel before we left Holland, on our bulletin board one day there was a notice if you had sixty points or less you could apply to go to England to school for three months. Well, I saw him and told him I had more than sixty points but if there was any chance I'd like to go. It goes back to show you it's not what you know sometimes it's who you know. Well, guess who got to go to England to school? Well, when they got down to Mons, there was supposed to be one boy from the tank battalion and when the notice came in there was two from our battalion and the other one was the other gunner on his tank. (Laughter) A fella by the name of Jack Hendrickson. He lives in Birmingham, Michigan now. Jack and I were selected to go to England to school for three months. We were just north, well just a little, maybe ten miles from Swindon at a town called Shrivingham. They called it Shrivingham American Univerisity. Well, they had people there that were in service didn't have enough points to come home that were college professors in various things. So, they were trying to find some way to occupy us until they could get us home. I had a class in Dairying, had the same textbook at UT that the man was using down there except it was paperback. He was from the University of Wisconsin, which is a dairy country. Had one on landscape gardening from LSU, had the same textbook, and then I had one on pork production by the name of ,I remember his name, his name was Grady Sellars. He was the head of the swine department at the University of Kentucky. He wrote articles for *Progressive Farming* magazine after that, after he got home. So, I had those three hours of classes a

day. In the second day I was there I ran into a boy that I was in high school with and he had a buddy. If we applied for a pass by noon on Tuesday we got a free rail ticket to anywhere in England or Scotland. So, we'd leave Friday afternoon, about two o'clock we'd be out of class, and be back in Sunday night. We went somewhere every weekend. We rode there travelling and we'd stay with the Red Cross for thirty-five cents a night and eat their SPAM sandwiches.

KUPSKY: What were some of the more memorable places you stayed when you went on these little trips?

BISHOP: Well, we just stayed with the Red Cross at that time; in their buildings that they had. But we went to London several times and we went to Bath a couple of times. We went down to, I can't remember the name of the town now that was, it wasn't too far from where we are, but it has the tallest church steeple in England. Little, slim, tall one. It's just to the south of the Stonehenge.

KUPSKY: It's not Canterbury is it?

BISHOP: No. I don't remember the name of it. I've been back there since then, but we went down there a couple of times. We went to Edinburgh one weekend. Rode a train all night Friday night and stayed up there Saturday and got up early Sunday morning and rode the train back all day Sunday then but at least we got there. Got up on the big castle on the hill and toured around there that day. It was interesting, very interesting.

DENTON: Did you go to up Scotland or in anywhere up north?

BISHOP: Just went to Edinburgh in Scotland.

KUPSKY: What did you think if Edinburg. I'm just curious because I spent some time in Scotland. I was just curious what you thought of Edinburgh while you were there?

BISHOP: I thought it was a beautiful city at that time. People were nice to us. We'd been back there a few times since then. People have always been very nice there to us when we were there.

KUPSKY: It's a beautiful city.

BISHOP: It is a beautiful city, beautiful city.

KUPSKY: I'm just curious and this is sort of general going back a bit, did you see any USO shows the whole time you were in Europe?

BISHOP: Saw one and it was at a very small place and it couldn't be many people get in it. What the facilities were when we were there. I think they had several shows, but I mean not many people could see it at a time. Maybe a hundred, hundred and fifty at the most.

KUPKSY: Oh, okay. What was the show you saw?

BISHOP: I don't remember. There was some ladies singing but I don't remember who they were.

KUPKSY: Oh, okay. (Laughs)

BISHOP: It was more just a musical type thing.

KUPKSY: Where was that?

BISHOP: I don't remember. I'm serious. I do not remember.

KUPKSY: Oh okay. Somewhere on the continent.

BISHOP: Yes, it was.

DENTON: Do you remember the day when you got orders to go back home?

BISHOP: Yeah, very well.

DENTON: Can you tell us about that?

BISHOP: We were at this Shrivingsham American University and I had an appointment at the dentist on Saturday morning. I want to say it was the fifth of December, it was the first Saturday in December. I had a cavity I thought and when I got to the dentist's office he said it was a wisdom tooth and they didn't fill wisdom teeth, they'd have to pull it. Well he wasn't too careful, just tore my jaw up a little bit or I thought he did. He packed it good and I got back and I had the upper deck in the room where we were staying in this dormitory. It was a school there but they just had regular army bunks in it and we ate in the cafeteria there, and back up a little bit of what our daily routine was. We had to stand at reveille at morning, go to three one hour classes and that was all we had to do you know, during the day. But, I got back and I was on that bunk and they came in and called out about five or six names. We never had to have a detail to be called out to do anything since I had been there, didn't have to pull a KP or anything and I thought "what in the world is this? I give some excuse to get out of this." Got down there, they got us outside and had us line up in kind of columns of four to a column, and threes and they said, "We've got your orders to go home." There was snow on the ground and I had to have my mouth packed you know. I guess that might have been close to noon. Well, I went back that afternoon, I mean back that night, to the medics and got it re-packed. Back again Sunday then there afternoon on Sunday. They said to get back with us, I made it a short trip each time. (Laughter) Well, Sunday evening they told us that we'd probably leave on Monday. Well, I'd stay there till the meeting was over and go ahead and pack, but Monday I got rid of having it packed you know and we left there Monday evening and went back to Tidworth, stayed in the same group of barracks that we were there

before. Stayed there about three or four days and then we went down to South Hampton and started home on a battleship. I don't remember the name of it. They were in a convoy and there was an aircraft carrier and some other ships along together and hit a storm. All rushed up and turned back, but the battleship didn't and it was written up in readers digest, the waves a hundred and fifty feet high and all on them. It was rough. It even broke that ship. It had to go into dry dock when it got back to the states. Let me see. On the 23rd of December, oh, about three o'clock in the afternoon we were up on deck, the water was just like glass, it was smooth and we could see something coming on our left side, it was that aircraft carrier. Oh, those boys just waived at us. (Laughter) As they passed us up. We were sick you know, but they were going to get home before we did. But we didn't know the Navy tradition, a battleship docks first. So, we waved at them in the Hudson Bay harbor before we docked, before they did. (Laughter)

KUPSKY: You got the last laugh.

BISHOP: So then we went back to Camp Kilmore again.

KUPSKY: Oh wow. You just kind of the reverse of ...

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPSKY: The exact reverse.

BISHOP: And we got in there on Christmas Eve and left there Christmas day and went to Camp Atterbury from there. Then discharged there.

KUPSKY: Well, I guess with the storm, I think you may have mentioned, but I guess seasickness was probably as much of a problem as it had been on the way over.

BISHOP: No it wasn't. It wasn't. Even though that storm, it wasn't near as rough as it was going over. Cause that old ship it was so bad. See, it was just like a bucking horse I'd say.

KUPSKY: Yeah, that's not pleasant. Yeah, I guess a battleship probably rides a little better 'cause it's so big.

DENTON: Plus you were going home so ...

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPSKY: Yeah. Yeah, that will help too.

(Laughter)

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPKSY: So, how long were you at Camp Kilmore then? It was like twenty-four hours then, very quickly.

BISHOP: Yeah, well, we didn't get there until, they got us up and fed us breakfast I think the way I remember, oh, about four o'clock in the morning. By the time we got in there and docked, then got unloaded and they got us out there and put us through a little processing and all. What they had to do, whatever they had to do at that time. They fed us a big steaks meal and it was about four that afternoon, we had two meals that day.

KUPKSY: You said it was four in the morning when you docked or four in the afternoon?

BISHOP: No, when they fed us. They'd feed everybody and get us off the ship see.

KUPSKY: Oh, I gotcha. This would have been, I guess within the few months after the war. Were there still crowds in the harbor when you came in?

BISHOP: Oh, it was pretty crowded, yes. It was.

KUPKSY: A lot of people there to see.

DENTON: Did anyone meet you at the port or ...

BISHOP: My mother and father lived in a rural area and Geneva's mother and daddy, neither of them had a telephone. In fact, neither of them had electricity at that time, in their area. I sent each one of them a telegram on Christmas Eve and they received it the day after Christmas. I ended up getting in to Geneva's home about one o'clock I guess on Saturday afternoon, discharged the evening before in Camp Atterbury.

KUPSKY: So, just to get the timeline, you were in Camp Atterbury then how long?

BISHOP: Two or three days.

KUPSKY: Okay, just waiting basically?

BISHOP: Just processing. They tried to get us to join up again.

KUPKSY: Oh, right.

DENTON: (Laughs)

KUPSKY: But you held firm I guess?

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPKSY: Was there any sort of temptation to either stay in the reserves or ...

BISHOP: No, I don't think there were in our group at that time. I think most of us wanted to get home and get away from it. Our company commander, I saw him later several times, and he said there was no way he was, this is the way he expressed it, there was no way he was going to stay in the Army. But he said they had the most beautiful little WAC [member of the Women's Army Corps] there talking to him. She talked me into it before I realized it. (Laughs) He said it was probably a good thing, he ended up a lieutenant colonel in reserves and he says it's really helped him with his retirement income.

KUPKSY: Oh sure. But you were more intent on just getting home?

BISHOP: Yeah. Getting home, yeah. Forgetting about our war.

KUPKSY: So I guess it sounds like it was probably what? About the 29th or 30th when you got home?

BISHOP: 28th was my discharged, 29th when I got to Geneva's home.

KUPKSY: Okay. That's when you got home.

BISHOP: And that was Saturday.

KUPKSY: What was that like when you first got there?

BISHOP: Well, they were eating lunch and I walked in on them. Of course it was a good and happy moment then. She was teaching and school started back on Monday. She went to school Monday, then we, I don't know, do you ever remember? No, I don't guess it was running in the Tennessee, the train? It had silver-like siding on it. Aluminum ...

DENTON: I believe I remember when I was real little it came through here.

BISHOP: Anyway it ran from Memphis to Washington. So we caught it on Monday night and rode it to Corinth, Mississippi and my dad met me us a little later on Tuesday morning. Then we came back Saturday night on the same train. Stayed down there with him that long. Then I got a job that started the 28th of that month teaching at Lafollette [Tennessee].

KUPKSY: Oh wow. Pretty quickly.

KUPKSY: Did you use the G.I. Bill at all?

BISHOP: Yes, but I, I didn't say this, when I was called in to active duty I needed three quarter hours having my degree. When I was in the Air Force I did some extra work then. UT awarded my degree in December of '43. So I had my degree. Another Ag. teacher and I decided we'd go back to summer school. We went back to our same faculty advisor

and he was dean at the college of education at that time. He recommended that we get our Master's in education and a minor in Ag. So, that's what we did. We both got into administration and supervision with a minor in Ag. I went back on the G.I. Bill of Rights for that. But I went in on Saturdays and I went some at night and I went in the summer then.

KUPKSY: Did you start that right away that spring semester then on Saturdays?

BISHOP: No. No. I waited. Let's see, started in '58. I mean, I mean '48.

KUPKSY: '48. Okay, but it was still a couple of years though.

BISHOP: Yeah.

KUPKSY: What was it like making the transition into a job right away?

BISHOP: It was enjoyable. It was. I enjoyed it. I really did.

KUPKSY: How big was the class you were teaching?

BISHOP: It was an unusual situation. The man who was the Ag teacher at Lafollette had to go into service so they took the Ag teacher at Jacksboro, he worked the morning in Lafollette and the afternoon in Jacksboro. So he saw his opportunity to get out of some work, you know. He had been the just the Ag teacher just at Jacksboro and so, they hired me for Lafollette. See, I only had classes that morning. I don't guess I had over forty-five students. It was an easy job. I stayed there then through that year was out and then I got out and got to shopping around some. You know we came to Rutledge then over there across the river.

DENTON: In Grainger county.

BISHOP: Stayed there twelve years and a half as an Ag teacher.

KUPSKY: At the high school then?

BISHOP: Yes.

KUPKSY: This was the first time you'd gotten married and this was the first time you guys were in the same place for more than a few days.

BISHOP: That's right.

DENON: Did that take some getting used to?

BISHOP: No. (Laughter) Not at all.

KUPKSY: Yeah, you might want to keep you voice down to answer that one. (Laughter)

BISHOP: Not at all.

KUPSKY: Okay.

BISHOP: No, we got along very, very, well. Everything was fine.

DENTON: When you got back and you moved to Lafollette where did you all make your home?

BISHOP: When I got the job in Lafollette she was teaching in Jellico so we got an apartment in Jellico and I drove over then. Then when school was out they had to move her to Lafollette where we were in the same schools, so we lived there about two months and then moved to Rutledge then.

DENTON: And you bought a home in Rutledge?

BISHOP: Well, we rented.

DENTON: You rented.

BISHOP: We rented to start with and then built one.

DENTON: Uh huh. And you have ...

BISHOP: No, we bought one then built another one. That's what it was.

DENTON: Oh, okay. Now, you have two children?

BISHOP: Two.

DENTON: Can you tell me about when they were born and ...

BISHOP: Larry was born March the 13th, 1948. He was always interested in electricity and things of that order. I came in from work one night and he was about the fourth grade I guess, he had him an order made out for some radio parts. He said he'd pay for them if I'd write a check to pay for it. He didn't have a checking account. (Laughter) I said, "What are you going to do with them?" and he said, "I'm going to make me a radio." So, we ordered them and made him a little radio and put it in a sandwich box you know, with a photo-electric photo cell in it. He'd hold it out in the sunshine and get three or four stations with it. He got started that way. Then he got his Ham radio license when he was a junior, sophomore or junior, in high school. He got his degree from UT in electrical engineering. He's been in that field and I guess he must have graduated in '70 and in '71 he got into a company in Lynchburg, Virginia making telephone equipment. He stayed in that field and then he got to working in different places but he ended up working for a

company in Pleasant Valley, New York. He was living in Atlanta doing their electrical engineering and designing work. And then they started growing and ended up with about twenty, let's see, sixty-four people in his office in Atlanta. Then they sold the business three years ago. All indicated that he is retired now.

KUPKSY: Did either of your sons ever enlist in the military?

BISHOP: No. Larry had an exam but they didn't take him back at that time.

KUPKSY: I guess that would have been Vietnam, around Vietnam?

BISHOP: I guess it was. Yeah.

KUPKSY: What was your attitude as far as ...

BISHOP: I was hoping he wouldn't have to go. (Laughter) But if he had to it was just one of those things. You couldn't do much about it.

KUPKSY: Did you have much of an opinion as far as the Korean War, when that began?

BISHOP: Well, kind of wondered why it ever happened. To be honest with you.

DENTON: Did you have any friends that went on to the Korean War?

BISHOP: None that was in our outfit then. We had some friends at Rutledge that went, that stayed in the reserve. In another outfit, but not the outfit I was in.

KUPKSY: Let's see, you joined like the American Legion, the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars]. When did you join those?

BISHOP: I joined the American Legion in August of '48.

KUPSKY: Oh, okay. Right away.

BISHOP: No, no, no wait a minute. Let's see. In August of '46. See, I've been a member for over fifty years now. In that. No, when we moved to Rutledge it is a small community so to speak and I thought I needed to get involved in some organizations and I just walked into a group of fellas one day and they were talking about the American Legion and they said, "Why don't you join and be with us?" so I did. Stayed with them. Then we got a VFW chapter started over there it. Then I lost interest and then dropped out of it and then I joined the one on the national level as a life member.

KUPKSY: Were you fairly active with the Legion right away those first years?

BISHOP: I was. Well, maybe not the first year or two, but I was on different committees but then I served as treasurer for a few years of it.

KUPKSY: So what did you do? Like what did the Legion do around in this community?

BISHOP: Well, we were trying to raise money at that time to build us a building. We put out bids with specifications for bids on cars and we raffled off three cars to raise money and I don't remember, we did some other things, but I don't remember what those were now. We got some money to get it started and we actually ended up building a building. Then we were very active in funerals. We had a doctor in Rutledge that was our bugler and we had one funeral, a boy was in service and was coming home and was killed in a traffic accident and when we fired the first, I was in the firing squad, when we fired the first shot his mother passed out. The boy that was giving the commands to fire had his back to the family and the people and all, so he kept giving the orders and of course we proceeded, the bugler played and all but they revived her then. We went to one funeral one afternoon across the mountain in Grainger County. It started at two and when we left there it was dusky dark. They had seven preachers there and all of them preached.

KUPKSY: All of them put in their two cents. Wow, that's a long service.

BISHOP: Very, very long.

DENTON: Are you in any other organizations or church organizations or military organizations or things like that?

BISHOP: Just active in the 8th Armored, military organization. As I said, [I'm a] life member of American Legion and the VFW and the Battle of the Bulge. But I'm not really active in any one of them. I just get their magazines and so forth.

KUPKSY: Now when did you first start with the 8th Armored Division Association?

BISHOP: In '83 we went through Nashville and I found out about the organization, I started going to the one, I guess it was '85 was the first one, and I've missed two since then. I started going and I was elected. We elect a President each year. Serves as an honorary position more or less. I served '91 and '92, I believe, as president and the man that started it was an attorney in Chicago, where he was the main one. He served as president four years and then when he got the by-laws and all that worked out they had three, four, executive officers and he took the time as an executive officer and he held that position for four years and resigned at the end of the meeting. They didn't elect a replacement till next year and I was elected at that time and have served since then.

KUPKSY: What did you think of the position as president? First the president but the we will talk about the other ...

BISHOP: Well the president, the main thing the president does in our organization is just preside at the annual meeting. He has no power or anything. That's the way the by-laws are set up. But, more or less public relations and with other members. That's all.

KUPKSY: As executive director what's your function?

BISHOP: As the executive committee, we are in charge of running the organization. Each year we go and check out different places for having a reunion and the usually have, they call it founds, military founds, military organization tours. They'll invite you down. Last year in May we were in Baton Rouge and we flew down for that. We were there Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights and we were coming home Sunday afternoon. The weather was so bad in Memphis that we couldn't get a plane out of there to come down to Baton Rouge. So we had to spend Sunday night. But they provided your hotels and meals and all, show you around and everything. So, well, we've been on one in St. Louis, we've been on one in Grand Rapids, we've been to one in Norfolk, Richmond, and Buffalo. Went around Charlotte, you know, of course we have to sign a contract with them assuring them that we are going to use so many rooms and they give us certain other things. We met with a lady in Knoxville, with the chamber of commerce I guess it was, no, the convention bureau, that used to be a manager at a hotel and I asked her, "What can I ask those people?" and her answer to me was, "Did you ever buy anything? Did you ever buy a new car?" She said, "Did you trade with them on the first offer?" She said to make them that offer and see what else you can get. She said they got a pad that can bend those rates. She said, "Have you asked them for a continental breakfast? Have you asked them for airport transportation? Have you asked them for free rooms for three or four of you?" You know things like that, so. So, we started asking them and we got it every year since then for the same price.

(Laughter)

DENTON: Well, hey! There you go.

KUPSKY: You mentioned needing to know the number of rooms, how many people usually show up at reunions, meeting, and things like that?

BISHOP: Well, at our age it is getting smaller. The largest group we had was about five hundred and ninety or eighty people.

KUPSKY: And what year was that?

BISHOP: That was in '99. That was our fiftieth reunion. Had it in Louisville. Last year I think we had two hundred and thirty four. But we used to go in on Thursday and had a little what they called the early bird party Thursday night. Then a tour Friday, and a dance Friday night, then a business meeting Saturday morning, and a banquet Saturday night, and then a business Sunday morning. So, we cut out the Sunday morning business, do it all on Saturday now and have a memorial service at the end of it. One of the men says we don't get to see each other but once a year. He said, "Why don't we start it on Wednesday?" He said, "Why don't you arrange the tour on Wednesday?" "We started arranging the tour on Wednesday afternoon and most everyone is there that's coming see cause it only costs them one nights lodge extra cause the transportation of getting there and back is the same price. They seem to enjoy it. There pretty much a congenial group.

KUPKSY: That sounds like it. Bledsoe, you had mentioned, did you say that you've stayed in touch with him?

BISHOP: Yeah, we have stayed in touch now fifty years.

KUPKSY: Where is he?

BISHOP: He lives in Fort Worth.

KUPKSY: And how often do you guys visit each other?

BISHOP: Well, now we just visit each other during the reunions.

DENTON: You mentioned that, or I've read that you were a PFC when you went in to the war.

BISHOP: I was a Private.

DENTON: You were a Private.

BISHOP: Mm hmm.

DENTON: Okay. And when you were discharged you were a Corporal. When did you receive your promotions and where?

BISHOP: Well, when we got to the 8th Armored Division, after we'd been in the Air Force. The ones that came into the 18th tank battalion about the second week, they were there they just made us PFCs then. See, they shipped out all the privates and the PFCs see, the rest, there wasn't any openings above that unless somebody died or got sick or something another or couldn't serve basically. Then when we went into combat of course there was people injured and then they had to promote somebody to put them in. So, after we went in in January some people were injured and I was promoted to Corporal then and named as gunner so that's the reason I went from tank six to tank fourteen as a gunner on that, in that platoon and it was kinda funny, the boys in the first platoon, the second platoon, and the third platoon they were one group see, so to speak. They done be with their group just to be with another one or the other one. So I liked the second so I asked if there was ever a change to move me back because there was a vacancy on number eight, the boy was killed there in Merbeck and Tetelrath. I was in the tank right behind him when his tank was hit with a bazooka. It came in an hit him in the shoulder and all, killed two in that tank, no, killed one in that tank. He was the only one. Then they of course got another tank and I went in on that and that was Bledsoe's tank. I mean he was our bog gunner on that one. I went in on that tank. So, then I got to Corporal. But there wasn't a lot of promotions in our outfit because we didn't have too many people that were killed, well some, but most of them were privates and PFCs. This might be of interest to you. We were in combat sixty-three days during the war, is all we were there. That wasn't

very many compared to a lot of the people. And we had I think it was less than 2100 people killed and injured. In that sixty-three days. Our company had five people killed. I read a speech one time that Patton made. He said that most of the times, he said you'd be scared but said only five percent of the people will die. Now see, we had roughly a hundred people, a little over a hundred see. And five people ...

KUPKSY: Yeah, that's right. What was your opinion of General Patton?

BISHOP: Well, we were in his army in the Battle of the Bulge and all I know is just what I heard after that. Sounded like he was a very stern individual. But he was scheduled to come back on the same ship that we come back on.

KUPKSY: Oh really?

BISHOP: Yes, but he was killed. He was injured and died.

KUPKSY: Yeah, was that right before you came back? I don't remember the date he was killed.

BISHOP: Yeah, he was injured just a few days before we came back see he was scheduled to be back on that same ship we were told.

KUPSKY: Had he ever sort of inspected the division or had you ever seen him before?

BISHOP: No, see we were just in it at the time we went up there at Berg, Sinz, and Nanning you know those three or four days. Well, maybe that we were there, some of our group was there maybe eight or nine days but I never saw him. I don't think any of our group ever saw him. Now we had a speaker at our banquet in Charlotte a few years ago, he had written a book. He said, "I rode up front with Patton." and he talked about him and he had a lot of respect for him. One man in our outfit that's on, well our division was organized and chartered in Illinois so we got to have one man on the board of directors from Illinois. So the man that's on it is 90 years old and he's a retired banker and an attorney. He stays in Florida in the winter and near Chicago in the summer. After the war was over, he was a lieutenant colonel. He was assigned as the battalion commander of an infantry battalion. They were stationed over somewhere in Austria and you know Patton made some kind of a trade or something to preserve these white horses, what are their names? The ones that can walk on their back legs.

DENTON: Oh, the Lipizzaners?

BISHOP: Yeah, he made some kind of a deal that saved those horses so the Russians didn't get them. So, Lieutenant Colonel Smith, Wellington Smith, says that they had a parade and invited him to it. Most of the infantrymen he had were recipients of the Purple Heart and infantryman's badge. They had some of those horses in the parade and he said, "I got to stand with Patton," and said he cried like a baby when he saw all of us.

BISHOP: He said he was very touched with it. He said I couldn't believe that if I heard about it. Lieutenant Colonel Smith just told me that.

KUPKSY: Well, does anything come to mind, can you think of anything that we missed that you think that you'd like record or ...

(Tape paused)

KUPKSY: Just a couple other questions, I was wondering how many times you've, you have mentioned going back to Europe. I was wondering how many times you've gone back. Like you went to the spot in Czechoslovakia but some of the other places I was wondering how many times you had been back?

BISHOP: We had been back to Berg, Sinz, and Nenning, I think four times. There at Tetelrath where our tank, at the crossroads where it burned, we were on a tour of the 8th Armored in '96 I guess it was. They said they would go by places if they were not too far out of their way. So we were going to be at Romon which wasn't ten miles from there, Belgium, I asked to go by there so we drove by there and we stopped and I made a pictures of that crossroads. Yeah, which it is just any crossroads but it meant more to the four or five of us than it would anyone else.

KUPKSY: Oh yeah.

BISHOP: And it looked just like it was when we were there of course.

KUPKSY: Oh really?

BISHOP: Yeah, the same roads and the same places.

KUPKSY: The other sites you went to, how many of them would you say were pretty much the same as they had been?

BISHOP: Oh, very close to it, very close. Now we had been to Tidworth three times, well, Geneva and I were over there in 1980 and we rode a train out, we went to Bath and came to Salisbury, where that big church is with that tall steeple. We picked up a car there and drove out to Tidworth, it wasn't but a few miles and it was not restricted. But now it's under guard. Got it fenced and their cavalry, I mean their tanks are there, the English tanks are, and you can hardly get in there. But we have been over there on two tours and managed to get in on those two so we've been there three times. But several of the barracks are torn down but there is still some there like we lived in but they've added to them. I guess restrooms and all cause see you went in a hallway and a room on each side, twenty-four in each room and one commode at the back then. For forty-eight people.

KUPKSY: Oh wow. A logistical nightmare, I would think. Trying to organize that.

DENTON: I was going to ask you currently, what are some of your hobbies and things that you do now?

BISHOP: Well, maybe I don't have enough. I spend a lot of time working on the 8th Armored keeping up with that. (Laughter) My grandson developed me a computer program where I handle the finances of it and I also get the records when people pay it. I send them to the secretary treasurer and my youngest son has got the computer set up to where, on Quicken 2004, I can keep the records and get a prop and law statement any time on any amount any number of days. I spend a little time doing those things because it's interesting and I get a lot of correspondence with different members. Like I was telling you about this one Saturday the men in Orlando and then that letter there. The lady down in Naples, Florida. It takes a quite a bit of time but I usually like to spend my time out in my yard mowing, working around in it in the summer time. Geneva and I travel some. We run around quite a bit. We did go, have gone, to UT basketball men's and football season tickets. We didn't basketball tickets this year, got four games but didn't get all of them. Go to church and Sunday school each Sunday. But when I quit working at Farm Bureau, I worked in this county forty years with Farm Bureau. And when I quit I decided that I should just put whoever is in charge takeover and dropped out completely. I didn't go back and try to mess with them. I just left them alone and that's the way I think it should have been. Even though they have their annual meeting, tonight and we are going to that.

KUPKSY: You know you're very active kind of nationally with this. Are you active now in any local veteran's organizations?

BISHOP: In the Purple Heart. I am the treasurer for the Purple Heart for this county and Coker County. It's not too active but I am the treasurer of it.

KUPKSY: But it's your job.

BISHOP: Yeah. Yeah.

DENTON: Do you have anything plans in the future to go back to Europe?

BISHOP: Well, if you want to read, read that last issue there of the newsletter. That's the first one this man Billinger has put out.

DENTON: Okay.

BISHOP: I received a call, I want to say when but I don't remember now, but the man said he was a snowbird living in Florida this winter. They moved from Maryland and a Frenchman that he knew was visiting him that couldn't speak English. He was one of the men that was in a concentration camp that our outfit liberated in Germany, and he'd liked to talk to someone from the 78th Medics, did I know of anyone. I asked him where he was, he told me Florida, and I said well, the man who was elected president for this year is a dentist who lived and practiced in Brooklyn. When he got [to be age]sixty-five he got

his license in Florida, and went down there and started practicing. Practiced at both places at times and he lived about fifteen miles from where you are. So they got together and this man says that this man weighed 70 pounds when they liberated him. He couldn't walk he was so weak and all that is the reason he was still there. They made the others leave. Get out and walked until they died you know or shot them or something. They are having a reunion or celebration next year, the sixtieth reunion, and [if] any of our people that want to come over there they will pay their food or lodging while they are there. Now the Battle of the Bulge people started on something like that but I think they got it priced up to about three thousand dollars now per person to go. Several of us was interested in going, till they come up with a price like that. But I think it's for about ten or twelve days I believe. But they were going to provide room and board while you we were there. I was kind of interested in going to that. See, it's always interesting to go back. But if you ever get a chance to go over there go, be sure to go to, oh, what's the town where they told them, "Nuts!"? About the message ...

KUPKSY: Oh, Bastogne?

BISHOP: Bastogne. Go to Bastogne and go out three or four miles east of town there to that museum and see their movies and all. That's very, very, interesting. Very interesting.

DENTON: I'm going this summer with the Normandy Scholars to Normandy ...

BISHOP: Are you?

DENTON: ...to Caen and Rouen. So, we get to go run around the beaches and ...

BISHOP: There's a man who's the agent for Tennessee Farmers that lives in Bradley County, works out of Cleveland office. He and his wife are leaving on the 3rd of June. Be over there this year on the 6th invasion.

DENTON: On the 3rd I think is when we get there.

BISHOP: Of this year? Oh, that's the day this man gets there. I imagine he goes over on the third.

KUPKSY: It would be pretty crowded I think. I would think they should.

DENTON: From what I hear it's going to be a busy year since it's the 60th anniversary.

BISHOP: Yeah. We were there three or four or five years ago. Geneva and I were invited, I don't remember what year it was now, by the German government because of being in the 8th Armored, to be over there. They provided us our transportation and room and everything. I think it cost us four hundred dollars each to go over there and be gone a week. (Laughs)

KUPKSY: Not too bad.

DENTON: Good deal.

BISHOP: And we flew into Berlin and then we toured around several places. It was through Germany, it was very interesting.

KUPKSY: Sure. Now let me ...

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO-----

KUPKSY: This continues the interview with Mr. Sidney Bishop on March the 18th, 2004 in Jefferson City, Tennessee with Greg Kupksy and ...

DENTON: Braum Denton

KUPKSY: And you said you had another story

BISHOP: (Points at tape player) (Laughter)

KUPKSY: Oh, okay. Well, maybe after the tapes off. Well, did you have any other questions or was that the end?

DENTON: I think that's about all I have.

KUSPKY: Well, one last question I would like to ask is if you could sort of think of any lessons or the wisdom you have taken with you from your war experiences? To sort of impart for the Oral History Program, I was wondering that might be?

BISHOP: That's the hardest question of all. (Laughter)

KUPKSY: That's why it comes last. Yeah.

BISHOP: Well, I don't know hardly what my thinking is on how to answer that. But I'd say that any time that we're in service, or any person that's in service, the best advice that anyone could have is be sure to follow the orders exactly the way that they have been given to you. Because whoever is supposed to be in charge should know what to do. Should have you on the right track and there ain't no use in trying to veer you from it and doing something different. Follow it out to the letter. And just take it as it is.

DENTON: Now would you have anything to say if you could say just a few words to the young people, such as myself, as far as the war goes and just kind sum up ...

BISHOP: I'm not sure what really you want me to say. Well, if you had to go in service, what I just said. If you don't have to go in service I think we still got to respect our leadership whatever decisions they make. Whether we're Democrats or Republicans. That shouldn't matter but we need to follow their leadership and their guidance and if

we've elected them we should at least have enough trust in them as a people that we should follow whatever they say.

KUPKSY: Are you politically active now?

BISHOP: No.

KUPKSY: Just curious.

BISHOP: No, I was in the insurance business in this county and I liked to have both the Democrat's insurance and the Republican's insurance. (Laughter) I thought it best, I voted for, Geneva and I did, who we thought we should vote for and we voted for both sides and whoever we thinks the best. As for business, sometimes it will hurt you if you get lined up with one side or the other.

KUPKSY: Definitely.

BISHOP: Maybe it hurts you if you don't support them but you could still support people and they know who you are supporting.

KUPKSY: Right. Something else that just occurred to me, you mentioned that you still have the farm in West Tennessee. Do you get out there much?

BISHOP: Oh, I'm down there maybe four, five, or six times a year.

KUPKSY: And it is pretty much the same as it was when you grew up there?

BISHOP: Pretty much. Yes it is. Of course they've got electricity in there now. They got black top roads in there. (Laughter)

KUPKSY: Right. Telephones.

BISHOP: Telephones.

KUPKSY: And a few other improvements.

BISHOP: Yeah. Yeah.

KUPSKY: Well is there anything you think we forgot to ask you or anything else you can think of that's ...

BISHOP: I don't think of anything just now.

KUPKSY: Okay.

BISHOP: I've enjoyed it.

KUPSKY: Well, so have we. It's been a great interview.

DENTON: We really appreciate it.

KUPSKY: Yeah, thanks for meeting with us and talking with us.

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----