



Jack Weinberg

“Jake”

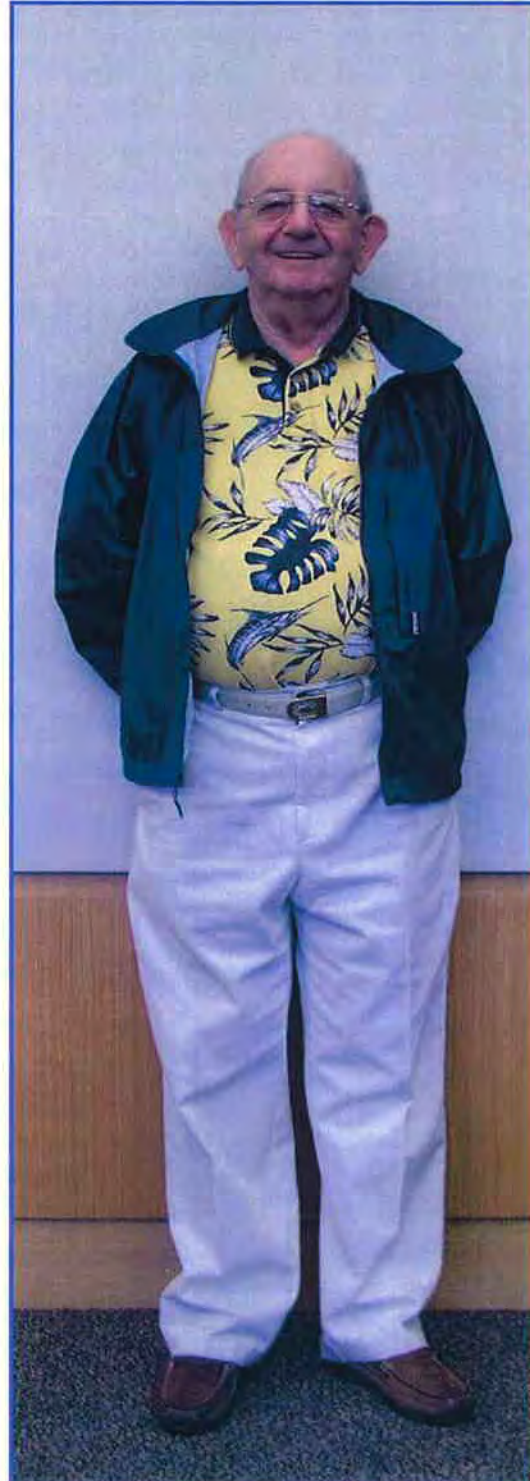
U.S. Army, World War II, Europe, PFC
103rd Division, 410th Regiment,
1st Battalion, Company D

Jack Weinberg

**Veterans
History
Project
Transcript**

**Interview conducted
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Jack Weinberg

Branch of Service: **U.S. Army**

Theater: **World War II, Europe**

Unit: **103rd Division, 410th Regiment, 1st Battalion, Company D**

Rank: **Private First Class**

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Place: Large Meeting Room B

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Interviewer/Transcriber: Neil O'Shea

This Veterans History Project interview is taking place in the auditorium of the Niles Public Library in Niles, Illinois. Today is Thursday, October 6th, in the year 2005. Our guest of honor today is a World War II veteran, Jack Weinberg. Mr. Weinberg served in the United States Army in the European Theater. My name is Neil O'Shea. I am a librarian here at Niles, and I am a member of the Veterans History Project Team. We appreciate Mr. Weinberg coming in today to enter his testimony in the national effort to document the contributions of his generation in the great fight that was World War II. I'm going to begin now by asking Mr. Weinberg if he can state his full name. (interviewer's words)

Jack Weinberg.

Thank you.

Do you mind if I call you Jack?

Sure. Call me anything you want.

So Jack what were you doing before you joined the service?

Ok, as it just so happened I just finished high school, but I did not receive a diploma because of all things I flunked one course – it was called stenography, which I did basically so I could be near the girls. I tell like it is so I was missing those credits and, as a consequence, from there – well actually, in addition, I was a year behind in school because of a longer story which we won't go into so I was drafted, I was conscripted, although my first thought I took the Army Air Corps written exam and I passed it – which was an absolute shock to me, I didn't think I would do it. And when I went for my physical, I failed for one basic reason is that I couldn't line up the two boxes - the depth perception was not what they hoped for. And plus the fact, what I didn't know at the time, that there was a tremendous need for cannon fodder, bodies.

Wow, so was this in Chicago?

This was in Chicago at their office on Van Buren. I got a notification to serve. I was eighteen, nineteen years old and I took the streetcar, gratis. They gave me a ticket to take the nickel streetcar or whatever, and I went there and I went to Camp Grant in Illinois and from there I went on a troop train to Camp Walters, Texas.

May I ask what you high school you attended?

Marshall and Manley.

Oh, Marshall, the Commandos

Well, I wasn't a sports person. I was not in command. I was basically there because of music, I love music.

This long train ride down to Texas, was that your first big trip outside Chicago?

Yes. The only other trip I think was on a bus to Milwaukee.

So your "education" was beginning, and your first choice of service was the

Air Corps.

24 – Not the Air Corps but the Army (tape counter reading)

And you were drafted for that?

No, I think in high school you took the Air Corps exam. I passed it, and as a consequence when I went for my physical, you had to make an instant choice: Army, Navy, Marines because of that particular little foible I wasn't accepted by the Air Corps so I had to make a choice of the three, and my choice was the Army.

You choose the Army instead of the Navy...

I didn't know how to swim. I was the only person that was ever pulled out of the pool at Marshall High School or Manly, I don't know which or the other. But I turned my body during the swimming test - I couldn't open my eyes, and I didn't realize that I was in twelve feet of water, and I stood up!

So you're on the train to Camp Walters

Texas, which is an IRTC - an infantry replacement training center, so I completed my basic training there

26- difficult basic training for "klutz"

Was that difficult?

Yes, extremely. Number one, I wasn't particularly athletic, never was athletic. If they bracketed the word "klutz" I would be at both ends of the bracket so I was a most unlikely person. In fact, I think in basic training there were two instances where they said to me: "I give you about five seconds in combat."

But they still wanted you.

I said was cannon fodder. This is what you had to do.

So is that about three months, the basic training...

Three months. Then through some sort of clerical error I got shipped to Fort Benning, Georgia, and went to the parachute school.

Wow. That's as bad as jumping in the pool!

Wow is right. Anyway, I wasn't supposed to be there. As long as I was there, I did most of the training. It was terribly physical; I mean it was physical torture. This was training that people don't realize how difficult it was. You never walked. You always ran. These things were terrible. I don't remember what the exact specifics were; part of it, I think, I found out much later in life.

Number one, I was a confirmed coward – I wasn't too happy about the situation. But as subsequent medical records would have determined by other people is that I had had a heart murmur. Now the reason I wasn't good at sports is because at eight they didn't allow me to take gym so I had a heart murmur. So I don't know if that was the reason, but I was probably prepared to go through with it.

58- from Ft. Benning to the 103rd Division

So I guess I whatever the reason they put me on the train and they sent me to Camp Howze, which was a home division – it was the 103rd Division Home at the time. They had just moved from Camp Claiborne, Louisiana to Camp Howze, Texas, which geographically is outside a city called Gainesville. Next to that was a little town called Mineral Wells which had crazy water crystals. Our terminology for it was "Venereal Wells." And the next little town was Weatherford, Texas, and this where Mary Martin originated from. And they had still had wooden sidewalks.

Next big towns were Dallas and Fort Worth and Denton, Texas, which was the ladies', women's school for teachers in Denton. So "Big D" was Dallas and "Little D" was Denton and they had, they had the most beautiful - I liked the girls. They didn't like me but I liked them, beautiful girls. They came of no consequence, but that's how we started getting different sorts of training to go to whatever state of action.

So you were redirected from parachute school to this home division?

Yes, which is by luck or whatever, my brother had just gotten out of. He was 2 ½ years older than I was, and he had taken his training in Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, and I got into the 103rd 3

weeks after he got out and got into the Air Corps – a strange twist of fate so I didn't see him until after the war was over. Naturally, we both survived and still are surviving today.

You come out of, of course, you're from Chicago, a great melting pot, there's all kinds of different people in Chicago particularly in the great institution of the public high school, but I would imagine that being in the army you meet even more interesting types from different parts of the country.

85 – disdain, disgust and love, too

I met people who were very, very difficult to deal with. I had nothing but disgust and disdain for some of them and absolute, undying love for others.

And you couldn't predict who that was likely to be?

Well the only, well I will tell you in my experience, at first, at many points of my life, I was subject to a lot of anti-Semitism. It was just a demographic type of thing, and the fact that I wasn't too agile as a soldier. That held me up for ridicule, but as a consequence, I was hardened by it, and I was very tenacious. I mean the more they heaped on me, the more I took it, the more I would fight back. I could remember at Camp Walters days. Somebody was riding me – couple of people were really riding me because of the religious circumstance. I remember I was cleaning a machine-gun one day, and I just, didn't say a word, just picked up a metal part, I remember the name of the part – nothing else about the machine-gun, but I remember it was called a trunnion block. I picked that piece of metal up, and I threw it and I hit him, and I put him in the hospital. So naturally I came up for a summary court-martial, but nothing came of it, because they realized that they weren't going any place because, number one, I had a valid complaint, and, number two, they still needed a body.

Did that guy ever rejoin the unit?

Oh yeah, I didn't hurt him badly. I had no really evil intent just enough to “say you're not going to get on my fanny any more” – which he never did. You can be a coward as long as you want, and they'll pick on you. But if you're provoked enough, you're going to fight back.

So you went in, I think, your data form here indicates that you enlisted on the 14th of July, 1943

I didn't enlist. I was conscripted. Nobody in their right mind would enlist – no way!

So now that we're back in Texas in the home division.

114 – becoming a “wire-man”

And they had no idea of how they wanted us trained. First, we trained as regular infantry, and my position within the platoon, I was in a heavy weapons platoon which meant that we were in 30 caliber heavy machine guns, 81 mm mortars and assorted small arms for - M1 rifles, 30 caliber carbines, pistols, and we had to qualify in all these weapons as best we could. And then I was sort of a “smart-ass” I didn't want to drag a base plate and I didn't want to drag a bi-pod, 'cause

these are heavy so I figured well, I'm going to be the communications part of this little outfit which meant I was the wire man.

Well, that was a wonderful thing - all I had to do was carry a little roll of wire with two sound-powered telephones and if we were going on the attack, I'd be with the rifle squad. I'd be in the nucleus. It would be me, the BAR man – the Browning Automatic Rifle, that's you're fire-power. We'd have the point man, the scouts on either side and the rear echelon man, and whoever happened to be in that particular make-up. You had the 60 mm mortar and the 30 caliber light machine guns and it was a mix. The thing I wish they would have done today and still do in many areas is that we were all trained in the infantry that whatever the situation was - let's say if I was first machine gunner that day and if I was killed, the one that was second machine gunner automatically took the place or the third machine gunner or the ammo-bearer. We were all like machine parts. We were replaceable. We could go from one job to the other job, and there was no question about it. This is what we had to do. This is what our task was. Today, you only do this. You tell them. "Well, you gotta turn the right faucet on. "Well, I don't know about the right faucets; I only work on left faucets."

Specialization to the point where it impairs the unit's efficiency?

Right. Then we trained at the 103rd. For a while, I don't think they really knew ... we were, like in the reserve. They had to have some people here, and we were waiting our turn for whatever problems or the higher-ups decided on. So meanwhile we started training, then we started training to be amphibious troops so we went in the landing craft, and again I drew the short end of the straw because when the front opened up. I was the guy on the right or the left that had to run and lay down on the barbed wire.

145 – "amphibious training, called "you're going to die"

How do you practice for that?

You don't! (Laughter) It's called, "You're going to die!" But this is what we trained for. When the front of the boat opened up, we're in shallow water. Now the enemy would be dug in and would have carloads of barbed wire at the shore line so I would have to be with somebody on either right or left, it was interchangeable, run the fifteen or twenty-five feet and when I lay down on the wire, everybody could pass through the center. I would hold it down. That's called "odd jobs."

Did you wear gloves?

Yes, we had wire-cutters. We had basically our body. If you would lay down on it, we had combat fatigues and jackets, and at that time the barbed wire really was, it like somebody you see on tv where they lay on a bed of nails. And once you lay down on that, you can survive - like being in training, plus like being in a foxhole and being run over by a tank and fording a river by bridge or else a rope.

So at the end of these various types of training in Texas, you could operate a phone, you could operate a machine gun, a Browning ...

Automatic Rifle, right, a pistol, a mortar, any weapon that was available, we knew how to operate. We could function with it.

So did you ever feel like "OK, It's time to go. We gotta get over there. We're all set. We're trained.

No. No. No.

Did you get any furloughs or leaves to come home at any time?

A couple of times I came home for a short period of time.

Anybody at home say "It's looking good over there. It's looking bad over there. We're worried about you"?

My parents and the rest of the family were concerned. But I didn't want them to be concerned because they were older. I was the youngest of my family. I would never tell them what I did. And my Dad would say, "What do you do?" They were from the old country. They really didn't understand that well. They were totally uneducated, and we had some personal tragedies in the family that further advanced it to where my mother basically was a recluse because I guess my sister had died when she was six of poisoning. She ate an apple or whatever it was. They didn't recognize how serious it was. I really don't know the details because they never discussed it. As a consequence, they had a lot of things to deal with besides being raised during the Depression where food was hard to come by, and employment was even harder. It was difficult. You had two or three families living together.

Did you send money home like some of the soldiers?

No, there was no money to send home. Our salary was \$50 a month, and you'd go to the PX. Well, I didn't smoke at the time. You'd go to the movies. I'd try to save and send some money home.

188 - organization of the 103rd "home" division

So when does the 103rd, that's you're home unit, when did they decide...sorry to be so dense. When you say "home unit," home division what does that ...?

That's the entire division, the 103rd Division. It's called the home division. You have in a division three regiments - it's not definite. But in our division we had 3 regiments - the 409th, the 410th and the 411th, and within those, adjunct to those units, you had your supplies part, your artillery part, your supporting units. Each regiment was made out of battalions. And in the battalion strength there were four companies - A, B, C were rifle companies, D was heavy weapons. Then you had the succession of the alphabet. It would go again and, there were heavy weapons so you had the type of structure. You had, I guess, three battalions to a regiment. I don't remember.

So does "home division" mean that's the part of the army that's back in the states?

This is like the 103rd Division. That was my "home division" – like the 42nd Infantry Division. Usually, a division is about 15,000 men. Like they teach you at school, "This is your home division." This is where your unit was assigned to you with a specific rank if any and what your duties were to perform.

Then the 103rd gets the orders to go

We didn't know where we were going, and we went to New York. And all of a sudden, it was "bam, boom, we're going on a boat!" We sailed out of New York. I think I had one night in New York, maybe not, I don't remember. We left from Camp Shanks, and we got on the General Brooks, which was a Liberty Ship. I remember I was standing with Lynch.

By this time you and Mr. Lynch are friends.

Oh yes. Part of his history, he was a part of the ASTP, the Army Specialized Training Program, which was supposed to have been the cream of the crop. He was going to specialized colleges. Well, they dragged him out, and he was in the infantry too along with a lot of other nice, wonderful people who didn't make it. It was a call for blood.

So you land at LeHavre?

No, we went across the Atlantic, and while we, this is really strange, were in this big convoy, we could see the coast of Spain which was all lit up and we were all blacked out. We went to the Mediterranean, straight through the Rock of Gibraltar. I remember seeing the monkeys as we passed by and seeing Africa. You could see Africa. You could see southern Spain. I hadn't been sea-sick at all till we got to Marseilles.

We got to Marseilles, and we were at a staging area, and while we were waiting for further orders, we worked on unloading ships, with ammo, artillery shells, you know, and all that stuff. We lived in a pup tent city, and I think we saw one movie which was "Gaslight" with Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman. That was the movie that we saw of record, and we saw that on the side of a hill. I guess we spent a couple of weeks there. I don't know exactly when, and then all of a sudden we had to go to the line.

260- baptism of fire at St. Dié

We got in these big 2 ½ ton trucks, and it was standing on top of our duffel bags. I can remember the route because I can remember the names. We went from Marseilles to Lyons in France. We spent the night outside. I mean sleeping, you got out of your truck, and from Lyons, I remember going past Dijon from which Dijon mustard is the point of origin, and I subsequently read that probably the best restaurant in the world was located in Dijon. One of the nearest big cities was Nancy, and that I think is where Eisenhower was headquartered for a time being. From there we went to Epinal. It's a city I knew of. I don't know what we did, if I was in there or out of there, and then we're going to relieve the 4th Division, I think, at a city called St-Dié which in our

mind it was “Saint Die.” That was our first, where we relieved, - that was our baptism of fire. That was on, I think, November 11, as it were Armistice Day, when we were committed. That was a year and four months after I was drafted.

We got there, and I remember getting in this cellar. Scared shitless, because on the way up it is a question of succession. You go past the supply organizations, the medical organizations, and you keep going on forward and then you see the big 155 guns, then you see the smaller guns, then all of sudden “it’s Molly Magee and me.” That’s a terrible analogy but all of sudden we had to debark from our trucks and our vehicles. Then it was quiet, and we got to the front wherever it was. I could see the patch where this person who was relieving me in the cellar. I could see the patch was the 4th Division because I asked him, “What patch is that?” He said, “That’s the 4th Division.” I knew they had some horrendously bad times, even, I guess, in modern times that Division, although I don’t think anybody alive if they they’re still living there experienced it. I remember being absolutely panic-ridden and looking through a slit in the cellar window and watching the tracer bullets and the machine gun bullets. And you could see them because they were opting for range.

The next day, I guess, we had to get out of there, and then we were going to the attack which meant a lot of things: Number 1 – you didn’t know what you were doing literally. I remember I went with my captain, Captain Lincoln, and I was with my little spool of wire and my little phones, and I don’t have a good sense of direction. I dropped my phone when were pinned down, and I had to get back to wherever the mortars or the machine guns were - I don’t know which one, probably for both, and when you’re serpentineing and you’re running you lose sense of direction very rapidly.

When you say “serpentineing,” you mean zig-zagging?

Yes, because you did that as a matter of training. There’s a lot of things going on, and I remember we got caught into a barrage. It’s sad. I was alive after this thing, and I didn’t see anybody else who suffered any harm, and then there was one guy who was killed – Kazmarek and I walked over. I looked at him. I didn’t see any wound marks so I assumed that a concussion got him. I subsequently found out 50 years later that wasn’t the case because somebody else in the outfit had inspected him afterwards and really got into his clothes, and he was hit by a sniper. So in effect, in going back not only were the Germans shooting at us in front, but some of our French compadres were shooting us from the rear.

OK? I mean it’s hard to believe, but these are the things that happened – so anyway that was part of it.

So you were trying to move across a field or down a road?

Yeah, whatever the objective. I have no idea. I didn’t know where the hell we were. I don’t think at the company level in the hierarchy they knew where they were going. I didn’t where I was going. I was told, “Well, we’re going to go over here; you’re going to be on the forward o.p. tonight or this afternoon or you’re going to do this and you did what they told you do and you just hoped that you made it through the day or some times you made it through the minute.

There were sequences of where there was absolutely nothing doing on the front line. Nothing. I mean you just sat in the hole and you did nothing. You couldn't get out but you didn't do any thing. Business was bad. This was where when we got into combat. I acquired a very bad habit. Once you reach a combat zone, everything is "free." I mean that in a very, very funny sense.

All your vitals are taken care of, allegedly: your food, your clothing, your sustenance, your cigarettes – anything they can get to you. As a consequence, one of the by-products of being in combat is that I had nothing to do. I remember having 2 packs of cigarettes in my pocket – they were free and digging a hole in the side, and I took out my cigarettes and out of sheer boredom that's how I started to smoke. It was probably about November 15th or whatever the date was. The only food we had for a while, I think it was for 30 days or close to it, we only had the lunch ration of the K rations. There was American cheese with bacon or American cheese without bacon. We had soluble coffee which is terrible. Lemonade that would absolutely take the varnish off the stock of the rifle. And maltose-dextrose tablets that if you threw them at kids that were starving they would throw them back at you.

So that gave me my first little sense of "doing good" for myself and for my buddies that I had because I could speak Yiddish. I learned how to speak German so I became the focal point of the "go-to" guy. I was the provider of food. I was provider of certain strategic things that we had to do to survive - namely, scrounging for food – it's like my buddy Lynch. He was very devoutly Catholic, and I used to go him "I'm going to go on a raiding party. We're going to get some food. I'm tired of this shit. OK?"

And I would bring the food, and he would eat it. One day I says to him, "Why don't you want to come with me? Dick, you know, you eat too! He says, "Well, I'm very religious. I do not steal." I said, "you son of a bitch, you know how to eat!" These are the crazy things. This is how we went, and we acquired certain habits in order to sustain ourselves physically and mentally.

We learned how to hear. In other words things sound - that weren't really valid to other people became very life-threatening to us. People don't realize that when you get out into the wilderness, and you're in a combat situation – what was very scary at one time it was so dark at night the skies were overcast we were all in foxholes, no stars, zero and we were all in fox holes and if you heard a noise, you threw a grenade. Bad feature of that was that it usually wasn't the enemy so you'll learned very quickly not to throw grenades for good or for bad. There were times that grenades weren't thrown that should have been thrown. It was extremely horror-ridden. Somebody else had a brilliant idea because we were losing our own men for no reason at all; we were killing each other. They made a bank of searchlights, these big aircraft searchlights. I remember they had 10, I don't know how many, but they shined them at a angle up in the sky. Well, it was just enough to illuminate us so we could make out persons for them so I don't know

how many lives that saved, but that was a wonderful idea. That was one of the sequence of events.

401 – ‘the scariest of all things’

In going on the attack, which was probably the scariest of all things, that means you had to get out of the hole and, you know,

Run forward?

Go forward. It wasn't running most of the time. You would run when you had to run but you were basically looking for – number one, I would say not looking for a target. You were looking for not to be a target. Obviously, I was quite successful.

So there's not like a fixed line that's readily discernible?

Not when you are on the ground. There are times like I say when we were interchangeable or sometimes we'd volunteer. My buddy, Lynch, at the time, he had just gotten married. He had a little girl. I was single, and one of things that nobody wanted to do, especially at night, was be part of what we call the “the forward o.p.” – the forward observation post. To do that card (?) you had to go ahead of everybody, and when they were coming us at us, you had to be the person to fire the first shot and be the alarm, be the catalyst for anything that was subsequently going to happen. So I would take that because I felt if got killed I didn't have a family and that was that it. That was one of our bonds although he never knew it.

Does he know it now?

I told him once.

Are you still in this St. Dié?

We took this St. Dié which had, I found out two months ago, has great historical significance for the world. I watched on the History Channel a program on cartography, and at St. Dié they have a religious monastery with a magnificent staff of map-makers, and it was here for the first time in the history of the world that the name America appeared on a map as a place of origin or departure or whatever, and I was very impressed by that. I never saw the monastery but at least we fought for it. I remember we took a house. There was no room for souvenirs. I did have a label from a tailor. I guess I could read it in French “tailleur St. Dié” and that I kept it in my pocket I don't know, I never knew what happened to it. That and the fact that we were in somebody's kitchen and they had one of these grinders, coffee grinders and they had some stuff in it.

455 – the food was so bad, coffee in helmets

We thought it was coffee, but it was that sawdust shit that the Germans had; it was all they had. And that tasted terrible. You'd rather drink nothing so the other food that we survived on like the C rations which were terrible. The food was so bad. I remember making coffee in our helmets. We would boil the coffee grounds I remember the sequence. After you boiled you had to get the

grounds out and if you put some salt in there, for some reason, the grounds would go to the bottom.

466- defecating in fox holes

Now you got to remember you cooked in there, you bathed in there, and you did just about everything and if you, when you're in a foxhole you can't get out, and you have to defecate in a shovel. And we used to serve our K ration boxes, number one, because they were very easy to burn. They were made for that purpose, and they were water-resistant. We would urinate in them and spill it out. You saved the carton. To defecate it was very difficult to do in on a shovel. We found when we started taking prisoners. We started taking the German shovels. They had a great shovel; we threw ours away because their shovel had a fluted locking nut. When you turned it, it would turn it a 90° angle so, number one, the shovel became a pick, and number two, if you had to take a crap, you would put the shovel behind you, and then you'd crap on the shovel and then you threw it out so that was a very useful tool.

Did you speak any German to the German prisoners?

Yes, I said that was one of my jobs. When we got into a situation where you knew they were about to take prisoners, it was up to me to creep up there and say, to flush them out, I could still do the German thing: "Cumin zse rausch de ho."

Meaning?

Come out right now with your hands up!

And they did that?

I'm here!

Were they kind of reeling, moving back at this time?

You know something? You cannot say this is being this or this being that. It depends on any specific instance of time. The army said, and I didn't agree with them most of the time, "everything depended on the terrain, the situation" - what situation you were in and what terrain you were on. There were certain things that you had to do, certain things that you didn't do. First time, I got ... We even thought it was funny at the time although it was pathetic.

498 - Lynch, pants down, survives the mortar attack

We were dug in the vineyard in Alsace, and I guess he was tired. He was more tired than I was, and we were digging in together and he dug his hole not as deep as I did, but just before we were getting ready to get some semblance of rest, and rest was a very precious commodity. There was a house not too far away that somebody in another company had to secure that house. I know what happened because I can still here the scream. Somebody had bayoneted this German soldier. I can still hear the scream. We were trying to get some rest, and there was nothing doing. There wasn't a shot fired the rest of the evening. And then it started to get damp because of the

dew, and I nudged him and he said “Jake,” if you’re Jewish, you become Jake automatically, “I gotta go” so I says “OK, don’t do it in the hole.” He says, “Yeah, I’m not going to do it in the hole.” I said, “Go out. They got those shrubs over there.” Wine shrubs or whatever you call them. And he went out and I don’t think he was gone a minute and all of a sudden they had this German mortar, I think it was called a Nebelwerfer. It was a six-barrel mortar that fired simultaneously with other artillery pieces. All hell broke loose. We were really, really catching hell. Finally, we got the word to get the hell out of there. OK, and I’m screaming “Lynch! Lynch!” I don’t see him; I don’t hear him - nothing. So stuck around (but) you gotta go, you know, gotta go. I started to go down the slope of that hill. All of a sudden I hear the magic word, “Jake.” I turned around, and I must have been a 150 feet away from him up the hill. He was coming down the hill, holding on to his trousers and with a rifle and with a shovel. When he let go of one, the other one would fall down. Well, he had crap all over him. OK. He was alive. He was well so we were laughing because it was funny. I said, “Holy Mackerel! You know what kind of picture that is?” He says, “Yeah, I know. It’s kind of weird, isn’t it?” I said, yeah, let’s go. So that was one of the other episodes.

And then some of the other very unpleasant things. We were in some forest near Strasbourg, near Hagenau. I try to place them on the map, but like I say, I never really knew in most instances where I was at, and there was a big tank fight. And we lost. I saw a German tank sitting there, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, five tanks in a row – five shots.

575 – morphine under your arm

That situation, I don’t know what the hell happened after that. I remember going on trucks in middle-December, and we thought we were going for a rest because first we had gone over to the 106th and they were being decimated. They had just gotten into combat. They were getting slaughtered. They knew nothing. I don’t what our situation was, but we were there for a couple of days. I guess, we determined which way the enemy was, hard to say, we determined which the enemy was, and then all of a sudden we had an order to get on trucks, and it was cold, really cold. We had our heads covered, we literally used our bodies for warmth. In combat we had learned through our sorrow that one of the things you depended on and you wanted if it ever came to you is you wanted morphine. When one of our buddies would get killed, we’d take the morphine. There is only one problem with morphine. You have to keep it warm so we’d keep a vial of morphine under each arm pit. Thankfully, it never got to that point. I did get wounded one time, but I didn’t go back to the battalion aid station. Number one, I wasn’t hurt. I mean this is it a piece of shrapnel here, in my left wrist, a crazy place to get (it) Ordinarily, you don’t get wounded.

SIDE TWO

We had it available if the pain was very severe and you got wounded, you had the vial of morphine that you could administer yourself. Out of observation we knew that one bottle if you got hurt that bad wasn’t going to be enough so we learned little tricks of carrying extra morphine. Also learned little tricks if you happen to be on the 30 caliber water-cooled machine gun and it needed water to operate to keep cool in certain circumstances we would find a vessel and piss in it and put it in the machine gun. If my German trench shovel would freeze, I would piss on it to unlock the locking nut.

15 – winter survival and a letter from brother in Italy

You learned how to dig a hole, and how to survive in it. You learned that the first thing you did was that you took some branches and you put something underneath you because you would get colder underneath you than you would on top of you because of the dampness. I remember we had this terrible winter, and Lynch and I were dug into a fox hole and we were facing, I don't know what town, and I guess the one night they got mail to us. I had a letter from my brother in Italy. It just so happened for a day or two we were bailing water out of our foxholes. We put wood on top of them. For us to survive we had to get rid of the water because the snow was melting so we had the ammunition boxes and we were emptying the water out of the ammunition boxes into the snow when we got a chance. We got the letter from my brother and we were hysterical. The letter went something like this: "Jack, we just arrived at Foja airfield. I am part of a bombardier squad or whatever – (he was a rear machine-gunner.) Things are terrible here. The food is really terrible and well things are looking up we're in tents, but next week we may have electricity." So this Lynch says to me, "Boy, he's really got it tough!" We always remember that because squalor is not the word for it.

25 – defining craziness

We had a lot of crazy experiences; things that other people did were even crazier, not crazier. You have to define craziness as the animal instinct for survival and bizarre behavior. I can remember one time I had a cold and I was hurting. One of my buddies in the company says, "Jake, I'm going to make you warm right away and we were in this little farming community, I have no idea where they were at, and he said, "I'll make it warm right away." He went to three houses one side and two houses on the other, and he set them on fire. That was it – it was warm so were we.

29 – securing food as the procurer

These are all experiences. They have no date. They have no location. Because I could speak German, I was the procurer. We were hurting for food. One of the situations we did when we were on the attack, I devised a situation. I was a PFC, Private First Class, by Act of Congress because you could not die as a Private. You had to die as a Private Class. Anyway we get in these little towns, and we'd take them. I got a little expertise. If you're near the town about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and it was quiet. There was no big attack coming in, no big skirmish. I said, "We were going to lay in the weeds. I see smoke coming out of the chimney." And we'd lay there, and we'd wait until about near dusk. Why? We were going to take the town. That was a certainty, but the reason for taking it around late afternoon was the fact that I saw the smoke and that they were cooking. So when's the best time to get somebody out? – when you could get something to eat coming in so we'd get their ass out and we had food! – of which I'm very proud of, I really am.

Then there was one time that we were really hurting for food, and we get to the small town and I could read a little German and this die Bäckerei – bakery, so you become an animal. I was an animal. I confess; I was an animal just like almost everybody else, and I walked into this bakery and I said in German "Ich wünsche Brot" – I want bread. And he says "Ich habe kein Brot" – I have no bread. I said, "Ich wünsche Brot schnelle" – I want bread, now!" He denied he had any bread. At that time during the war they had ration coupons and coupon books for bread. I could

see them all laying in stacks, all the ration cards, whatever. I took all the ration cards, all the paper I could find. I took them and put them in the middle of his store, and I says, "Brot, Brot, Brot, schnelle. (thumping table.) "Fleischt (brockensie ein fire.)" (?) Fire, would you like a fire?" "No, No, No. " So I said "OK" and I started to lay down the fire, and we got bread! We had black bread; we had rye bread, we had all the bread we could handle – which I say I'm very proud to be a part of because I will tell you I was one of the few Jewish kids in the infantry and there were more than you think there were - names are very deceiving.

63- learning to love and understand "hillbillies"

I got to tell you. My respect goes out to one brand of person who for a long time I thought I didn't like, but I got to respect. If you're ever going to go into a combat situation, you want to be with hillbillies. Think about it. They learn how to live in the wilderness. They taught me how to live like an animal. They taught me how to shoot and not miss, and they were wonderful huntsmen and wonderful marksmen. If you're going to be with somebody that you wanted, you wanted them, unequivocally.

I couldn't understand them, but I learned to love them. I remember one time. I was coming back; I relieved somebody, and they wanted their camouflage pants which were green. They had this sound-powered phonies (?) "Jake, I want mah green paints," and I said, "What the hell are green paints?" They turned out to be green pants. You had to learn how to speak their language. But if you really analyze military history, and you go from Sergeant York, and you go from Audie Murphy, and some others and I am not a war buff. I stay away, but by observation, just being around you learn these things or you travel. You go through Kentucky, and you see the Sergeant Alvin C. York Historic Park, and you know what it's all about because you've seen the movie. They were the people to be with you or you with them; we complemented each other.

And you knew you were going to eat too. We had one time; we had a little episode where we had not much to eat. We went out into the forest, got a couple of deer. We knew we'd be there for a couple of days. They hung them up. They bled them or whatever, and we had venison steaks.

90 – buddy Lynch weakens

Then I remember the day, not that day, it was close to the end of the war. "Lynch," I says, "Dick, I'll make you a steak." He says, "I'm not hungry." Meanwhile before then he was getting kind of weak and I was dragging his rifle, and the cook was dragging his ammo. He was sick. I kept up for three or four days and we were getting beat up terribly, physically. There wasn't too much going on shooting. We were in the mountains, and it was terrible. It wasn't a good place to be, and finally we got to this town. It was near Heidelberg for some reason – that I remember. I looked at him. I said, "Dick, you better eat something." He said, "I'm not hungry." I looked at his eyes and his eyes were yellow so I said you go and get out of here. He says, "I don't want to leave." I said "No, You got to get out." He said, "I don't want to leave my buddies." I said, "You got to leave. You got to go because you're getting to be a burden to me. I don't want you to die because I don't want to die. You got to go!" He says, "I don't have any money." I said, "I got 40 bucks." I gave him the 40 bucks.

107 – the Red Cross experience

Never give them to the Red Cross at all because from my experience and others we never got anything from them. They only took. They never gave. OK? Certain things happened that made me furious and others – very personal and it depended on the individual. I'm not being fair, but life isn't fair. You base a lot of your prejudice on personal experiences. One was – I had just received the Combat Infantry Badge. Now if you notice and I can't help but not notice that anytime you see anybody that decoration is always on top. We got that (pause) and we were decimated and we had to go back and we hadn't eaten in days. I don't want to tell you the last time we bathed. Physically and emotionally, we were wiped out, and we were staying with an artillery unit, and they came up with 2 ½ ton trucks with coffee and donuts. We were grubby dirty, smelly, filthy, and I came up with my cup and I said, Roberts was with us – I don't know if he died or not, and walked up for the cup and there were two American Red Cross girls. We had just gotten the Combat Infantry Badge. That was the only clean thing we had, and it was no big deal but you had to stick it some place, and I had it in my hand, no I had it over here. I walk over there, and one of the girls – I had the cup out. And she says to me, "We don't serve killers." I said, pointing to the Combat Infantry Badge, "Honey, we weren't doing this because we wanted to do it. You can take this and jam it up your ass!"

Now when my buddy Lynch went back to the hospital I gave him all the money I had, and I keep on badgering him. I say, "You never paid me the 40 bucks." But he had enough for his toothpaste and other things. He had yellow jaundice, and whatever it was they pulled all of his teeth out. He was in the hospital for three months or four months. We finally got together after the war, and we got together at Berchtesgaden. OK, he's one of the other people in the picture. As a consequence, I've never been, and every time I see something that annoys me with the Red Cross. It just enflames me.

I can imagine. My goodness.

Every experience I ever had with the Salvation Army which was minimal was good. I mean never overseas. I never had the opportunity. But in the States I never missed the kettle. It was fine. I had no problem, other charities. Like my wife when I came home from service, and they were still passing the bucket around for the Red Cross, and they showed the thing on the movie screen with the Red Cross ambulance, and I'm sayin' to myself, "you know, this is government property. This doesn't belong to the Red Cross." And they pass the bucket around. And I'm fairly generous I always give to whatever the cause is. And I've worked for causes. I never put in a quarter. I think I may be wrong in certain areas, but I can't reject that from my personal being because I knew how much that cup of coffee meant to me, and how it upset me by having those words said to me. It was the wrong thing to do.

Anyways, not having any dates in order, a couple of other things I'll tell you about.

It was March 15th... now this was the day that Paul Fussell got wounded on because it was documented in something I saw on television with Tom Brokaw.

This is the university ..., historian, professor?

Right. I've never contacted him. He was in the same battalion. I don't know what the hell happened.

161 – a couple of cowards

OK, a couple of heroic things I was witness too. At one time we were the furthest east of anybody in France a little town called Wissembourg and if you look at the time it's right across the river into Germany. Now we were there, and we were getting killed. I was in the basement of, I don't know who else was there with me, some other guys and this Lieutenant Boyle who was standing outside the basement or enough exposed. Frankly, I think I was crapping in my pants half the time. I was there; I did what I was supposed to do, but I was functioning out of fear not out of rational whatever, and I was the water man at that time for my mortar squad. I guess the line was cut; it was severed by an artillery shell, or a mortar shell or whatever - I don't know. But the f.o. from the artillery could communicate with the mortar squad because their radio thing was working. So this non-commissioned officer that we had, he wanted me to go out and mend the wire, and I said, "I know that's my job, (but) I'm not doing it because I can talk to you. And the outcome is the same; we both give the same instructions so there was no need for me to go out to mend the wire." He said, "You go out or I'm gonna have your ass court-martialed." I said, "You know what, I'll go out, but I'll make a deal with you right now. You meet me halfway." OK, it subsequently turned out that he, there was a lieutenant and a sergeant that held back. You know what held back is? – they were cowards. OK? Two of them never knew they were cowards because they were drunk from the day they got into combat til the last time I saw them wherever it was.

190 – General McAuliffe explains things

Anyways, we get to this river. This General McAuliffe on March 14th, I think, and he's standing about that far away from me and he's got the maps and all that crap. All of a sudden, we get relieved. We were going off-line that day. They take us back into a safe area, and we knew something was wrong. They gave us a chicken dinner, you know, with our mess kits and all that stuff - all we can eat. We had jello. We had fruit cocktail. We got paid. Now this was really crazy because we were laughing. Where are we going to spend the money? So we got paid, and I understood that we had a big crap game after we got paid. The guys are playing craps and it didn't make any difference to me. Why should get I involved? I wasn't going to win; I wasn't going to lose. It wasn't my concern. We got done with that and all of a sudden they started calling us company by company into this school building. I can't recall it verbatim, but it went something like this: "the 6th Corps throws (?) the 7th Army throws the 103rd Division throws the 410th Regiment, chose(?) the 1st Battalion and this what we will have behind us, and he started telling us how many divisions on tanks of infantry, how many airplanes, which was the first time, after D-Day, it was in direct support of ground infantry, how many extra artillery pieces. There was only one problem. We had to go first. Well, we went back to our part in the front line.

214 – "tell me how to stay alive"

When you get casualties, you get replacements. This is still, until I die, it will always be in me memory. Now this one kid, he was the same age I was, may he was a year or two younger and it was his first day in combat. He had never been in attack before. He says, "Tomorrow is a big

attack.” We knew it was going to be big because we were in the middle of the Siegfried line; we had get in that crap. And he says, “What can you tell me to keep me alive?” I said, “I can’t tell you anything. I can’t even tell me how to stay alive. The only thing I can tell you do is when we start going through this barrage; keep your eye on me. Don’t talk to me. Don’t signal me. Just keep your eye on me. If I happen to go, I go. If you happen to go, you go. If anybody else happens to go, they go. But it’s going to be whatever it is. We take our chances, but keep your eye on me because I have instincts and things that I have learned and that everybody around me that has the survival thing to know what our instincts are and a little bit of limited knowledge” So this a terrible thing. It was my birthday. So all night long we hear the tanks rumbling. They’re getting up behind us, and they lay down the smoke, and we started going through and there was one radio operator, and he was sitting by a tree, and he was crying, and he wasn’t going. I said, “You know, I don’t want to go either, but if you don’t go. He says, “I’m going to get killed.” I said, “I know but if you don’t go somebody is going to kill you. It isn’t a question of choice.” I had to leave. I mean you do what you have to do.

244 – “a million- dollar wound”

Then one guy came through, he was maybe 50 feet ahead, 200 feet and he was happy. Why? He had gotten what we called “a million dollar wound.” He had a bullet right through the bone. Through-the-bone you don’t go back. So he was happy. He said, “I got a million-dollar wound.” You know what, I was jealous. Things to be jealous over! That was a little part of that day.

251 – battlefield sounds and death

Then somehow another I wound up, we were in – part of that day was a machine-gun fight. I was in the line of fire. I was lying on my stomach, and you can tell the difference in the sound because when the bullet is looking for you it is a sound of a whip. Shrapnel, it sounds like a bee. And he was looking at me. Fortunately, I don’t who; I don’t know why; I don’t know when, but the machine-gun nest was out. I got out of there. The firing started again, had to hit the dirt. We were already in German territory. I mean territory we had just chased them out of, and I guess there’s only three people besides you and I don’t ever know, and it’s one of those things that still hurt today and I don’t... It’s terrible. I had a weapon, and I was getting under fire and I went to jump into the nearest foxhole. OK? You gotta remember you’ve got your weapon in your hand and the safety is off. You’ve got your finger on the trigger. I leaped into the hole. There was a German soldier in the hole. I pulled the trigger. I took his head off. I had to lay in the hole for about two hours. That wasn’t a great experience. My wife knows it. My son knows it. Lynch knows it and you now. That’s just for the record. That’s some of things that you put up with up. The fact that a dead body was already around, it was par for the course.

We had one guy for a hobby – his hobby was teeth - gold teeth – where he would take the German soldiers that were dead and rack them up against the wall, take his rifle out and knock their gold teeth out and put them in a jar. That was one of the things I was a spectator of.

286 – escaping from the SS

I can remember one time – it was a little town called Schillersdorf in Alsace-Lorraine and through a series of events, Lynch and I got trapped, well, we had done our guard duty. You know

you always provided your own security. It was my turn to sleep and Lynch's and all of a sudden whoever was security. This was, historically, this is the last time that there was any kind of major offensive launched by the SS, trying to break through, going back to the Severne Pass, I subsequently found out. Well, I was upstairs with Lynch, and I don't know who it was because it was dark. You heard voices and he says, "Lynch, Jake, let's get the f--- out of here." And then all of a sudden the machine gun, I mean it was through the windows, and the next words, I'll never forget, and I see it on a commercial every once in a while, I mean words mean different things to different people at different times. When the machine gun first started to come into, where we were at, the words were "Need I say more?"

The only thing is, that subsequently time frame-wise and I have no concept of time is that they were downstairs, the SS were downstairs, all hopped up on ether and booze - schnapps, and we were trapped upstairs, Lynch and I, so "how you gonna get out?" I, being very resourceful, you have to be; I looked around. You had to make instantaneous decisions. Those questions, should or shouldn't I or this is a good move or isn't this a good move? They were coming up the stairs so we started firing - had no idea if we were hitting anybody, no idea at all and I saw through the window. Now in Alsace-Lorraine you measure a farmer's wealth by the pile of horse manure they had on the side of the house. I looked out the window and I said, "Dick, this is where we're going." "Into the horse shit?" and I said "Into the horse shit, we got no choice. Now!" I left my gun there, my rifle there. He had his and we ducked out. We landed in a pile of horse shit. From there we made it, I guess, I don't know how or whatever, we were absolutely overwhelmed by rifle fire whatever it was. We finally escaped. We got into a barn. It was me and Lynch. The only thing I had was a '45 because, I gotta tell you, everything was "free." Any weapon you wanted. American, German, whatever it was, you had as many as you wanted. You didn't clean the gun; you just pick up somebody else's and used it. We're in this barn and, all of sudden, this Lynch says, "Here's something, Jake, be prepared to use your piece." And here I got the '45. And I said to him, "And what the f--- am I supposed to do, throw it at them?" At that time I made the determination that it was a cow so I says "Come on, I know there over here. We're trying to get out over there." We got out the door, and I just had a '45. He had his M-1, I think, I'm not positive. And then all of a sudden they're shooting at us. This SS is screaming, "Come here, you Yankee son-of-a-bitch." Well, I beat Jesse Owens. I screamed back, "F--- you" We took off.

We had to retake that town later. That was another thing. I don't know how many guys froze to death, trying to take that town. They had a big tiger tank sitting at the edge of the forest just pumping these big rounds at us.

358 - Malmedy repercussion

There was another episode, where I guess Malmedy Massacre (December 17, 1944) had taken place. Remember in Belgium where the Nazis had butchered 100 and some odd GIs. Well, we were in Alsace and bad news travels fast. And I don't remember who, it was my turn to take prisoners back, and I remember somebody said to me, "I'll take them back for you." I said, "OK." It saved me a trip, fine. I don't think, maybe it was 2 minutes later, I heard bang, bang, bang. Five minutes later, I don't remember who it was, I said, "Did you take the prisoners back?" There was no answer - so obviously I knew what happened and I wasn't particularly upset over it. I mean, it didn't bother me. What the hell do I care? It was one guy less to worry about.

I assume that you saw "Private Ryan." It took me the better part of a year to see that movie. The thing that really made me cry, because it was really well done, is the final scene where they're in a churchyard, sequence. That was part of my birthday but in reverse. I can remember they had a sniper up in the church loft, and I was pinned down with some other guys. We couldn't move, locked in. And they sent a couple of fighter planes because everything was in direct support of us. They were shooting artillery, everything was breaking loose, and we couldn't get at, and we finally got rid of the sniper. But you'd stick your helmet up and "pi-choo" – a hole right through it.

372 – how to dodge 88s

That one kid that, on my birthday, that I said, "follow me," he stayed alive. After, I don't what the sequence was, he said, "How did you know what to do?" I said, "Well, I knew by the sounds what guns were being shot at us at that particular time of the departure from our advance point. I knew they were 88s. Now, I knew by the amount that there was a lot of stuff coming at us. Now, we had a captured 88 at the time, and I said, "I want you to take a look at this gun." The rules were the same for all weapons of that type – never fired one but if you want to search then you come and up and down. All you got to do was turn the crank so we knew in combat if a shell landed over here, and a shell landed over there, you were being bracketed in. The next shell was going to be in your back pocket – all you had to do was turn that crank. This part of the crank would give you fifty feet up; this would give you fifty down. But if you were caught in that type of sequence, and you went to either flank, they would have to re-level the gun which took ten or fifteen seconds, depending on the ability of the gunner so they'd go this way or that way. That was enough time to get out of the direct line of the artillery shell. It was enough to keep you alive. It was like baseball. It was a battle of inches.

It's hard to hit on any days; there were some days that there was absolutely nothing doing. It was, I remember, we use to wear these shoe packs where we had regular socks, and then we had the heavy wool socks and then we had these shoe packs that were a combination of eyelids and these cross things in them with the laces. We would wear out a pair of socks on the heel going up the hill and wear the toes out going down. If we didn't take care of our feet as best we could, you had a good chance of winding up with trench foot. From thence if you got that, you went to the hospital. If it was real bad, you had amputation.

414 – "funny story"

Then, a funny story, near the end of the war, I was carrying mortar ammunition - no idea where the hell I was at. In addition to whatever we had to carry, there were three rounds of mortar ammunition in the front and three rounds of ammunition in the back. We had to stop every five, ten minutes because it was heavy work. We were tired. It was winter. We were sweating like horses. We just had to keep on going. We stopped at one point and I'm walking behind... you couldn't really see anything and I'm walking behind this..., Christy, that was his name, from Queens, and I'm walking behind him, and I tap him on the shoulder and this is probably close to the dialogue:

"Christy."

"Yeah, Jake."

“Did you shit in your pants?”

“No.”

“But I smell it. Where is it?”

“It’s behind my ears.”

I stopped another time to rest and I turn around and I says,

“Christy, how the hell did you ever get shit on the back of your ears?”

“The last time I took the yoke off because it hurt under (?) my shoulders, and I laid it down so I laid it down on a pile of crap. On the way over my head, I got it behind my ears.”

We were hysterical; we were laughing. I mean it was funny because you couldn’t do anything about it.

So in the midst of everything you still managed to maintain a certain amount of humor. It was mundane humor. It was horrible humor in different ways, but it was humor nevertheless so we got into the next morning and I thought we were going to reserve, but we were going to the attack. So sure enough we get down and there was a group of German soldiers in this little forest thing. We’re getting ready. At that time the piece I was carrying was a 30 caliber carbine – that I had managed to find a saw and I had sawed the stock off because it was lighter. Getting ready, I take aim and at the tip of any weapon you have little sight thing right in the front so I said “uh, I can’t fire.” I can’t get a bead, covered in shit, Guess what? It was covered in shit.(laughter).

465 – combat mantra

That’s some of the stuff. Most of it was a horrendous, horrible experience. The only thing that I have to say in my defense, and there’s a lot I haven’t told you because I don’t remember a lot. Your memory slips by you. You remember only the real low spots which you make into high spots. But the only thing I gotta tell you and I told this to my son one time. I says, “You know what? If you want stress and you want real stress, just think about getting out of a hole in the mud and you hadn’t eaten a decent meal in a week and having a hand grenade in one lapel, a hand grenade in another lapel, loaded down with as many cartridge belts as you possibly can handle and as many weapons as you think you can be comfortable with and having to get out of the hole under a smokescreen and go.” I said “You did it because you had no other option.” It was, maybe it was patriotism; maybe it was whatever it was, but it was survival. I told my kids there were only two things that were our mantra. We kept on repeating them, me and the other guys. Number One “Better you than me.” And the other one is “nobody lives forever.”

502 – Luigi and his life-saving mirror

And that it was it and we wound up on this task force and reason I brought up this Luigi, this guy that was sitting on the tank. We got through with a terrible ordeal one time. There were a lot of casualties, American casualties, and I don’t know many lives he saved by a very, very simple, simple little thing. I didn’t even know what the hell he was doing half the time. He couldn’t even speak English which was a credit to him. After this particular siege, he held back and I walked back, and I said, “What the hell are you doing?” And he says, “I need a medico.” He starts

screaming for a medic which I heard him scream a lot of times, but I was so interested in staying alive; I didn't know what was going either. Well, what he had done, when a G.I. was hit, he had a very indispensable thing. He had a mirror, a little pocket mirror, and he would put it under the G.I.'s nose, and if he saw moisture, he knew the soldier was still alive – a simple little thing like that. You know how many lives he must have saved with that little procedure? And I didn't know what the hell he was doing. And one of the final things that was very important in my life and in a lot of other people's lives, we were on this task force and we happened to run into a town named Landsberg in Germany which wasn't too far away from the town that Albert Einstein was born in. This town of Landsberg is where Hitler wrote Mein Kampf.

Continuing on, there also happened to be concentration camp that we freed.

Side Three

1 – Dachau

We're picking up now on side three, and Jack is telling about his unit's coming to the town of Landsberg which is significant for several reasons.

Yes, it was the place where Hitler was incarcerated and wrote *Mein Kampf*. Also it was the site of the concentration camp that we freed. It was the 103rd Division, but it was primarily the 101st, the 103rd, and the 10th Armored Division, and I don't know who else. You gotta remember a lot of troops were converging in the same area. We were all on task forces riding on tanks. These things were not that small. You had these labor camps and concentration camps and it was actually, I wouldn't call it a suburb, but it was about twenty miles or whatever away from Dachau Concentration Camp which I subsequently visited – not one of the greatest experiences of my life.

We took that, and you gotta remember at that time, we knew nothing of the concentration camp. We knew there were concentration camps, but we always assumed they were like detention camps or like a labor-type situation. I was riding on a tank with my fellow comrades and whatever and all of a sudden a lot of things became a total blur. I saw these people with pajamas on, and they were skeletal, and they were emaciated, and they were filthy, and we didn't know what the identification was. Were they Russian prisoners? Were they Polish prisoners? Were they ... who were they? All of sudden I started to hear Yiddish. I said, "Holy shit!" I ran in there.

Uh, I'm very muddled, I'm very confused because there were a lot of things; it's like a symphony of Mahler. There's so many things going on simultaneously, and they were all layered, and you don't know which layer to pull off, or if all these layers will ever get pulled off. But I remember getting very upset. I couldn't believe the inhumanity that I had witnessed with the corpses. I had seen plenty of corpses before, I mean, but the circumstances were different. The magnitude was different. I mean we saw – we would get into a fight we'd find twenty dead, thirty dead, whatever the case maybe, a couple of pick-ups on this side and that side. On March 15th, the day of my birthday, we had a lot more casualties. It was very stressful and, but this something that, still to this day, I cannot comprehend - the magnitude of the people, I guess we were there for a couple of days, because I do remember some sense of having the Germans with

bulldozers digging these pits for burial. I have a division book, and it shows one of the pictures of one of the heads in an ice tong (?) things of that ..., very horrendous so I took a couple of them out of the concentration camp into Landsberg, I assume. I spoke the language. I saw a nice house. I walked in there, and the civilians were there, and I had my gun – you never went anyplace without gun. I had my weapon with me. I told everybody, all the civilians, to get the hell out because “I’m going to kill every f---n’ one of you.” I got them out, and I went through the house, and I said to these two guys, “Anything you see is yours, whatever you want.” I guess we spent a couple of days with them because there were a lot of things that I did do. I remember going there. They needed money. It was a bank; I robbed a bank. Everything was “free.” Like I told you; there’s a different premise. Everything was I remember giving them different money, the “X” mark or whatever it was. Money meant nothing to me because I had no way of spending it, and no way of sending it home had I wanted to convert or been able to convert. It was nothing to me but it would mean something, hopefully, for them.

I remember one person wanted a watch, and I walked out in the street, and I saw a group of German civilians walking near me, and I said to them in German, “Can you please me tell the time?” And sure enough the first instinct was to go like this, (looking at watch on wrist) so I cleaned them out, giving it to these other people. I guess we scrounged for food for them. I mean it was horrendous. People were just dying. They decided this was when they wanted to die. What most people don’t take into consideration in that situation and I still... is the smell. The smell of decaying bodies under unclean sanitary conditions was horrendous.

I went, it was a number of years ago, this friend of ours, my wife went away for a couple of days. This friend of ours who we’re still friendly with was a widow I said, “Come on I’ll take you; we’ll go for something to eat. We walked into the, I won’t mention the franchise, and usually I love every food. For some reason I walked into that franchise which had just opened in the area, and I just turned around and to said to her, “Do you mind if we leave?” I never told her why.

It took you right back...

Yes, “Do you mind if we leave?”

50 – moral responsibility

As a consequence, as a spin-off, for 25 years I did not go to a Fourth of July celebration. I could not, and I still cannot stand fireworks. I go because my children wanted to go. OK? And I would not refuse them: I went, and I occasionally, socially, I would go and the least favorable of all is the fireworks display. I won’t go. I don’t go – this is bullshit. I’ve seen the real thing. I said I don’t want to go. To me this is pain. When I smell gunpowder, it’s pain. When I see a rifle – and I said to my son one time, I said, “You know, you people have to be responsible. People have to know what it is to do the most irresponsible or responsible thing in the world. And do you know how much moral effort it takes to raise your rifle or any weapon with the intention to do bodily harm? That’s a big responsibility.”

I never forgot that responsibility, and there were times that I think in my mind. How many times have I dropped, in other elements, been at the mortars, and dropped the shells into the tube as a first gunner and saying in my mind, “I wonder how many women and children I’ll kill with

this?" You don't know. You don't know. I don't stay awake dreaming about it or thinking about it, but it's never out of your mind.

So does World War II end then for you at Landsberg?

No, we were still on a Task Force, and then there was a weird situation. We wound up going through on this Task Force through Mittenwald, Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Oberammergau. Those places geographically were in the Alps. They were three towns in Germany that were ultra. This is going into the best suburb of Europe. Garmisch-Partenkirchen, this is where Richard Strauss lived, the composer. He waved to us. I had no idea it was.

He waved to you!

Yes, I had no idea it was until maybe twenty minutes later, and then somebody said to me, "You know who that was?" I said, "I hadn't the faintest idea; I didn't know who that old fart was." He says, "You know, that was Richard Strauss." I said, "Ohhh."

And at the time would it have meant anything to you?

Yes, because I was a music-lover. It still means something to me. Sure!

What about Kurt Vonnegut?

I just read about it, that's all. I just knew that he was in the 409th. There were a couple of episodes that I read in relation to his life. And I said, "Hah, he was in there, too!"

And then we had other little isolated instances where one guy, Londine, we were one time. He was the guy that got lost, and he was a jeep driver in the company. And he got lost, and I could still see him going in the jeep, and he drove right into the German lines and he got captured. He lived; I think he's still alive today – so I remember that episode, "Where the hell is he going? He got captured."

Little isolated things: I went out on patrol one night. There was a reconnaissance patrol during the Bulge period. There were a lot of things that blurred, and all of sudden I hear this racket, and my buddies were lying there on the forward edge of the slope, and up comes a Tiger Tank. It pulls up in front of me. And there were Tiger Tanks in back of them because our first impulse, we were supposed to be in reconnaissance, see what was going on, though our first impulse, was when we saw this guy, this German soldier, get out and he walked out and the cupola was open and he took a leak. We were trying to figure out – "let's go and drop a grenade in there." This was a stupid thing to do because there were three or four tanks behind him – all they had to do was turn the turrets and we're gone. I guess we got the nudge and we didn't do it. We came back and I don't know what subsequently happened after that because you never knew what the end of some of these stories were; you knew the beginning, and sometime you knew the end, and sometimes you only knew the middle and sometimes you knew absolutely nothing.

We got to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, that's where Strauss was, beautiful and Mittenwald which was famous, all famous for their scenery and their spas. This is one of the greatest violin-making towns in the world which I had a bliskover (?) extolling the virtues of violin-making and the other one was Oberammergau. This is where they have the Passion Play. Easter Passion Play. I remember all the houses were painted, and then I remember going down from the mountains into the plains, Innsbruck, which was magnificent - the scenery was. And then part of the outfit cut them off. I guess we met at the Brenner Pass where Hitler had met Mussolini, and then we got the orders, I guess, what the hell's this guy's name, Admiral somebody, (Doenitz) assumed control of Germany. And then it was crazy. We walked up to the German soldiers and said, "Hand us the weapons." Then, the quest for food came up again. Then we got a jeep, a 30 caliber machine-gun, and we were in Innsbruck, and I don't know where the hell we went. We had food, man! We did it just like they do on television! We had gang-busters. We walked in there, and we went down in the basement and we had foood!

Some of the other things that happened; they were remarkable. If you lived through it, it was the best experience of your life as harrowing it was because you had the experiences, you knew that if you lived through them, you knew you were going to have again hopefully. And the thing I get very upset with is the fact is throughout the other intervening conflicts in the world, I always felt that if you took these politicians and these, irrespective of religion or whatever it is, and some of these religious leaders and put them in and let them fight it out. Let them fight it out! Put them behind a gun and let them know what it is to sit behind a machine-gun. Let them know what it is not to eat and not to ...

137 – taking a crap on the move in winter

This is a little anecdote. Did you know how you took a crap when you're going in transit, from one part of the front line to another? You know how you do it, in the winter time? You dropped the guy's pants and you put them over the tailgate. Two guys hold one leg; two guys hold the other; two guys hold the arm, two guys hold the other and let her go. These are just little functioning things that you have to do. I mean if you want to, you could do 'em in your pants, too. I've done that, been there, done that - so it's a living, or I should say it is a living, almost to the point of being a dying.

So war ends in Europe in 1945, and you're still in the Army until 1946?

'46. We're in Europe, being trained to go to Japan. During that period of time after the war, we were in town in Germany. After Innsbruck, I don't remember which outfit. We were getting an upgrade from a line company; we were going to a new thing called 4.2 chemical mortars. It wasn't the greatest deal either but it was better than where we were at. We started getting training on that and then all of a sudden they had the atomic bomb. Then we started counting points to go home.

154 – St. Georgen chemical installation

But in the intervening time we got involved in a little town called St. Georgen which is outside of Munich. Now this was a German installation where they had chemical weapons. I don't mean one weapon. I was underground there. This is part of what we did. There were thousands and thousands and thousands of chemical missiles or artillery missiles or whatever. It was so

important to the Germans. They had their own fighter planes protecting it. In fact, I have a picture, someplace – I don't where it's at, of me sitting on top of a fighter plane. It was non-operational but just the fact that I wanted that picture to make sure that wasn't a fantasy; this was reality.

Those were weapons that the Germans were hoping to use?

Yes. Now other points of history from my knowledge – on the way back from inspecting this site this is where George Patton smashed up and got killed. I'm not positive, this is what I think. I think Eisenhower was there; a lot of big people were there because this was big-time stuff.

You made a comment that the Germans weren't outfought; they were out-massed? Did you say something like that?

180 – the German weapons

That's right. They were superb fighters. I mean that in every sense. I've been under their machine-gun fire. I've been in their machine-gun duels. Their weapons were far superior to what we had. Their supply lines were shorter than what we had. Their machine-gun had a rate of fire that was at least twice as fast as our old World War II machine guns because that's what they were. The M-1 was our primary weapon, and it was good. The BAR was good. The Germans' weapons were better. They had a Schmeiser which was a fabulous weapon that was a machine gun. Their pistols were the P38s and the lugers were awesome, absolutely awesome. Their artillery that 88 – they could drop that 88 shell in your back pocket. Also they had very esoteric armaments. I remember being fired on by a railroad gun. I think it was 280 mm. I think the name of the gun was "Alsace Annie" as referring to the parallel of "Big Bertha." When that thing went off, you knew, I mean, the 88s sounded like a pea-shooter compared to that. There weren't very many rounds that were fired, but I remember each and every one of them because I was really hurting.

190 – saving Cummings's life, unintentionally

Then there was one episode that I saved a person's life, not heroically. We were digging a foxhole. This person next to me, Cummings, I think was his name, and he's starting to crack, and every time he heard a sound, he hit the dirt, and I'm trying to dig a foxhole. Every time he hit the dirt, I hit the dirt – I figured maybe he knows something I don't know. I don't take any chances. After a couple of hours of that, I was getting unnerved. My company commander happened to pass by – Captain Lincoln. He got out of the jeep, and I motioned for him to come on the side. He said, "What's the matter?" I said, "You know what? Get Cummings out of here because he's going to get us all killed." He says, "What do you mean?" I said, "I'm going to go back there and start digging in," and "I told him what happened, " You just watch. You'll get the message in less than a minute." Sure enough, I got back. I wasn't any more than 50? feet away from this commander of mine. And sure enough every time, bingo, he hit the dirt; I hit the dirt. Five seconds later, bingo, hit the dirt, I hit the dirt, and so does everybody else around. We all sensed that something was not right. Pull him off line! Saved his life, hopefully it saved ours too. Crazy, crazy things that are things that are still unreal because they are unreal. It's not a real world.

They always says these are criminal things. I say, “You know something? Combat is free. Everything is free.” You can harm, maim, kill, destroy, burn, pillage, loot, rape – all of the above, none of the above, depending on your ability, your position and your desire. And nobody will get punished for them – except yourself.

If you live with it, I suppose.

Yes, you have to live with your all consequences, things that you do on a whim, for entertainment are unbelievable. I love music. I didn’t hear music for a long time, and I happened to get into a situation where I was in the company of somebody that had a piano – this woman. Did you see the movie, *The Pianist*?

No.

Well, this really happened to me before it happened to them. I saw that piano, and I saw that woman, and I saw that piece of music. I still remember the name of that piece of music. It was the “Revolutionary Étude of Chopin,” and I said to her in German that I would like to hear some music being played, and she said that she can’t! And I took out my ’45, and I pointed it at her head and, “You just learn how.”

Did she play?

She played.

There was another episode where we were at this very, very nice place, and they had this firewood bin, whatever, because they did an awful lot of cooking so no matter how fancy the house was. This place was really nice. We were going to make dinner. We found a couple of chickens or whatever it was, and we were going to make a good dinner, and we didn’t have wood. So, they said, “Jake, we’ll go shoot off the lock, and we’ll take the wood. And I said, “No, leave it alone. Leave the lock the way it is. I’ve got a better idea.” Do you know what we used for wood? – the furniture. We had no qualms at all – some of the little things that you did for entertainment. You had to have something going for you. Right now, for the last sixty years, if somebody dropped a million dollars in my lap, I don’t think I would touch it. OK? But there’s things that I did that I’m not particularly proud of. It’s just that things happen, and it’s on whim because it was a change of pace. It was sort of release.

205 – returning to civilian life

How did you handle the transition from being out of the army, returning to civilian life? Did it take a while? Was it hard?

I’m still going through it. You never finish with the cathartic thing of doing this. There’s certain things, certain phrases, certain things that will happen. I didn’t go to a war movie. I stayed away. Fourth of July – I stayed away - I went to a movie; I didn’t walk out of the house . My wife understood. She accepted it. When my children got to the age where they wanted to go to a Fourth of July parade, I had to go to a Fourth of July parade, but I wasn’t happy about it. Even if

I go to a concert, and they had the “1812 Overture,” and they fired the cannons I was anxious getting already.

Did you make use of the G.I. Bill then when you got home?

Yes, when I got home, I started to go to college. I did my first semester, and I was in the middle of my second semester. Like I said before, my mother and dad were very poor. They were very intelligent, but they just didn't have the social graces, and they didn't have the education; although in my dad's case, he learned how to speak four different languages and do it well and read and write and be functional in all of them - because he had nothing better to do. He didn't have employment. He self-educated himself for the most part. Well anyways, I had at the time, two older brothers that were in the produce business. One of the owners with my brother was married and had two children. I was in the middle of the second semester in my first year. I came home from school one day, and my mother said my brother is in the hospital; he's going to have surgery, and you have to support his family. So, according to our tradition at the time, I said “OK,” and I just walked away from school, assuming that when my brother recovered that all of three us would go into a different endeavor. It didn't work out that way because after this brother got well and got back to business and all of sudden after two or three weeks, he said to me, “You're going to have to go find a job because the business can hardly carry for two families. I know it's not going to carry for three.”

240- finding a career

In all essence, I was out of school; I was out of work, and I was out of touch. It's called “fend for yourself.” In retrospect I never should have quit school because they would have made it somehow. But being very soft and at that time I was just so happy to be alive that I figured that well. I'll make do and whatever.

But prior to that when I was going to high school, I got a part-time job as a messenger boy for a watchmaking business where they repaired timepieces downtown. I was the messenger boy to get the parts and this and that and the other thing. I was fast, and there weren't too many messages. I made \$4 a week. I would play with the timepieces, and I loved them. I saw a sign in the streetcar that said “Be independent. Be a watchmaker.” I was covered under the G.I. Bill; it gave me income. I enrolled. I passed the aptitude test. I did OK.

In the meantime, I met this girl who subsequently became my wife, and she worked for a jeweler. I worked for a watch company at the bottom, but her father, the boss, needed somebody to sell part-time for Christmas, and I had never sold, (but) ? I could bullshit a little bit. So I went to work during the Christmas season, and I started selling. All of a sudden, when I was working at this other place, the man who became my boss walked into the office, and said, “I'm firing him and him, and I'm hiring him. So I went to work with my father-in-law in the same place so I could sell. I learned how to repair. I became a lot of things – a lot of bad things happened there. They were getting older. It got to the point where I was sustaining the entire business because I was the only that was functional. The son of the owner who was an attorney, quite successful, he said, “You know, when I finally did get control of the business, bookkeeping-wise, the business was going bankrupt.” (Number two?) I had carried it on my back for fifteen years. I was working nights, moonlighting, doing work for other stores in order to justify our total existence. Anyway,

I finally got control of the business, and through the power of desire to succeed. I turned a bankrupt business into a successful business. I don't want to tell you how many times I got stuck-up, or how many times I got this or the other thing.

280 – family

Eventually, I got out after thirteen years of owning it. I got out and I was 60 and a half. I retired. I sold the business, and I retired. I didn't want to go on. I said, "You want to know something? I got lucky. I worked hard. I saved. I didn't piss it away. I didn't make any big investments but I secured my little condo in Morton Grove. I bought a little condo ten years ago in Florida, and I paid for that. Everything was fine. I got enough to eat. I can drive a car. I can go to the show. I educated my two children. My daughter holds a master's in psychiatric social work, lives out in Massachusetts. Her husband graduated from Williams and Columbia, Phi Beta Kappa.

Those are nice achievements in addition to the medals.

Two grandchildren there, a boy and a girl – wonderful kids, scholastically, socially – wonderful. I can't laud enough praise on them. That is really done by other people. I'm not talking about me; I'm talking about other people! Both kids are presidents of their classes. Both have fantastic grades. He plays the drums also in the marching band. My granddaughter plays the flute; she's in the marching band. Whatever the thing is, you don't have tell them to do homework. They do it. They know how to study. They know how to work. They know how to achieve. My grandson, he's got a job two years in a row at a very nice restaurant; he's a bus boy. He knows how to work physically. He makes his own money. He buys his own stuff. He is indispensable to the business now because he learned how to wait. He learned how to cook. One of the pluses, the people who owned the restaurant were, at one time, they were providers of food for places like the Rolling Stones and things of that nature. So they come well-documented there.

Here in Chicago, my son, who I am very proud of, is fifty-six. He went to the University of Michigan, a scholarship. With the scholarship it cost mega-bucks, which is fine. He spent eight years there. – doctor.

What's his field?

Internal medicine. Two daughters, older daughter just became a CPA, lives in New York. She was sought out by a big firm – beautiful girl, very talented. The other one also graduated from Michigan with honors. My son is a Phi Beta Kappa. My son is an AOA, which in medical school is the same as Phi Beta Kappa. I don't brag. I don't really say much of anything. The other granddaughter is starting her junior year at the University of Michigan.

Boy, you're a Big Blue family!

What can I tell you? Also, my son in his practice right now has eleven physicians. He was for six years, as a side-issue, - he was the doctor for the Chicago Bulls. Remember Michael Jordan. He controlled every part, for six years, the entire medical structure for the Bulls.

You know, Mr. Weinberg, I think that would be another great conversation.

OK, we're ending it. You're on overload. OK. But out of, I don't brag

That quote from Caroline Kennedy is what I'm hearing as you're saying this - (Jack had mentioned her statement to the effect that if your children are failures, then you are a failure).

The wartime experience and surviving ...

I'll tell you something. I'm not a religious person by any stretch of the imagination after what I saw. My father knew it when I came home. I told my mother and my dad. I said, "I know you were raised Orthodox. I know where you come from. I know what I saw. I know what I witnessed. I said, "You know something? The only thing I gotta say about God is someday you're going to have big convention of all the gods, but the real God can't find a parking place!"

After that, he knew. He never contested. He knew. I just don't go. When the children were small, I gave them all education, all the things that they required. I let make them make their choices. I still never questioned the choices of my children, my grandchildren, whatever the religious factors were – this was fine, I went along with everything. Fine, whatever their decision is. They are good, decent, intelligent and very praiseworthy people. And what else can I tell you?

Thank you, Mr. Weinberg!

And I didn't die!!

Postscripts:

Upon proofing this transcript, Mr. Weinberg was struck by his many references to food. He explained that food was a source of life and an important subject when your strength was being constantly tested and that thinking of meals or what's for dinner or breakfast is an element of ongoing continuity for him to this day.

He also stated that he and all of his fellow soldiers felt an enormous sense of satisfaction in that they were performing their patriotic duty. They would always feel proud when seeing the B-17s or B24s flying overhead. They would feel anxious when they heard or saw the anti-aircraft guns firing at them.

A story he later recalled was his finding in Germany around the war's end of a Mercedes convertible German Staff Car which had been hidden under some hay. Later during the British General Montgomery's victory parade in Innsbruck, he saw Monty riding in same kind of car. Jack's mind told him, "That's my car!" It looked just like the one he had turned in.

Jack also mentioned that he had recently talked to his war buddy, Richard Lynch, who was doing "ok" after heart surgery.

Appendix (11 pages)

Photocopy of portrait in uniform.

Photocopy of views of monument to the 103rd Infantry in St. Dié, France.

Mr. Weinberg's Honorable Discharge Papers

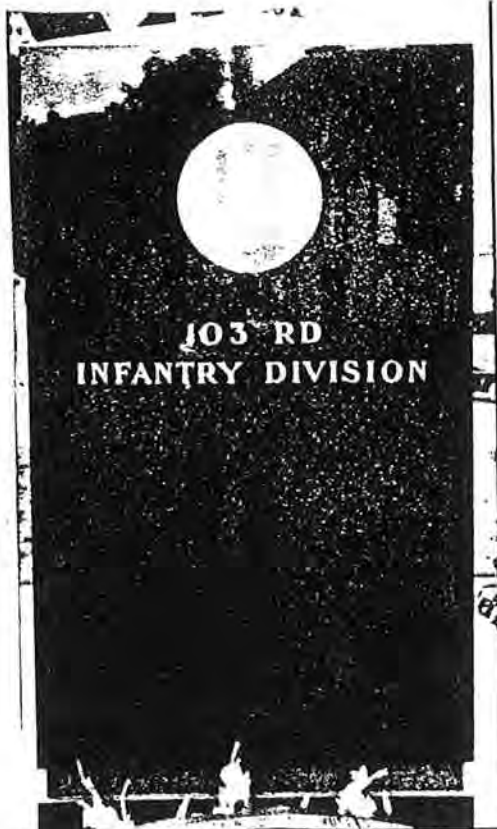
Mr. Weinberg's letter of entitlement to awards, obtained from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis

9 scans of wartime photos and photocopies of photos

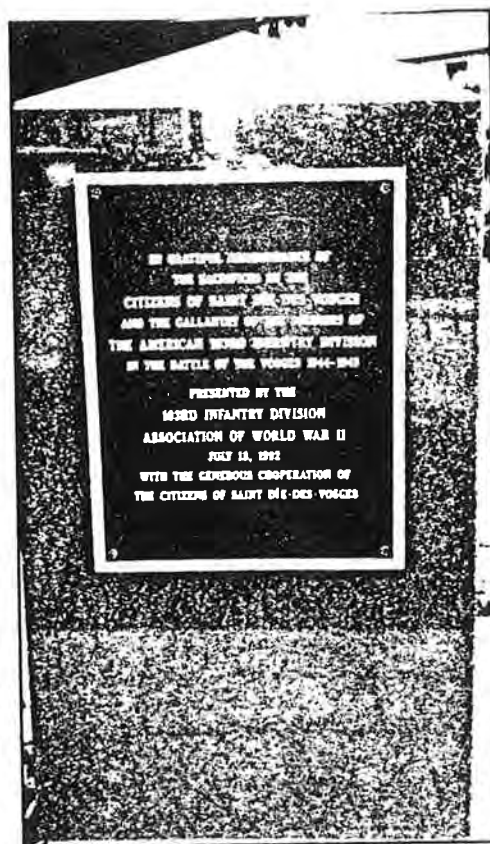
Scanned photocopy of dramatic picture taken at Hitler's "The Eagle's Nest" at Berchtesgaden



Jack Weinberg



Obverse side of the monument at St. Die. (Courtesy of Harold Branton)



Reverse side of the monument at St. Die. (Courtesy of Harold Branton)



Right side of monument at St. Die. (Courtesy of Harold Branton)



Left side of monument at St. Die. (Courtesy of Harold Branton)

Monument dedicated to the 103rd Infantry Division at St. Die, France.

Army of the United States



Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

JACK WEINBERG, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS
COMPANY D 410TH INFANTRY 103D DIVISION

Army of the United States

is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States of America.

This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at SEPARATION CENTER
CAMP MC COY, WISCONSIN

Date APRIL 1946

THOMAS E. HAMMOND
Major, AGD
Commanding

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL: WEINBERG JACK
 2. ARMY SERIAL NO.: [REDACTED]
 3. GRADE: PFC
 4. ORGANIZATION: CO D 416TH INF 103RD DIV
 5. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES: 1441 SO ST LOUIS AVE CHICAGO 23 ILL
 6. DATE OF SEPARATION: APR 46
 7. PLACE OF SEPARATION: CAMP MC COY WIS
 8. COMPONENT: AUS
 9. PLACE OF SEPARATION: SEPARATION CENT
 10. DATE OF BIRTH: 15 MAR 25
 11. PLACE OF BIRTH: CHICAGO ILL
 12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT: SEE 9
 13. COLOR EYES: BRN
 14. COLOR HAIR: BRN
 15. HEIGHT: 5-8
 16. WEIGHT: 152 lbs
 17. NO. DEPT: 0
 18. VARS: [X]
 19. MARITAL STATUS: SINGLE
 20. U.S. CITIZEN: YES
 21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO.: STUDENT HIGH SCHOOL X-02

MILITARY HISTORY

22. DATE OF INDUCTION: JUL 43
 23. DATE OF EXPIREMENT: 4 AUG 43
 24. SERVICE NUMBER: 4113
 25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE: CHICAGO ILL
 26. SERVICE NUMBER AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE: SEE 9
 27. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO.: HEAVY MORTAR CREWMAN 1607
 28. MILITARY QUALIFICATION AND RATE: EXP INF BADGE, COMBAT INF BADGE, RIFLE
 29. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS: RHINELAND CENTRAL EUROPE

30. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS: GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL AMERICAN THEATER SERVICE MEDAL
 EUROPEAN-AFRICAN-MIDDLE EASTERN THEATER SERVICE MEDAL
 31. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION: NONE

32. LATEST IMMIGRATION DATES: JUL 45, MAR 46, TYRHOUS MAR 46
 33. SERVICE OVERSEAS CONTINENTAL U.S. AND ABROAD: 6 OCT 44, 31 MAR 46
 34. DATE OF DEPARTURE: 6 OCT 44
 35. OCCUPATION: E T O F
 36. DATE OF ARRIVAL: 20 OCT 44
 37. SERVICE OVERSEAS: U.S.
 38. DATE OF ARRIVAL: 9 APR 45

39. CONTINENTAL SERVICE: 1 YEAR, 2 MONTHS, 7 DAYS
 40. FOREIGN SERVICE: 1 YEAR, 6 MONTHS, 4 DAYS
 41. GRADE: PFC
 42. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION: CONVENIENCE OF THE GOVT, PRI-1, (DEMORILIZATION) AR 615-365, 15 DEC 44
 43. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED: NONE

PAY DATA

44. LAGGERS FOR PAY PURPOSES: 2 YEARS, 9 MONTHS, 1 DAY
 45. MONTHLY PAY: \$300
 46. BOUNTY PAY: \$100
 47. TOTAL AMOUNT: \$400
 48. TRAVEL PAY: NONE
 49. TOTAL AMOUNT, NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER: \$12.25, H J GILDENBURG MA

INSURANCE NOTICE

50. KIND OF INSURANCE: U.S. Govt.
 51. MONTH PAID: \$6.40
 52. EFFECTIVE DATE OF NEXT MONTH DISCONTINUANCE: 30 APR 46
 53. DATE OF NEXT PREMIUM DUE: 31 MAY 46
 54. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO: [X] Continue

55. REMARKS: LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED ASR SCORE (2 SEP 45) 46
 THREE (3) OVERSEAS SERVICE BARS
 INACTIVE SERVICE ERC FR 14 JUL 43 - 3 AUG 43
 56. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED: [REDACTED]
 57. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - sig. office): WINIFRED M HEALY 1ST LT WAC [Signature]

Revised Form 55, 28 November 1944

This form supersedes all previous editions of WD AGO Form 55 and 55 for uninitiated persons entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which



National Personnel Records Center

Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Avenue St. Louis, Missouri 63132-5100

August 8, 2005

JACK WEIRBERG
[REDACTED]

RE: **Veteran's Name: WEIRBERG JACK**
[REDACTED]
Request Number: 1-726237886

Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for contacting the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). The record needed to answer your inquiry is not in our files. If the record were here on July 12, 1973, it would have been in the area that suffered the most damage in the fire on that date and may have been destroyed. The fire destroyed the major portion of records of Army military personnel for the period 1912 through 1959, and records of Air Force personnel with surnames Hubbard through Z for the period 1947 through 1963. Fortunately, there are alternate records sources that often contain information which can be used to reconstruct service record data lost in the fire, however, *complete records cannot be reconstructed.*

We would normally utilize alternate record sources and provide an NA Form 13038, Certification of Military Service, to verify military service; however, the separation document provided with your enclosures contains more information than we are able to reconstruct. We have made copies of all the documents provided and they will be maintained on file.

We are pleased to verify entitlement to the following awards:

BRONZE STAR MEDAL;
GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL;
AMERICAN CAMPAIGN MEDAL;
EUROPEAN-AFRICAN-MIDDLE EASTERN CAMPAIGN MEDAL with 2 bronze service stars;
WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL;
COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE 1ST AWARD;
EXPERT INFANTRYMAN BADGE;
HONORABLE SERVICE LAPEL BUTTON WWII;
EXPERT BADGE with Rifle Bar;

Your Awards Case Number is A5H5HX636TBPK

The Bronze Star Medal is based on the award of the Combat Infantryman Badge or the Combat Medical Badge.



Christy Roberts and Dick Lynch are probably among Jack's fellow company soldiers in this picture which was most likely taken somewhere in Alsace-Lorraine.



**Some members of Jack's company
Sgt. Rodell from Iowa who received a battlefield commission
is standing 1st from left.**

**Elmer Doerr,
a Sergeant from Iowa**



Army buddy and lifelong friend, Dick Lynch ,with Jack

D Company in Alsace. Jack in middle.



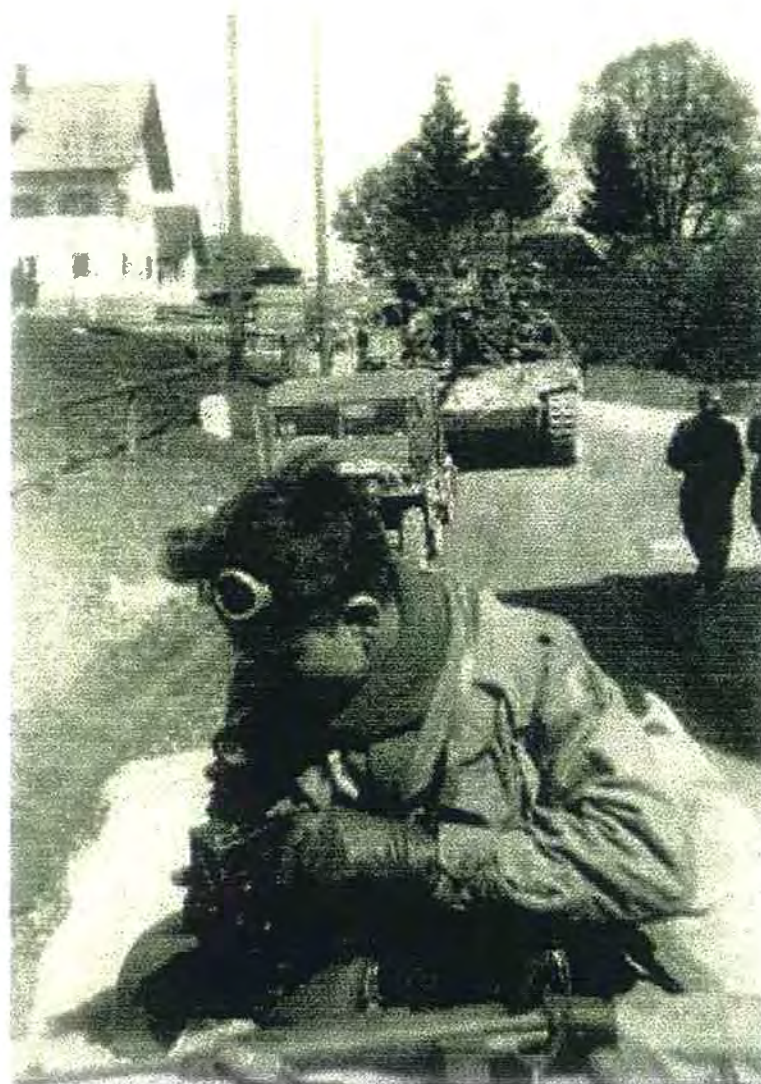
Kane Roedel Waisberg McElroy



Lynch



**Dick Lynch, Alexander Kuc
and Jack Weinberg**



**Luigi Marin, riding on a tank top in early
May, 1945. He saved several fallen soldiers
by using a mirror to check for breathing and
then alerting medics.**



Jack on left

Jack atop German fighter plane at Landsberg





During their reunion, Jack and his friend Richard Lynch and other soldiers visit Berchtesgaden, “The Eagle’s Nest,” in 1945 after the war’s end. Mr. Lynch had just recovered from a bout with yellow jaundice that had sidelined him for 3 months. Jack recalls wondering what might have been going through Hitler’s mind when he looked out on this scene, possibly through the Berghof Window.