

CHARLES COOLIDGE...36th INFANTRY DIVISION ORAL HISTORY OF
HIS SERVICE IN WWII...RECORDED VIA TELEPHONE JAN. 11, 2001

I WAS THE FIRST 20-YR. OLD DRAFTED FROM THIS AREA...HAMILTON COUNTY (CHATTANOOGA) TN. UNTIL THEN THEY HAD BEEN DRAFTING 25 YR. OLD. I JOINED THIS TEXAS UNIT AT CAMP ATTERBURY, INDIANA..AFTER HAVING TRAINING AT SEVERAL CAMPS IN U.S. THE 36th WAS A TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD..AND ACTIVATED NOV. 25th, 1940. THEY WERE ACTIVATED AT CAMP BOWIE, TEXAS. I THINK THEY RECEIVED \$6 A MONTH BUT WHEN I WAS DRAFTED INTO THE ARMY, THE PAY WAS \$21 A MONTH. I JOINED THIS UNIT AT CAMP EDWARDS, MASSACHUSETTS. WHEN I JOINED THEM UP THERE, THEY ASKED ME IF I HAD EVER BEEN HOME ON LEAVE..WHEN I TOLD HIM "NO"..HE SAID "WHERE DO YOU LIVE?" AND I SAID, "SIGNAL MOUNTAIN, TN." HE ASKED ME IF I HAD ENOUGH MONEY TO GET HOME AND WHEN I TOLD HIM I DID, HE TOLD HIS ORDERLY TO TAKE ME UP AND SHOW ME WHERE MY BUNK WOULD BE AND LET HIM PUT HIS STUFF THERE AND I WILL GIVE HIM A PASS AND SEND HIM HOME BECAUSE THIS OUTFIT IS GOING OVERSEAS..I HAD NEVER BEEN..WHAT DO YOU CALL IT, OBSTACLE COURSE., WHERE YOU TRAIN TO GO THRU BARBED WIRE FENCE AND STUFF LIKE THAT. AND NOW HERE THE WEATHER IS AROUND ZERO...OR BELOW. WE STAYED THERE A COUPLE MONTHS AND THEN WE SHIPPED OVERSEAS..WELL WE ACTUALLY LANDED IN NORTH AFRICA IN MARCH OF '43...WE LANDED IN ORAN. THEN WE GOT THRU N. AFRICA..THEN THEY INVADED..THE 1st, 3rd, 45th, and 34th..INVADED IN SICILY. OF COURSE, THAT WAS FINE, WE HAD PATTON BY THEN..HE WAS THE HARD-NOSED FIGHTER..I DON'T KNOW WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF HIM NOW, BUT HE WAS THE FIGHTER..BUT HE CUSSSED TOO MUCH...I DIDN'T LIKE THAT PART OF HIM BUT AS FAR AS FIGHTING, HE WAS THE FIGHTER. YOU KNOW WHO I AM TALKING ABOUT..GENERAL PATTON? THEN AFTER THEY TOOK SICILY, OF COURSE, THE 36th INVADED IN SALERNO..IN SEPT. 9, 1943. WE GOT OFF THE MOTHER SHIP PROBABLY ABOUT 2:30 A.M...WHEN I SAY "MOTHER SHIP" THAT'S OUT IN THE OCEAN PRETTY FAR OUT. THEN WE GOT IN THESE LITTLE ASSAULT BOATS. YOU CLIMB DOWN ROPE LADDERS AND GET INTO THESE LITTLE ASSAULT BOATS..AND THEN RONDEVOU. WE GOT OFF THE MOTHER SHIP ABOUT 2:30 AM..AND INVADED ABOUT 4:30 IN THE MORNING AND WE WERE THE FIRST TROOPS IN..WELL, I SAY WE WERE..THEY MAY HAVE HAD SCOUTS GO IN FIRST AND TRY TO PICK UP SOME INFORMATION..BUT WE WERE THE FIRST TROOPS TO GO IN ..GO BACK TO EUROPE AND OUT AT DUNKIRK.

AND STAY. WE HAD A TERRIBLE BATTLE THERE BECAUSE WHAT THEY WERE TRYING TO DO WAS ESTABLISH AN AIRFIELD WHERE THEY COULD FLY FROM. AND, OF COURSE, THEY HAD...THERE WASN'T ONE PLACE IN SOUTHERN ITALY WHERE WE COULD MAKE AN AIRFIELD OR WHERE WE COULD MAKE AN INVASION BECAUSE WE COULDN'T FLY THAT FAR. SEE, THEY COULD FLY FROM SICILY, BUT YOU HAD TO GET SOME PLACE FAIRLY CLOSE FOR THE FIGHTERS. SO, ACTUALLY, WE WENT IN..AFTER THE FIERCE BATTLE AT SALERNO, WE FINALLY TOOK AND HELD IT. THEN WE GOT THE AIRFIELD SET UP THERE. BUT WE WENT ON UP THE "BOOT" ..AND YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THIS FILM, ..."UP THE BLOODY BOOT"..THEN WE WENT UP ONE MOUNTAIN AFTER ANOTHER..GOING UP HIGHWAY 8 FROM NAPLES ON INTO ROME. BUT WHEN WE GOT TO THE RAPIDO RIVER..ON JANUARY 22nd & 23rd, WE TRIED TO CROSS THE RIVER. NOW THAT WAS AN ARGUMENT THAT AROSE BETWEEN MARK CLARK.. ..HE WANTED TO MAKE A FRONTAL ATTACK ACROSS THE RIVER..WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE. BUT WE WERE GOING TO MAKE A FRONTAL ATTACK ACROSS THE RIVER...THAT'S WHAT WE DID..TRIED, RATHER. THERE WERE 2 REGIMENTS THAT ATTACKED.. I THINK IT WAS THE 141st AND 143rd. I WAS IN THE 141st. WE TRIED TO GET ACROSS THE RIVER..TOOK PONTOONS..LITTLE RUBBER BOATS..AND, OF COURSE, THE SHELLING WAS FIERCE. IF YOU GOT OFF THE ROAD, YOU GOT INTO A MINEFIELD BECAUSE THE GERMANS KNEW THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU COULD GET ACROSS. THEY WERE SHELLING US UNMERCIFULLY. WELL, PART OF US DID GET ACROSS AND PART OF US DIDN'T...I GOT IN THE RIVER BUT NEVER CROSSED THE RIVER AT THAT PARTICULAR PLACE. DURING THIS BATTLE I WAS ATTACHED WITH A RIFLE COMPANY. AND THEN, AFTER IT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL FOR THREE DAYS OR MORE AND WE LOST 2400 MEN OUT OF TWO REGIMENTS...THEY SAY ONE DAY, I SAY 3 DAYS..AND WE KEPT LOSING MEN ALL ALONG. THE RIFLE COMPANY I WAS ATTACHED TO, WHICH WOULD, AT NORMAL FULL STRENGTH..BUT, OF COURSE THEY WEREN'T FULL STRENGTH, BUT IF THEY HAD BEEN, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD 212 MEN BUT, WHEN WE GOT ON MOUNT CALVARY, WE HAD 12 MEN LEFT. OF COURSE, ANYBODY THAT WAS A PRIVATE, THEY MADE THEM CORPORALS, SERGEANTS OR WHATEVER, YOU KNOW. THE BATTLE WAS SO FIERCE AND WE WERE LOSING SO MANY MEN..AND WE HAD, I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY COUNTRIES INVOLVED THERE..BUT A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT. OF COURSE, ALL OF US LOST HEAVILY AT THE RAPIDO RIVER...AND THAT AREA. AND ON THE 28th THEY CAME OVER AND BOMBED THE MONASTERY. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HAVE EVER HEARD OR READ ABOUT THAT. YOU'VE HEARD A LOT OF FLACK

ABOUT IT ANYWAY BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT WE SHOULDN'T HAVE BOMBED THE MONASTARY. WELL, ACTUALLY, WE DIDN'T BUT IT WAS IN OUR AREA SO WHAT WE DID, WE MOVED OUT OF VESECTA..BUT STAYED ON THE HILL AT MOUNT CAIRO. THEN SOMETHING LIKE 50 FLYING FORTRESSES CAME OVER AND BOMBED...OF COURSE, THEY SAID THE GERMANS WERE NOT THERE BUT THAT WAS A LIE BECAUSE WE SAW THEM JUMP OUT OF THE WINDOWS AND SHOOT WHEN THE PLANES WENT OVER...OVER THE WALL THAT SURROUNDED THE MONESTARY. THE REASON I AM TELLING YOU THAT..IS BECAUSE WHEN I WAS BACK OVER THERE IN 1984, I WENT UP AND LOOK-ED AT THE MONESTARY AND ONE OF THE GUARDS WHO WAS THERE WAS TALKING ..I GUESS MY SON WHO WAS WITH US, HAD ASKED HIM A QUESTION ABOUT SOMETHING AND THE GUARD HAD SAID "OH WELL, THE GERMANS WEREN'T IN THERE". I SAID "LOOK OVER THERE AND TELL ME THAT... I WAS LYING OVER THERE WHEN THEY CAME OVER AND BOMBED THIS PLACE. AND I SAID, "DID THE PRIESTS AND THE PEOPLE HAVE MACHINE GUNS THAT THEY STARTED FIRING AFTER THE PLANES WENT BY?" HE FOUND OUT THEN THAT SOMEBODY KNEW A LITTLE BIT MORE THAN HE DID. YOU KNOW THOSE PEOPLE UP THERE WHO WERE GUARDS OR GUIDES, THEY ALWAYS TRY TO MAIN-TAIN THE GERMANS NEVER USED THE MONESTARY BUT THEY DID AND I KNOW THEY DID BECAUSE I WAS THERE. WELL, AFTER WE CAME BACK AND HAD TO GET REPLACEMENTS, THEN WE WENT FROM THERE UP TO WHERE WE GOT ON BOATS AND WENT UP TO ANZIO. NOW, ON ANZIO, AT THE SAME TIME WE HAD TRIED TO CROSS THE RAPIDO, THEY HAD INVADED UP THERE..IN FACT, PAUL HUFF GOT HIS MEDAL THERE...HE WAS THE FIRST PARATROOPER TO GET THE MEDAL OF HONOR.. HE LIVED AT CLEVELAND TENNESSEE (ABOUT 30 MILES FROM CHATTANOOGA)...I LIVED ON SIGNAL MOUNTAIN..BUT THAT IS CONSIDERED A PART OF CHATTANOOGA. THEY WENT TO ANZIO.. AND ALL THE WAY TO ROME...THEN HAD TO FIGHT THEIR WAY BACK TO WHERE WE WERE. THEY USED TO SAY THEY HAD THE BIGGEST PRISONER OF WAR CAMP IN THE WORLD AT ANZIO BECAUSE IT WAS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY GERMANS...OF COURSE THE CASUALITY RATE UP THERE WAS JUST ASTRONOMICAL BECAUSE THEY WERE SHOOTING THEM FROM ALL SIDES..EXCEPT THE REAR WHICH WAS THE OCEAN. THEN IN MAY OF '44 WE WENT UP TO ANZIO. WE GOT ON BOATS AND WENT UP THERE, AND WHEN WE WERE BEING ORIENTED ON WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN, THEY TOLD US WE'RE SENDING YOU UP THERE TO BREAK OUT..WE'RE GOING TO ROME. THERE WAS

UP THERE..IN FACT, PAUL HUFF GOT HIS MEDAL THERE..HE WAS THE FIRST PARATROOPER TO GET THE MEDAL OF HONOR..HE LIVED AT CLEVELAND TENNESSEE (ABOUT 30 MILES FROM CHATTANOOGA..OF COURSE, I LIVED ON SIGNAL MOUNTAIN..BUT THAT IS PART OF CHATTANOOGA. THEY WENT IN AT ANZIO..AND WHEN THEY ATTACKED, THEY WENT ALL THE WAY TO ROME..GOT TO ROME, THEN HAD TO FIGHT THEIR WAY BACK TO OUR OWN LAND..THEY USED TO SAY THEY HAD THE BIGGEST PRISONER OF WAR CAMP IN THE WORLD AT ANZIO BECAUSE IT WAS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY GERMANS..OF COURSE THE CASUALTY RATE UP THERE WAS JUST ASTRONOMICAL BECAUSE THEY WERE SHOOTING THEM FROM ALL SIDES..EXCEPT THEIR REAR..WHICH WAS THE OCEAN.

THEN IN MAY OF '44 WE WENT UP TO ANZIO. WE GOT ON BOATS AND WENT UP THERE, AND WHEN WE WERE BEING ORIENTED ON WHAT WAS GONNA HAPPEN, THEY TOLD US "WE'RE SENDING YOU UP THERE TO ~~BREAK OUT~~"! WE'RE GOING TO ROME. THERE WAS NO DOUBT..YOU'RE GOING TO ROME! WELL, WE GOT THERE ONE MORNING ABOUT ELEVEN O'CLOCK..TOOK OUR MEN UP TO THE FRONT LINES AS CLOSE AS WE COULD..THEN ABOUT FOUR O'CLOCK THE NEXT MORNING, WE PUSHED OFF AND WENT TO VELLETRI...INSTEAD OF GOING UP THE MAIN HIGHWAY. THEY HAD PEOPLE WORKING IN MAPS AND SURVEYS..AND HAD PHOTOGRAPHED AND STUDIED THE AREA AND SAW THAT IT LOOKED LIKE THERE WAS LITTLE ACTIVITY ON THE RIGHT FLANK OF WHERE THE GERMANS WERE AT VELLETRI..SO WHEN HE WAS STUDYING THESE MAPS..THE COLONEL CAME IN AND HE SAID "IT DON'T LOOK TO ME LIKE THERE IS MUCH ACTIVITY OVER IN HERE..HE COULD TELL BY THE DEW..WASN'T MESSED UP. HE SAID, "LOOKS LIKE TO ME THAT IF THEY'RE THERE, THEY'RE NOT MOVING AROUND"BECAUSE HE COULD TELL THE DEW WASN'T MESSED UP..."YOU REALLY THINK THAT'S RIGHT?" HE SAID "YEAH". HE SAID, "I THINK WE SHOULD SEND OUT A PATROL." HE SAID, "WILL YOU GO WITH ME?" AND THE GUY NOW TELLS ME "WELL, WHAT COULD I SAY.."NO, I'WON'T GO." BUT HE SAID, "YES, I'LL GO." SO THEY WENT UP THERE AND SURE ENOUGH, THEY FOUND A WEAK SPOT THERE IN THEIR LINE SO ONE DAY WE PUSHED OFF AND WENT AROUND AND CAME IN BEHIND VELLETRI. WE CAPTURED SOME GERMANS. WE EVEN CAPTURED A GERMAN KITCHEN THAT HAD FRANKFURTERS, SAUERKRAUT, AND ICE CREAM. WE WENT AHEAD AND TOOK ROME...AND THEN WE WENT AS FAR UP AS ROCASTRATTA, WHICH WAS 90 KILOMETERS ABOVE ROME. THEN WE GOT RELIEVED..AND I SPENT A DAY OR TWO IN ROME.

IN FACT, I'VE GOT PICTURES I HAD MADE IN ROME WHICH I SENT HOME AND I STILL HAVE THEM. COMING BACK, NOW, WE GOT REPLACEMENTS..THEN WENT OVER AND MADE THE INVASION IN CANNES..IN SOUTHERN FRANCE ON AUGUST 15, 1944. AND THAT'S WHERE IN FRANCE, I GOT THE MEDAL OF HONOR. AND THE REASON I WANTED TO GIVE YOU THIS BACKGROUND IS BECAUSE PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THAT IT WAS SUCH A WASTE..THEY HAD THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS OF TROOPS BUT THEY WANTED TO BE SURE AND POSITIVE THAT IT WAS GOING TO BE A REALITY... THAT THEY WERE GOING TO BE ABLE TO INVADE. IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS SUCH A TREMENDOUS WASTE WHEN WE HAD SUCH FEW PEOPLE TO INVADE AT SALERNO...THERE WE HIT PANTHER DIVISIONS THE GERMANS HAD. THERE WASN'T BUT ONE OR TWO PLACES YOU COULD LAND IN SOUTHERN ITALY. OF COURSE, THE GERMANS HAD ALL THEIR CONCENTRATION OF TROOPS DOWN IN THAT AREA BECAUSE THEY KNEW IT WAS GOING TO BE A TOUGH BATTLE BEFORE WE EVER WENT IN.

BUT, ANYWAY, WE WENT INTO CANNES IN FRANCE, WHICH WAS AUGUST 15, 1944. THEN WE STARTED UP. IT WAS A PICNIC TO WHAT WE HAD BEEN FIGHTING IN ITALY. IN ITALY, THAT WAS THE WAR. I MEAN, IN ITALY, YOU COULD PUT A BLANKET OUT. THE WATER HAD BEEN ABOUT 2 OR 3" IN MY FOXHOLE AND..NOT THINKING..I WENT DOWN TO MAKE A CUP OF COFFEE..IN THIS GULLEY..IT WAS UNDERNEATH THE ESCARPMENT AND THE GERMANS COULDN'T SEE YOU..YOU TAKE A K-RATION BOX AND LIGHT IT..IT WON'T MAKE ANY SMOKE, BUT IT WILL MAKE A FIRE. YOU CAN WARM UP COFFEE. WELL, IT WAS NOVEMBER, I GUESS ..KINDA COLD AND RAINY. I THREW MY BLANKET OVER THIS BUSH TO DRY..AND 3 OR 4 MINUTES LATER, I HEARD THIS "WHOOM" AND I LOOKED UP WHERE MY BLANKET HAD BEEN AND THEY HAD HIT IT WITH ONE SHOT. IT WAS ARTILLERY..I IMAGINE AND 88. AND THEY HAD HIT THAT BLANKET WITH ONE SHOT AND IN FACT, THE WATER JACKET ON MY MACHINE GUN GOT A BIG HOLE IN IT AND I HAD IT REPLACED.

NOW THAT WAS BEFORE FRANCE..THAT WAS WHILE WE WERE STILL IN ITALY...ITALY WAS JUST ONE HECK OF A WAR OVER THERE.... THE CASUALTIES WERE TREMENDOUS...IN FRANCE, EVEN THOUGH WE LOST A LOT OF MEN, WE WERE MOVING A LOT..TAKING ABOUT 500 MILES OR SO A DAY..PROBABLY TOOK THE MOST LAND THAT WAS EVER TAKEN IN WWII IN SUCH A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. THE GERMANS DID IT WHEN THEY OVER-RAN FRANCE BUT AS FOR THE AMERICANS,

IT WAS PROBABLY THE BIGGEST LAND GRAB THAT WAS MADE BECAUSE WE WENT ALL THE WAY UP TO GERMANY.

Q. CHARLES, WHERE DID THAT HAPPEN WHERE THE SHELL CAME INTO YOUR TRENCH.

A. WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

Q. WAS THAT..IN ITALY YOU SAID. WHERE IN ITALY?

A. MOUNT SAMMURCRO OR..I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'M PRONOUNCING IT RIGHT.

Q. WELL, OKAY, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH.

A. THEY WERE SITTING UP THERE IN THE HIGH MOUNTAINS, AND WE WERE DOWN IN THE VALLEY LOOKING AT..WE WERE IN THE FOOTHILLS AND THEY WERE IN THE MOUNTAINS..YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. AND THEY COULD LOOK DOWN AND SEE US. WE WERE JUST..AFTER WE'D TAKE A MOUNTAIN LIKE THAT, WE'D LOOK BACK DOWN AND SAY, WELL, NO WONDER THEY KNEW WHAT WE WERE DOING DOWN THERE. THEY COULD SEE US DOWN THERE. AND, OF COURSE, AFTER WE WENT IN FRANCE, IT WAS A DIFFERENT..WE HAD MORE EQUIPMENT..WE WERE BETTER...SEE, WHEN WE WENT OVER IN NORTH AFRICA, WE WENT OVER WITH LEGGINGS..DIDN'T HAVE COMBAT BOOTS. WE HAD LEGGINGS THEY HAD USED IN WORLD WAR I..SOME PEOPLE SAY WE HAD O-3s BUT I DO THINK THEY HAD ALREADY ISSUED THE M-1 BEFORE WE GOT OVER THERE. OF COURSE, WE HAD MACHINE GUNS...30 CALIBER. AND I WAS IN A MACHINE GUN PLATOON. WE HAD FOUR GUNS. AND, LIKE I TOLD YOU, WE HAD SO MANY REPLACEMENTS, YOU COULD GET PROMOTED WITHOUT ANY REAL CHORE. NOW, TO GET BACK TO WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW IS THE STORY UP IN THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS. OF COURSE, WE WERE JUST GOIN' ALONG. OF COURSE, THE VOSGES MTNS. WAS ANOTHER PLACE WHERE THEY WERE GOING TO STAND AND FIGHT. AND THAT PARTICULAR MORNING WE WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE HILL 624..AND I WAS WITH THE COMPANY COMMANDER OF K COMPANY..I WAS WITH ONE SECTION WHICH WAS TWO MACHINE GUNS, WITH MY MEN, WHICH WOULD PROBABLY HAD BEEN 12, 13 or 14 MEN.

Q. WAS IT HILL 623 OR 624?

A. WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT WAS 623 OR 624..THE CITATION STATES 623. AND THAT WAS THE OBJECTIVE..TO TAKE HILL 623. WELL, WE WENT UP AND AS WE WERE GOING UP..OF COURSE IT WAS PRETTY DENSE..SO MANY TREES..REAL THICK..AND WE WERE TRYING TO READ THE COMPASS...I WAS SHOOTING MY ASMA SO I'D BE SURE TO GET THE RIGHT SPOT ON THE HILL.

LINE THAT WAS GOING ALONG THE TOP OF THE HILL..ACTUALLY THE FIRST BATTALION WAS GOING TO ATTACK ON OUR RIGHT FLANK. OF COURSE, THEY HAD GONE AHEAD OF US..BUT THEY CUT ACROSS IN FRONT OF US.

WELL, I TAPPED INTO THE LINE..THE REASON I KNOW WHO IT WAS..WHEN I TAPPED IN..IT WAS CHARLIE COMPANY TALKING WITH ABLE COMPANY. WELL, RIGHT AWAY I ASKED HIM "WHERE ARE YOU?" THEY SAID, "WE TOOK THE HILL"..WE HAVE GONE DOWN INTO THE VALLEY AND WE'RE GOING UP ON THE NEXT HILL IN FRONT OF THAT.

SO I CALLED BACK TO THE REGIMENTAL AND SAID, "WE'VE GOT HILL 623 COVERED AND I'LL SPREAD MY MEN OUT..THE RIFLEMEN OUT..AND WE'LL MAINTAIN IT...OR DO YOU WANT US TO PUSH ON AND GO FORWARD? THEY SAID, "NO YOU DIG IN WHERE YOU ARE." SO WE DUG IN. OF COURSE, AS WE WERE GOING TO THE RIGHT FLANK..I WAS WITH A BOY NAMED GEORGE FERGUSON..HE'S STILL ALIVE..LIVES IN GLENS FALLS, NEW YORK..HE SPOKE GERMAN..SO I ASKED GEORGE TO ASK THEM IF THEY WANTED TO GIVE UP. SO HE STARTED TALKING TO THEM IN GERMAN AND I THOUGHT THINGS WERE GOING PRETTY GOOD..WE WERE JUST STANDIN' UP AND TALKING TO THEM..YOU KNOW, I COULD NOT UNDERSTAND GERMAN BUT I KEPT WATCHIN' THIS GUY AND ONE OF THE GERMANS GOT BEHIND A TREE..HUNDREDS OF TREES THERE..AND HE GOT IN BEHIND ONE AND PUT THAT RIFLE..POINTING IT TOWARDS GEORGE WAS..OF COURSE, I SHOT HIM AND WHEN I DID, OF COURSE, THEY OPENED UP WITH THEIR BURP GUNS. IT WAS PROBABLY A PATROL OF ANYWHERE FROM 8, 12, or 15 MEN..SO THEY OPENED UP.

IN A MINUTE ..MAYBE 3 OR 4..IT SEEMS LIKE LONGER IN A SITUATION LIKE THAT..BUT ANYWAY GEORGE KEPT TALKING TO THEM..WELL, WHEN HE STOOD UP, I FIGURED I'LL STAND THERE WITH HIM. WE WERE 10 YARDS OR 15 APART. OF COURSE, THEY STARTED TALKING AGAIN AND I THOUGHT THINGS WERE LOOKING PRETTY GOOD. IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME THEY OPENED UP WITH THEIR MACHINE GUN ON HIM AND GOT HIM IN HIS LEFT ARM. HE, OF COURSE, HIT THE GROUND AND I WENT OVER AND KIND OF HELPED HIM..DRAGGED HIM. WE WERE AT THE PEAK OF THE HILL AND I TRIED TO DRAG HIM TO GET BACK DOWN TO WHERE I COULD GET HIM TO AN AID MAN...WHICH I DID. IN FACT, LIKE I SAID, HE GOT BACK HOME. HE'S RETIRED FROM THE POST OFFICE NOW. BUT HE DID A HEROIC THING...I DON'T KNOW IF HE EVER GOT AWARDED ANYTHING FOR IT. AND, OF COURSE, WE STARTED THE BATTLE THAT LASTED FOR THREE OR

FOUR DAYS. THEY ATTACKED US BUT THEY KNEW WE HAD THAT HILL.

AND THE PRESSURE WAS ON US..THE LOST BATTALION HAD GONE THROUGH THE VALLEY AHEAD OF US. YOU RECALL, I TOLD YOU WE TAPPED THEIR LINES. THEY WENT DOWN THE VALLEY AHEAD AND WENT UP THE NEXT HILL. AND WHEN THEY GOT TO THIS OTHER HILL, THE GERMANS ENCIRCLED THEM..AND THEY STAYED THERE. THAT WAS WHAT WAS KNOWN AS 'THE LOST BATTALION' THE 442 REGIMENTAL JAPANESE/AMERICA OUTFITS WERE THE ONE THAT FINALLY GOT TO THEM. YOU KNOW, THE THREE OR FOUR DAYS WE STAYED UP THERE, I KEPT TELLING THE BATTALION COMMANDER..I MEAN THE REGIMENTAL COMMANDER IN THE BATTALION.."HEY, WE NEED HELP UP HERE...WE ONLY HAVE 27 MEN UP HERE..WE NEED HELP..COME ON, SEND ME SOME MORE MEN. WE ONLY HAVE 27 MEN..WE NEED HELP...WE CAN GO UP AND WE'LL TRY TO GET TO THE LOST BATTALION. OF COURSE, WE WEREN'T CALLING THEM THE 'LOST BATTALION'. THEY KEPT PROMISING ME THEY WERE GONNA COME...WELL, ON THE THIRD DAY, ABOUT TEN OR ELEVEN O'CLOCK AT NIGHT, THEY ATTACKED...WE ALREADY KNEW THE TERRITORY PRETTY WELL BY THEN. I THINK THE 7th ATTACK IS WHEN THEY FINALLY ..OR I RAN OUT OF AMMUNITION. THEY HAD TANKS, ETC. AND WE COULDN'T COMPETE WITH THAT. BUT THERE WAS A VALLEY TO OUR LEFT WHERE THEY ATTACKED. NEARLY EVERY TIME THEY WOULD ATTACK UP THROUGH THAT VALLEY. I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY KEPT DOING THAT BECAUSE ALL WE HAD TO DO WAS STAND UP AND THROW HAND GRENADES AT THEM. BUT THEY KEPT DOING THAT AND THE THIRD NIGHT WHEN OUR PEOPLE CAME UP TO SEND RELIEF, THEY STARTED DIGGIN' IN ABOUT TEN OR ELEVEN O'CLOCK AT NIGHT. AND MY RUNNER, BINDER, SAID TO ME.."DO YOU THINK THAT'S GERMANS DOWN THERE?" AND I SAID, "NO WAY ARE THE GERMANS GOING TO MAKE THAT MUCH NOISE...UP THERE ON THE FRONT LINE.. AT NIGHT". THE GERMANS NEVER LET YOU KNOW WHERE THEY WERE. SO, ABOUT 12 O'CLOCK, IT GOT ALL QUIET DOWN THERE...DEADLY SILENT. I SAID, "WELL, I DON'T KNOW..WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL DAYBREAK TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON..AND WE DID. BY DAYBREAK, PART OF THE THIRD BATTALION HAD COME UP THERE, PROBABLY A RIFLE COMPANY.. AND THEY HAD GONE..DUG IN AND THEN DECIDED THEY WEREN'T IN A VERY GOOD LOCATION SO THEY WENT BACK TO WHERE THEY JUMPED OFF.

THEN, THE NEXT MORNING..OF COURSE, THE GERMANS ATTACKED US AGAIN. THAT'S WHEN THEY BROUGHT THE TANKS AND I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY..PROBABLY A HUNDRED OR MORE TROOPS...

BECAUSE ACCORDING TO THE UPS REPORT..I'M SUPPOSED TO HAVE KILLED 44 AND WOUNDED 60 THERE IN THE 4-DAY BATTLE. BUT THAT WAS IN THE NEWSPAPERS BEFORE I EVER GOT BACK HOME...IN THE CHATTANOOGA NEWSPAPERS...IN THE FALL OF 1944. OF COURSE, BEFORE THAT ACTION, I WAS AWARDED THE MEDAL OF HONOR.

Q. CHARLES, CAN YOU GO BACK AND TALK SPECIFICALLY AS TO - YOU KNOW, GOING OVER THE CITATION...AND..

A. WELL, THE FIRST 3 or 4 DAYS WE JUST HAD ..WELL, THEY WOULD ATTACK AND WE WOULD REPULSE THE ATTACK...WE WEREN'T TRYING TO PUSH OUT BECAUSE THEY JUST TOLD US TO HOLD OUR GROUND..BECAUSE WE WERE REALLY TRYING TO GET TO THE LOST BATTALION. WE WERE THE CLOSEST ELEMENT TO THE LOST BATTALION. THEY KNEW THAT AND THEY WANTED TO KEEP US FROM GETTING THERE. AND THE PART THAT STICKIN' OUT THE FURTHEREST, THAT'S THE PART THAT'S GONNA GET HIT. AND WE WERE THE CLOSEST...TO THEM.

EACH TIME THEY WOULD ATTACK, THEY WOULD LOSE MEN...WE WOULD..WE'D BEAT THEM BACK AND THEY WOULD GO BACK AND REGROUP..MAYBE WAIT A HALF DAY AND THEN TRY AGAIN. NOW, THE LAST TIME WHEN THEY CAME IN WITH THE TANK..THE HEAD TANK CAME UP AND OPENED UP THE TURRET..HE WAS PROBABLY 10, 15 FEET FROM US..BUT ANYWAY HE PULLED DOWN THERE THAT CLOSE AND SAID TO ME..HE RAISED THE TURRET..NOW, HE SAID THE SAME THING TO ME THAT I HAD TOLD FERGUSON TO ASK THEM..."YOU GUYS WANT TO GIVE UP?"..AND I LOOKED UP RIGHT IN HIS FACE AND SAID, "I'M SORRY, MAC,,YOU GOT TO COME AND GET ME. AND HE PUT THAT TURRET DOWN ON THAT TANK AND TWIRLED THAT THING AROUND. HE KNEW WHERE HE'D TALKED TO ME AND HE FIRED 5 TIMES POINT BLANK. WELL, EVERY TIME..YOU KNOW THERE WERE SO MANY TREES UP THERE..EVERY TIME HE WOULD FIRE, I WOULD WATCH TO SEE IF THE BARREL WENT RIGHT OR LEFT..I WOULD JUST GO FROM THE BASE OF ONE TREE TO ANOTHER..HE FIRED THE FIRST ONE..WELL, THE SHELL HIT A TREE..BUT THE SHRAPNEL FROM IT CUT A GASH ACROSS THE TOP OF MY SHOE WHERE THE TOES WOULD BE BUT IT DIDN'T PENETRATE THROUGH THE LEATHER. IT JUST CUT A STREAK ACROSS IT..AND HE FIRED AGAIN POINT BLANK..AND THEN I HAD A BAZOOKA..MAN..I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE WAS BUT I CRAWLED OVER AND GOT THE BAZOOKA..BUT IT DIDN'T WORK..I THREW IT DOWN..I HAD A LOT OF GRENADES..PROBABLY A COUPLE OF CASES BY MY FOXHOLE..WELL, BY THE TIME THOSE TANKS CAME UP THERE, THEY

WERE BEGINNING TO GET BRAVE..THEY WERE COMING OUT AFTER US..COMING THRU THAT DRAW..COMING ACROSS THE FRONT...AND COMING ON THE RIGHT FLANK..BUT WE HAD ANOTHER MACHINE GUN OVER THERE AND THEY WEREN'T GIVING A LOT OF STATIC OVER THERE BECAUSE THE TANKS WERE AT WORK ON THAT SIDE. I CRAWLED UP THERE AS CLOSE AS I COULD AND STARTED LOBBING THOSE GRENADES AT 'EM..BUT THEY KEPT COMING CLOSE BECAUSE THAT STEEL OF THOSE TANKS WOULD PROTECT THEM. YOU KNOW YOU CAN PULL THE PIN ON THE GRENADE AND YOU HAVE 8 SECONDS BEFORE IT EXPLODES..SO YOU CAN HOLD THE PIN DOWN AND WAIT AWHILE BEFORE YOU THROW IT...YOU'RE GONNA GET SOME CASUALTIES..KILL A LOT OF THEM..I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE AWARE OF THE FACT..BUT IF YOU HAD A HUNDRED MEN IN THAT BATTLE..HOW MANY DO YOU THINK WOULD FIRE?

Q. FIFTY PERCENT?

A. TRY FIVE.

Q. REALLY?

A. FIVE OUT OF A HUNDRED WOULD FIRE..BUT I WAS GIVING MY MEN ENCOURAGEMENT..I'D SAY GET OUT THERE AND FIRE..I GIVE CREDIT THAT THE LORD WAS GIVING ME THE COURAGE TO STAND UP AND DO THAT. OF COURSE, MY MEN USED TO LATER ON IN THE WAR THEY'D SAY..WHEN THE COMPANY COMMANDER MIGHT ASK THEM TO TAKE SOMETHING UP TO ME..THEY'D SAY I'M NOT GOING UP THERE AND DRIVE COOLIDGE ANYWHERE..THAT GUY'S CRAZY. WELL, I WASN'T CRAZY BUT I HAD BEEN FIGHTING SO LONG I HAD BECOME CALLOUSED. BUT LIKE I SAID, I GIVE THE LORD CREDIT FOR PROTECTING ME..BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T DO WHAT I HAD DONE AND GO THRU WHAT I HAD AND NOT BE WOUNDED OR KILLED. I NEVER WAS WOUNDED..BUT I CAN'T WALK TODAY BECAUSE I HAVE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS..I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO WALK FOR ABOUT 15 OR 17 YEARS. I USE A MOTORIZED WHEELCHAIR..A RASCAL..I CAN GO ANYWHERE I WANT BUT I JUST CAN'T WALK.

Q. WOW. CHARLES, NOW, WHEN THIS TANKER CAME UP TO YOU, HOW FAR FROM YOU WHEN HE ASKED YOU TO SURRENDER? CAN YOU DESCRIBE WHAT HE WAS WEARING..AND WHAT..?

A. HE HAD A GERMAN UNIFORM ON.

Q. WHAT COLOR WAS IT?

A. BUT HE DIDN'T HAVE A HELMET ON..HAD A GERMAN CAP..A LITTLE GERMAN CAP..IT WAS THEIR BLUE-TYPE TANKER UNIFORM

Q. WHAT COLOR?

A. KIND OF DARK GRAY..I COULDN'T SEE HIS FEET..I ONLY SAW HIS HEAD AND PART OF HIS SHOULDERS..BECAUSE HE WAS STANDING IN A TANK. I DON'T REMEMBER EXACTLY..YOU KNOW, 55 YEARS ..IT'S HARD TO REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD ON. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HAVE EVER STOOD IN FRONT OF A TANK THAT'S FIRING AT YOU BUT THAT'S A TERRIFIC SLAM..LET ALONE THE THING HITTING TREES AND EXPLODING.

Q. SO WHEN HE PULLED UP..HOW FAR WAS HE FROM YOU?

A. OH, HE WASN'T ANY MORE THAN 25 YARDS...MAYBE 30...HE WAS PRETTY CLOSE...THE BARREL OF THAT THING WOULD ALMOST COME WITHIN TEN FEET OF THE GUNNER..AND HE'S THE ONE THAT GAVE UP...HE AND THE AID MAN WERE SCARED TO COME OUT WHEN I ASKED THEM TO.. WE'LL RETREAT BACK..(WITHDRAW) BACK TO WHERE THE REST OF THE BATTALION WAS. THEY WOULDN'T COME OUT BUT THE REST OF THE BATTALION WOULD..EVERYONE ELSE CAME OUT..I HAD ONE THAT GOT KILLED THERE..A BAR MAN..THE REST OF US GOT OUT OF THERE.

Q. WHY WOULDN'T THOSE GUYS COME OUT?

A. WELL, THEY WERE RIGHT UNDERNEATH THE BARREL OF THAT TANK..I COULDN'T BLAME THEM.

Q. THEY WERE PINNED DOWN THEN?

A. YEAH. THEY WERE PINNED DOWN. OF COURSE, THE TROOPS ..THE INFANTRY..THEY WEREN'T HOVERING AROUND THOSE TANKS BECAUSE THE TANKS PROTECTED THEM.

Q. SO, WHEN YOU SAY THEY WOULDN'T COME OUT..YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE AMERICANS? OR GERMANS?

A. OH, YEAH..THEY WERE AMERICANS..THEY WERE..ONE WAS MY GUNNER AND THEY SURRENDERED.

Q. THEY SURRENDERED TO THE GERMANS..?

A. YEAH.

Q. OH'.

A. WELL, THEY JUST..I GUESS THE GERMANS OVERRAN THEM..AND FOUND OUT WHEN THEY TOOK THE HOLE THAT THERE WAS TWO OF THEM IN THERE.

Q. AND HOW MANY GOT CAPTURED?

A. ONLY THOSE TWO. THE MEDIC WAS ONE OF THEM AND ONE WAS A MACHINE GUNNER.

Q. DO YOU RECALL THEIR NAMES.

A. NO, I DON'T.

Q. SO, INITIALLY, CHARLES, IN YOUR CITATION IT SAYS THAT YOU..."ATTEMPTING TO BLUFF THE GERMANS BY A SHOW OF ASSURANCE AND BOLDNESS CALLED THEM TO SURRENDER. WAS THAT THE INCIDENT WHERE YOUR FRIEND WAS SPEAKING GERMAN TO THEM."

A. "RIGHT. THAT'S WHEN WE ASKED THEM TO GIVE UP."

Q. OKAY. HOW CLOSE TO YOU DID THEY COME?

A. WHEN WE WERE TALKING, WE WERE CLOSE...BUT THERE WERE SO MANY TREES, YOU COULD COME PRETTY CLOSE BEFORE YOU'D SEE THEM. IN OTHER WORDS, I'D SAY..MAYBE 25 YARDS.. THEY MAYBE WERE EVEN CLOSER THAN THAT. OF COURSE, I SHOT ONE OF THEM..HE KEPT TRYING TO GET US TO COME HELP HIM. HE WAS LYING BEHIND A TREE..AND KEPT YELLING AT US TO HELP HIM.."MEDIC" "MEDIC" OF COURSE, MY AID MAN WAS PROBABLY 100 FEET AWAY BUT WE DIDN'T GO HELP HIM."

Q. "THAT WAS A GERMAN?"

A. "YEAH, HE WAS GERMAN..AND, OF COURSE, LIKE I'M SAYING, WE KILLED A BUNCH OF THEM.. UP THERE. WE HAD JUST BEEN MAKING A RECONNAISSANCE TO SEE WHERE WE WERE GOING TO PUT THE MACHINE GUN."

Q. "AND THESE REPLACEMENTS..WERE THEY YOUNG?"

A. WELL, MOST OF THEM WERE YOUNG..THEY WERE REPLACEMENTS..THEY WERE ANYWHERE FROM 18, 19, 20, 21, 23..ONCE IN AWHILE YOU GOT ONE OLDER..BUT MOST OF THEM WERE JUST KIDS.

Q. AND HOW OLD WERE YOU AT THAT TIME..DO YOU REMEMBER?

A. TWENTY THREE. I HAD JUST TURNED TWENTY THREE. I WAS BORN IN 21..YEAH, I HAD JUST TURNED 23 IN AUGUST AND THIS WAS OCTOBER."

Q. WOW, HOW MANY MEN DO YOU THINK YOU KILLED, ULTIMATELY? NOT THAT YOU ARE BRAGGIN' ABOUT IT..BUT I'M JUST CURIOUS.

A. I CAN READ YOU THE ARTICLE..IT SAYS, KILLED 44 AND WOUNDED 60..BUT I DON'T THINK I KILLED ANY..THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE SHOOTING..IT WASN'T AN INDIVIDUAL THING. WE HAD A SGT. HAWKINS ..HE WAS FROM CO. K..HE'S THE ONE THAT WROTE UP FOR THE MEDAL OF HONOR. ..WRITING UP THE CITATION..AND BINDER WROTE UP THE CITATION FOR THE MEDAL OF HONOR. THEY WERE UP THERE SEEING IT ACTUALLY HAPPEN. THEY DON'T TAKE "HERESAY"

IT'S GOT TO BE THE REAL STUFF..AND, OF COURSE, THESE GUYS WERE IN THE BATTLE WITH US.

Q. NOW, YOU WERE NEVER WOUNDED? WERE ANY OF YOUR CLOSE FRIENDS KILLED OR WOUNDED?

A. NOT IN THIS PARTICULAR BATTLE. I HAD A MEDIC DURING THIS TIME WHEN THE GERMANS GOT SO CLOSE..LUCEY..WE CALLED HIM "MEDICO" ALL THE TIME..HE TOOK HIS ARMBAND OFF AND GRABBED AN M-1 AND STARTED FIRING AT THE GERMANS..HE WAS A MEDIC.

Q. WHAT KIND OF WEAPON DID YOU HAVE, CHARLES?

A. I HAD A CARBINE..AND I HAD, OF COURSE..2 MACHINE GUNS..BUT I WASN'T FIRING THEM. I HAD A CARBINE THAT I WAS USING..OCCASIONALLY I TOOK A RIFLEMAN'S M-1 AND WOULD FIRE AT THEM.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU PULLED OUT?

A. WE PULLED OUT AND WE JUST PULLED BACK..WE DIDN'T REALLY PULL OUT..WE WITHDREW.. YOU MIGHT SAY STRAIGHT DOWN THE HILL. WE WENT BACK DOWN THE HILL..THAT'S WHERE THE REST OF THEM WERE. THE BATTALION AND REGIMENT WERE ALL DUG IN BACK BEHIND THE NEXT HILL...THE SAME HILL BUT JUST A BREAK IN IT...THEN I TOLD YOU I HAD BEEN ASKING FOR HELP..WELL, WITHIN 2 HOURS OF WHEN WE WITHDREW OFF THAT TOP PINNACLE..THE 442 CAME IN TO HELP. THEY CAME UP AND RETOOK THE HILL...AND WHEN THEY DID THAT, THEY MOVED ON ACROSS..THEY DIDN'T STOP THEM. THEY LET THEM GO ON DOWN INTO THE VALLEY AND UP THE NEXT RIDGE. THAT WAS EITHER THE 4th OR 5th DAY. ON THE 5th DAY THEY GOT TO THE LOST BATTALION. WHAT WE DID THE NEXT DAY, WE JUST WENT BACK UP AND TOOK THE HILL...THEN WE PUSHED ON THRU THE VALLEY WITH THE REST OF THE BATTALION..ANOTHER RIFLE COMPANY. WE HAD MORE TROOPS THEN. I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY WERE SO RELUCTANT TO SEND UP MORE PEOPLE I GUESS IT WAS BECAUSE THEY COULD BE CUTOFF LIKE THE FIRST BATTALION. SEE, WHEN YOU ARE OUT THERE IN THE MOUNTAINS, YOU CAN GET CUTOFF PRETTY EASY..WITH THE DEPTH..SO MANY TREES..IT'S SO THICK WITH TREES.

I WENT BACK THERE IN '84..I'VE GOT A PICTURE HERE ON THE WALL IN MY OFFICE...MY SON IS STILL IN THE MILITARY..HE'S A LT. GENERAL..IN THE AIR FORCE..BUT HE WAS OVER THERE NEGOTIATING WITH THE RUSSIANS IN SWITZERLAND AND HE WAS PRETTY SURE THIS WOULD BE HIS

LAST TIME TO BE OVER THERE SO HE CALLED AND ASKED US TO COME OVER AND WE WOULD GO TO ALL THE PLACES I HAD BEEN IN WWII. WE TOLD HIM ONLY ON ONE CONDITION..THAT HIS WIFE COULD COME ALONG TOO..SO SHE GOT HER PARENTS TO COME STAY WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND WE ALL MET OVER THERE..WE HAD ALREADY RENTED A STATION WAGON AND FROM THERE WE WENT DOWN TO WHERE WE HAD ACTUALLY INVADDED IN SALERNO (ITALY)..WE WENT ALL THE WAY DOWN THE BOOT AND THEN WE CAME BACK UP TO WHERE WE INVADDED AGAIN IN FRANCE..CROSSED OVER AND WENT ALL THE WAY DOWN INTO CANNES, AND THEN CAME BACK UP. WE HAD A GREAT TIME BUT WHEN WE WERE IN FRANCE..WE WENT DOWN THIS LITTLE DIRT ROAD AND I SAID TO MY WIFE... "THAT LOOKS LIKE WHERE WE WENT UP THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN." SHE KIDS ABOUT IT NOW. FIFTY YEARS LATER AND YOU'RE GONNA SAY "THAT'S WHERE YOU WENT UP THE SIDE OF THIS MOUNTAIN." BUT, SURE ENOUGH, WE WENT ON DOWN A LITTLE DIRT ROAD..AND AS WE WENT DOWN WE SAW A HOUSE AND A LADY WAS SITTING ON THE PORCH..I TOLD MY SON TO GO TELL HER WHAT WE WERE DOING..THIS WAS A DEAD-END OF THIS ROAD..I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT WONDER WHY WE WOULD BE DOWN THERE..SO HE DID GO TALK TO HER..HE SPOKE FRENCH VERY WELL..SHE DID NOT SPEAK ENGLISH..SHE TOLD HIM "YOU CAN SEE WHERE THE FOX-HOLES WERE SO WE WENT BACK UP AND STOPPED AND THERE WAS A LARGE STONE SOMEONE HAD PULLED UP OUT OF THE GROUND AND CARVED 141 ON IT..AND THE 141~~st~~ INFANTRY IS WHAT I WAS IN..AND THAT WAS THE PLACE WHERE WE HAD GONE UP THE MOUNTAIN. FIGHTING IN FRANCE WAS NOTHING AS TO COMPARED TO FIGHTING IN ITALY..I WAS AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR FOR ACTION IN FRANCE. AT VELLETRI...I GOT THE SILVER STAR AWARD. BUT YOU GET CALLUSED..AND THIS IS THE PART MOST PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND..ONCE IN AWHILE I AM ASKED TO SPEAK AT SCHOOLS. LAST FEBRUARY I WENT TO REDBANK HIGH AND THEY TELEVISED IT...I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HAVE EVER SEEN THE MOVIE "SAN PIETRO"..THAT IS THE FILM THEY SHOW TO THE RECRUITS. IT SHOWS OUR DIVISION ATTACKING SAN PIETRO. I HAVE A COPY OF THAT AND I SHOW IT BEFORE I BEGIN TO SPEAK..I TELL THE STUDENTS,, "I JUST WANT TO KIND OF ORIENT YOU TO WHAT IT WAS LIKE..FIGHTING IN ITALY." I NEVER GAVE UP..I ALWAYS FELT THE LORD WAS TAKING CARE OF ME..AND I USED TO TELL THE STUDENTS THAT MY MOTHER WAS HOME ON HER KNEES PRAYING FOR ME. SHE ALWAYS GOT ON HER KNEES AND DID UNTIL THE DAY SHE DIED. ..SHE KNELT BY HER BED AND PRAYED EVERY NIGHT...I WOULD SEE HER WHEN I WALKED DOWN

THE HALL TO MY BEDROOM...SOME POWER UP ABOVE WAS TAKING CARE OF ME. I GREW UP BELIEVING IN GOD. IF I'M LOOKING FOR FIGHTIN' MEN, I DON'T CARE HOW TOUGH THEY ARE. I WANT TO SEE WHAT THEY BELIEVE..SOME POWER UP ABOVE WAS TAKING CARE OF ME.

Q. THAT'S REMARKABLE. HAD YOU PULLED BACK, CHARLES..WHEN DID YOU LEARN THAT YOU WERE GOING TO RECEIVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR.

A. OH, IT WAS..I HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT I WAS PUT IN FOR IT IN NOVEMBER. THEY HAVE TO DO SO MUCH INTERROGATION, TO FIND OUT ALL THE FACTS BECAUSE THEY CAN'T TAKE ANY HERESAY. IT WAS IN NOVEMBER OF '44 BEFORE I KNEW I HAD BEEN RECOMMENDED TO RECEIVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR. BUT THEY DIDN'T TAKE ME OFF THE LINE BEFORE THAT..WE WERE..WE DIDN'T EVEN GET RELIEVED OFF THE LINE UNTIL CHRISTMAS DAY OF '44. THEN WE WERE EATING CHRISTMAS DINNER AND THEY SENT US RIGHT BACK..THEY HAD TO BREAK THRU UP THERE NEAR LEMBERG. AND WE RELIEVED THE 100th DIVISION THAT WAS IN FULL RETREAT. WE WENT IN THE LINES AND ESTABLISHED A NEW FRONT.

Q. SO WHEN DID YOU END UP LEARNING ABOUT IT?..THE MEDAL OF HONOR?

A. I GUESS IT WAS AROUND ABOUT APRIL OF '45. NOW THEY TELL YOU WHEN YOU HAVE BEEN PUT IN FOR THE MEDAL, YOU HAVE TO COME OFF THE FRONT LINE. AND THE ONLY WAY I GOT TAKEN OFF THE FRONT LINE ON APRIL 1st OF '45 WAS WE WERE AT THE SIEGFRIED LINE AND WE WERE GOING TO ATTACK..WE WERE ATTACKED THE NITE BEFORE..AND THEY WERE GETTING READY TO TAKE A LITTLE TOWN INSIDE THE SIEGFRIED LINE AND THE COLONEL WAS ORIENTING THE OFFICERS..A RIFLE COMPANY..WELL, THE RIFLE COMPANY MAN THAT I WAS WITH WAS A CAPTAIN McARTHUR..WHO WAS CAPTAIN OF K COMPANY..SO THE CAPTAIN SAID, "I'M GOING TO HAVE SGT. COOLIDGE GO WITH ME TONIGHT. AND COLONEL OWENS SAID.."YOU GOING TO HAVE WHO GO WITH YOU?" AND HE SAID IT AGAIN, "I'M GOING TO HAVE SGT. COOLIDGE GO WITH ME.".. THEN COL. OWENS SAID, "NO, HE'S NOT GOING WITH YOU BECAUSE I'M TAKING HIM BACK WITH ME. I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS STILL UP THERE ON THE FRONT." SO THEN THEY SENT AFTER ME. AND THAT'S WHEN I WAS TAKEN OFF THE FRONT LINE LINE..APRIL 1st OF '45. OF COURSE THE WAR WAS NEARLY OVER THEN. WELL, OF COURSE, YOU REALLY NEVER KNOW WHEN THE WAR'S OVER UNTIL IT'S OVER. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

Q. RIGHT.

A. I HEAR THEY TALKED ABOUT WHEN WE DROPPED THE FIRE BOMBS IN APRIL ON SOME GERMAN CITY AND BURNED IT TO THE GROUND. ALL WE DID WAS DROP FIRE BOMBS, YOU KNOW, AND DESTROYED A LOT. I KNOW SOME PEOPLE WHO HAVE WRITTEN ARTICLES ABOUT THAT AND THEY WANTED TO KNOW WHY WE HAD TO DO THAT...WELL, THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND WAR..YOU CAN GET KILLED, ..IN FACT, I HAD 6 MEN IN MY PLATOON WHO WERE KILLED A DAY AFTER THE WAR HAD ENDED...WELL, THEY WERE HIT..NOT KILLED..WOUNDED. WELL..IT WAS MY PLATOON BUT I WASN'T WITH THEM..I HAD ALREADY LEFT THEM.

Q. ANY OF THE SIX MEN KILLED?

A. NONE OF 'EM WERE KILLED BUT ALL OF THEM WERE WOUNDED.

Q. GOSH. TELL ME ABOUT THE CEREMONY, CHARLES, THE MEDAL OF HONOR CEREMONY..WHO DECORATED YOU AND??

A. I WAS DECORATED BY GENERAL HASLIP.. H-A-I-S-L-I-P. HE WAS RELIEVED BY GENERAL PATCH. GENERAL PATCH'S SON WAS KILLED IN WORLD WAR II. HE WAS GOING TO BE THE ONE THAT PRESENTED THE MEDAL. SEE, IT WAS AT THAT TIME THAT PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT DIED.. INSTEAD OF BRINGING ME TO THE WHITE HOUSE..IT WAS PRESENTED OVER THERE ..ON THE BATTLE FRONT. BUT THEY DID INVITE ME TO THE WHITE HOUSE LATER WHEN I GOT BACK IN THE UNITED STATES ...WE HAD A REGIMENTAL PARADE ON JUNE 19th AND THE MEDAL OF HONOR WAS PRESENTED TO ME OVER THERE...A REAL NICE CEREMONY..AND THEN, OF COURSE, THEY TOOK ME TO THE OFFICERS' HEADQUARTERS...THE WAR WAS OVER BY THEN..THEY HAD A FEW DRINKS..

Q. WHEN THE GENERAL PRESENTED IT TO YOU, WHAT DID HE SAY, DO YOU REMEMBER?

A. NO, I CAN'T RECALL WHAT HE SAID. OF COURSE, HE CONGRATULATED ME..WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW HIM ...HE TOOK GENERAL PATCH'S PLACE...GENERAL PATCH HAD BEEN SENT TO THE UNITED STATES.. GENERAL HAISLIP CAME TO PRESENT ME WITH THE MEDAL. WELL, WHAT HE HAD DONE THE DAY BEFORE..OR THE MORNING BEFORE..WE HAD GONE UP..MY JEEP DRIVER AND I HAD GONE UP TO THIS LITTLE TOWN OF DORMSDOFF, WHICH IS ABOUT 14, 15 KILOMETERS AWAY FROM WHERE WE WERE STAYING. WE'D GONE UP THERE TO HAVE A "DRY RUN", PRACTICIN' SO WE WOULD KNOW WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO AND WHEN WE WERE GOING TO DO IT. AND WHEN WE DID, THE GENERAL'S LIGHT PLANE LANDED THERE ON THE FIELD...THEY HAD ABOUT FOUR BULLDOZERS. ..OUT THERE..IT WAS A BIG AIRFIELD..THEY WERE FILLING UP THE HOLES SO THEY COULD

HAVE A PARADE OUT THERE..A CEREMONY. IT WAS A GREAT BIG PLACE..AIRFIELD...AND THIS PLANE LANDED. MY DRIVER SAID...WE WERE SITTING AROUND TALKING..AND MY DRIVER OF THE JEEP SAID TO THE PILOT.."HOW ABOUT TAKING ME UP AND GIVING ME A LITTLE SPIN?" SO THEY WENT OVER AND GOT IN THE PLANE AND TOOK A LITTLE SPIN..TOUR..MAYBE 10 OR 15 MINUTES. AND THEN THEY CAME BACK DOWN. WELL, WHEN THEY GOT BACK, I SAID TO HIM, "HOW ABOUT TAKING ME UP FOR A SPIN TOO?" AND THE GUY SAID, "NO, I CAN'T..I'M RUNNING SHORT ON FUEL." I SAID, "O.K. AND I DIDN'T SAY ANY MORE." AND HE DIDN'T KNOW I WAS THE ONE BEING PRESENTED THE MEDAL.

SO THAT AFTERNOON AFTER THE CEREMONY, AND THE GENERALS WERE ALL SHAKING MY HAND... THE MAN WALKED OVER TO ME AND SAID..THIS PILOT SAID, "I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE THE ONE GETTING THE MEDAL..WELL, I WOULD'VE TAKEN YOU FOR A RIDE..IF I HAD KNOW YOU WERE THE ONE GETTING THE MEDAL. I SAID, "NO, YOU WERE SHORT ON GAS, YOU SAID, I HAVE MADE THE WAR AND I AM NOT ABOUT TO GO UP IN A PLANE THAT IS SHORT ON GAS." THAT STUNNED HIM. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

A. WELL, I'VE GOT LOTS OF STORIES. I CAN TELL YOU ANOTHER ONE..HOW I GOT HOME. THEY FLEW ME FROM PARIS...AND I LANDED IN ANNAPOLIS...WHATEVER THE NAME OF THAT AIR BASE IS.. NOW YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER, I DIDN'T VOLUNTEER..TENNESSEE IS NOTED TO BE "THE VOLUNTEER STATE"..BUT I DIDN'T VOLUNTEER..I WAS THE FIRST 20-YEAR OLD "DRAFTED" FROM CHATTANOOGA AREA. HAMILTON COUNTY..THAT'S THE AREA WHERE 6 OF US WERE DRAFTED TOGETHER..BEFORE THAT, THEY WERE TAKING 21 TO 24 YEAR OLDS. BUT, ANYWAY, TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT..SOME OF THEM GOT INTO AN ARGUMENT AS TO WHO WAS GOING TO ACCOMPANY ME HOME..SO I SAID, "NONE, OF YOU IS GOING TO GO HOME WITH ME..I'M GOING HOME BY MYSELF." WELL, WHEN I GOT TO PARIS, THEY ASSIGNED A COLONEL TO BE IN CHARGE OF ME.. GETTING BACK TO THE STATES. HE DIDN'T SAY THAT HE HAD TO GO HOME WITH ME..BUT THAT HE WAS IN CHARGE OF MY GETTING BACK TO THE STATES. ANYWAY, WE GOT TO TALKING AND I LEARNED HE WAS GOING HOME THAT HIS WIFE WAS DYING WITH CANCER. BUT HE BRIEFED ME A LOT..TOLD ME, "NOW, WHEN YOU GET BACK IN THE STATES..YOU KNOW HE FOUND OUT I'D BEEN IN FOR NEARLY 3 YEARS AND HADN'T BEEN HOME DURING THAT TIME. HE SAID, "YOU ASK FOR A RECUPERATION LEAVE." I SAID, "WHAT'S THAT?" HE SAID, "WELL, YOU'VE BEEN IN COM-

BUT A LONG TIME AND YOU'RE ENTITLED TO GET RECUPERATION LEAVE." I SAID, "WELL, I DON'T KNOW." HE SAID, "THEY'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT TO YOU..THEY DON'T WANT TO BUT THEY'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT TO YOU." THAT WAS WHAT THEY WERE DOING..THE WAR WAS OVER AND THEY WERE TRYING TO CUT THE PAYROLL..AND GETTING EVERYONE OUT AS FAST AS THEY COULD. SO I GOT TO CAMP ATTABURY ON THE TRAIN RIDE. I WALKED UP TO WHERE THE SEPARATION CENTER WAS..AND THE FIRST SGT. ASKED WHAT I WANTED..WHEN I SAID I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A RECUPERATION LEAVE..HE SAID, "THIS IS A SEPARATON CENTER..YOU CAN'T GET A RECUPERATION LEAVE HERE." SO I TOLD I WOULD LIKE TO TALK WITH THE COMMAND-ING OFFICER. AND THE GENERAL'S DESK WAS RIGHT THERE BEHIND HIM..I TOLD HIM, "I'M SGT. COOLIDGE, AND I WOULD LIKE TO GET A RECUPERATION LEAVE." WELL, I FINALLY SAID THAT THE BEST THING I KNEW TO DO WAS TO CALL THE COMMANDING GENERAL'S OFFICE IN WASHINGTON. BY THIS TIME, THEY WERE GETTING KINDA "TICKED OFF" BUT I DIDN'T CARE. AFTER BEING IN COMBAT SO LONG, YOU GET KINDA BRAVE AND DON'T GIVE A DARN. WELL, I TOLD THEM WE WOULD JUST CALL THE COMMANDING GENERAL'S OFFICE AND HE SHOVED THE PHONE OVER TO ME...AND I PICKED THAT THING UP AND HE SAID, "WAIT A MINUTE" I SAID, "DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE COST, I'LL PAY FOR IT." HE PUSHED THE BUZZER. BUT HE SAID, "WELL, MAYBE WE CAN GIVE YOU A LEAVE IF YOU WILL SIGN A STATEMENT THAT YOU WILL STAY IN." I SAID, SURE, NO SWEAT, I'LL SIGN, BUT BEFORE I DO THAT, I WANT YOU TO KNOW WHEN I GET BACK, I'M GOING TO SIGN TO GET OUT. SO HE PUSHED THE BUTTON FOR THE SGT. MAJOR. AND HE SAID, "SGT., THIS MAN TELLS ME HE WANTS A RECUPERATION LEAVE AND I TOLD HIM HE COULDN'T BUT HE SAYS HE WILL SIGN TO STAY IN AND WHEN HE COMES BACK HE WILL ASK TO GET OUT. CAN HE DO THAT?" THAT MAN NEVER HESITATED. HE SAID, "HE CAN DO THAT ON ONE CONDITION...IF HE HAS THE MEDAL OF HONOR. AND I HAD NOTHING TO IN-DICATE THAT I HAD THE MEDAL..SO THE GENERAL LOOKED UP AND SAID, "DO YOU HAVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR?" AND I SAID, YES, SIR." HE SAID, WE'LL GIVE YOU YOUR LEAVE." WELL, THAT'S JUST PART OF THE STORY...THEY SENT ME OVER TO A HUT THAT GOT 2 FLOORS. AND THIS IS JULY..AND IT'S HOT AS HADES UP THERE AND I AM IN WOOL O.D.'s. THEY TOOK PICTURES OF ME WITH ALL THOSE FLOOD LIGHTS AND YOU COULD SQUEEZE MY SHIRT THE

BAT SO LONG, WE'LL GIVE YOU LEAVE."

WELL, THAT'S ONLY PART OF THE STORY. THIS IS JULY AND NO AIR CONDITIONING BACK THEN. AND THEY STARTED TAKING PICTURES..WITH FLASH BULBS AND ALL THAT HEAT FROM THE LIGHTS. THEN AFTER THEY DID ALL THAT, THEY SENT ME OVER TO THE TRAIN STATION...GIVING ME MY 30-DAY LEAVE. THE RAILROAD MAN SAW HOW I WAS SWEATING..HE LOOKED AT ME AND SAID "HOW LONG SINCE YOU'VE BEEN HOME, SGT.?" I SAID, "NEARLY 3 YEARS." HE SAID, "I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY SENT YOU OVER HERE..THEY KNOW THE LAST TRAIN PULLS OUT OF THIS BASE AT 4:30 IN THE AFTERNOON." AND HE STOOD AROUND AWHILE AND WE GOT TO TALKING, HOW THEY HAD KEPT ME OVER THERE TAKING PICTURES, ETC. AND HE SAID, "THIS GENERAL UP HERE THINKS HE'S GOT SO MUCH POWER, I'M GOING TO PUT HIM TO THE TEST. I BELIEVE I'LL GET THEM TO FLY YOU HOME...TONITE."

ANYWAY, HE MADE A FEW CALLS AND HE SAID, "YEAH, THE GENERAL IS GOING TO HAVE YOU FLY HOME." "THE GENERAL IS GOING TO SEND HIS JEEP OVER HERE AND TAKE YOU OVER TO THE AIRPORT AND FLY YOU HOME TONITE." AND I THOUGHT TO MYSELF..YEAH, I CAN SEE THAT HAPPENING. DURING THE TIME I WAS WAITING..HE STARTED GIVING ME MEAL TICKETS TO EAT ON..NOW, THIS MAN IS A CIVILIAN. HE'S NOT IN THE MILITARY. HE'S JUST A CIVILIAN UP THERE RUNNING THE TRAIN STATION. PRETTY SOON THE GENERAL'S JEEP SHOWS UP AND THEY TOOK ME OUT TO THE AIRFIELD. WELL, BY THIS TIME, IT'S ABOUT 8:30, or 9:30 AT NITE. SO PRETTY SOON A FELLOW COMES IN AND SAYS "HAVE YOU SEEN GEN. ?? TONITE?" THEY SAID, "NO SIR, WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM TONITE." WELL, HE STOOD AROUND AND WAS LOOKING AT SOME MAPS OR SOMETHING AND I HEARD HIM SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE AIRFIELD NEAR CHATTANOOGA...AND I THOUGHT HE MUST BE TAKING ME HOME. AND IN A FEW MINUTES, HE SAID TO ONE OF THE FELLOWS, "YOU SURE YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE GENERAL..HIS JEEP'S OUT THERE." "ARE YOU SURE YOU HAVEN'T SEEN GENERAL SO-& SO?" WELL, I GUESS I HAD BETTER 'FESS UP, I SAID TO MYSELF..SO I SAID, "SIR, I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO BE FLYING ME TO CHATTANOOGA." WHOA, MAN, HE WAS FIT TO BE TIED. HE DIDN'T ASK ME WHY OR ANYTHING ELSE. I HEARD HIM MAPPING OUT WHERE HE WAS GOING..LAND AT LOVELL FIELD. THAT'S THE NAME OF THE AIRFIELD IN CHATTANOOGA. SO AFTER WHILE HE TOLD THE SGT. TO COME TELL ME TO LOAD ON THE PLANE. HE SAID, "WE'RE GETTING READY TO TAKE OFF."

SO I WENT OVER AND GOT IN THE BACK OF THE PLANE. IT WAS A GREAT BIG C-52 OR C-54, I DON'T KNOW WHICH. WE GOT AIRBORNE..AND I AM TIRED, SO I WENT BACK IN THE BACK AND LAID DOWN..I HAVEN'T SLEPT IN A COUPLE OF DAYS..SO I STRAPPED IN THE SEAT BELT AND WENT OFF TO SLEEP. WELL, PRETTY SOON, ONE OF THE SGTS. CAME BACK AND SHOOK ME AND SAID THE COL. WANTED TO TALK WITH ME. WELL, I TOLD HIM TO TELL HIM THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK, I WANTED TO SLEEP..I WAS TIRED. I SUPPOSE THAT DIDN'T SET WELL WITH HIM...BUT THE NEXT THING I KNEW WE WERE OVER MISSIONARY RIDGE...THAT'S CHATTANOOGA. THE SGT. CAME AND SHOOK ME AND TOLD ME THAT HE THOUGHT WE WERE OVER MY HOME TOWN. "YOU WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AND SEE IF WE ARE?" I EASED OVER TO THE WINDOW AND I COULD SEE LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN AND THE VALLEY AROUND CHATTANOOGA..AND I SAID, "YEAH, WE'RE OVER CHATTANOOGA." ABOUT THAT TIME, I HEARD THE SPEAKER COME ON AND THIS GUY SAID, "THIS IS PILOT SO & SO, I WOULD LIKE TO GET LANDING INSTRUCTIONS ..I'M ON FLIGHT # ? AND I NEED LANDING INSTRUCTIONS...AT LOVELL FIELD." BOY, IT CAME BACK LOUD AND CLEAR, "I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT MILITARY PLANES ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LAND AT LOVELL FIELD." THE PILOT REPEATED IT AND GOT THE SAME ANSWER BACK..FINALLY, THE PILOT SAID, "I'VE GOT INSTRUCTIONS TO LAND AT LOVELL FIELD AND THAT'S WHAT I PLAN TO DO. HE GOT THE SAME ANSWER..BUT THE PILOT REPEATED IT AGAIN. "I DON'T CARE IF YOU GIVE ME INSTRUCTIONS OR NOT, I'M COMING IN ANYWAY." YOU BETTER BELIEVE THEY STARTED BARKIN' LANDING INSTRUCTIONS WHEN HE STARTED COMING DOWN. BACK THEN LOVELL FIELD WAS SMALL BUT WHEN HE LANDED, HE PARKED RIGHT OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIELD. THE RAILROAD MAN HAD CALLED MY MOTHER AND DADDY SO THEY WERE THERE TO MEET ME AND MY SISTER AND GIRLFRIEND TOO...AND THE NEWSPAPER & PHOTOGRAPHER. BY THIS TIME, I THOUGHT I HAD BETTER GO UP AND THANK THE PILOT AND I ALSO TOLD HIM IF HE WOULD LIKE TO SPEND THE NIGHT, WE HAD PLENTY OF ROOM. HE WAS "TICKED OFF, YOU KNOW." SO, HE SAID, "I HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO FLY YOU TO CHATTANOOGA AND RETURN AND THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO DO." I SAID, "HAVE A NICE TRIP...THANK YOU. SIR..AND GOODNITE." BY THAT TIME, WE WERE UP TO WHERE THE PHOTOGRAPHERS HAD COME AND THEY ASKED, "CHARLIE, WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?" I SAID, "WE HAVEN'T GOT A PROBLEM. HE WANTS TO FLY BACK AND I TOLD HIM TO HAVE A NICE TRIP."

A. I CAN TELL YOU PLACES IN ITALY OR FRANCE OR GERMANY LIKE I HAD JUST BEEN THERE.

Q. TELL ME, IT WAS QUITE AN EXPERIENCE FOR YOU, THEN.

A. ABSOLUTELY, AND MY LIFE HAS BEEN QUITE AN EXPERIENCE EVER SINCE. YOU REALLY SHOULD SEE THE PARK THEY NAMED FOR ME HERE IN CHATTANOOGA. THEY SPENT 7½ MILLION DOLLARS ON COOLIDGE PARK...WHICH HAS A BEAUTIFUL...ALL ANIMALS HAND-CARVED CAROUSEL. WHEN I CAME HOME, THEY HAD BIG CEREMONY AT THE MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM...AND ALL THE STORES IN THE CITY CLOSED AT NOON ..IT WAS TO HONOR ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED IN WWII..SO THE AUDITORIUM WAS FILLED TO CAPACITY AND THEN SOME. FT. OGLETHORPE WAS IN GEORGIA BUT ONLY A FEW MILES FROM CHATTANOOGA SO IT WAS A BIG MILITARY BASE. COL. CLARK WAS IN CHARGE THERE AND ALONG WITH THE AMERICAN LEGION THEY HAD A BIG CEREMONY...AT LEAST 5,000 WERE IN ATTENDANCE. THEY HAD CLOSED THE STORES IN TOWN AT NOON WHICH HELPED THESE EMPLOYEES TO BE ABLE TO ATTEND...MOST HAD RELATIVES IN THE MILITARY DURING WWII. BACK THEN, TV WAS NOT VERY BIG IN THESE CITIES.

Q. WHAT YEAR WAS THIS?

A. 1945, AUGUST THE 8th '45.

Q. WOW, WAS THERE A PARADE ALSO?

A. WELL, THEY HAD A PARADE..HAD A LUNCHEON..AND THE ROTARY CLUB AND KIWANIS CLUBS COMBINED THEIR MEETING AND HAD US FOR LUNCH AT THE HOTEL PATTEN...THEN WE WENT IN CONVERTIBLES AND AUTOS AND WENT THRU TOWN IN A PARADE...AND ENDED UP AT THE MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM FOR A BIG CEREMONY..WHERE THEY NAMED SEVERAL PARKS FOR ME..ONE ON SIGNAL MTN. AND ONE IN CHATTANOOGA..MY COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE 36th HAD FLOWN IN. IT WAS REAL NICE. SINCE I LIVED ON SIGNAL MOUNTAIN, THE PEOPLE THERE THOUGHT IT SHOULD ALSO NAME A PARK IN THAT AREA..IT'S ON THE SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY GOING UP THE MOUNTAIN. IT IS STILL UN-DEVELOPED BUT THEY DO KEEP THE GRASS AND WEEDS CUT. AND THE PARK IN THE CITY OF CHATTANOOGA REMAINED AS IT WAS THEN..BASEBALL DIAMONDS AND TENNIS COURTS. THEN THE NAVY/MARINES LEASED SOME ACREAGE FOR SEVERAL YEARS UNTIL ABOUT 1999 THEY BUILT A LARGER PLACE ON AMNICOLA HIGHWAY...REALLY NICE AND LARGER...SO EVENTUALLY COOLIDGE PARK SEEMED TO BE FORGOTTEN. WE READ IN THE NEWSPAPER THEY PLANNED TO BUILD A HIGH-RISE ON THIS ACREAGE WHICH WAS STILL SUPPOSED TO BE COOLIDGE PARK. MY WIFE WROTE THE MAYOR AND HE LOOKED INTO THE RECORDS AND FOUND THERE REALLY WAS SUPPOSED TO BE "COOLIDGE PARK"..AND ALL THIS TIME I WAS TELLING HER TO "FORGET IT"..BUT WE ARE

ALL VERY HAPPY THAT IT TURNED INTO A BEAUTIFUL PARK..THERE IS A LARGE FOUNTAIN IN WHICH THE YOUNG RUN AND PLAY IN DURING SUMMER MONTHS..IT HAS LARGE CONCRETE ANIMALS DIFFERENT ONES..SURROUNDING WHICH SEEM TO BE POURING WATER FROM THEIR MOUTH..IT HAS A 5,000 GALLON TANK UNDER IT WHICH RECYCLES THE WATER...IT STAYS BUSY. A GROUP OF PEOPLE HAD BEEN CARVING CAROUSEL ANIMALS IN ST. ELMO...A SUBURB OF CHATTANOOGA AND HAD NO IDEA WHAT THEY WOULD DO WITH THESE ANIMALS BUT WHEN THEY CAME TO A PLANNING MEETING FOR THE PARK...THAT WAS WHERE THEY DECIDED TO PUT THE CAROUSEL..AND IT REALLY HAS BEEN BUSY ALL YEAR AROUND...HAS 52 DIFFERENT ANIMALS..NOT ALL HORSES...WITH 8 CHARIOTS ON WHICH THE OLDER ONES CAN RIDE AND NOT HAVE TO HOP ON AN ANIMAL...SO.. SEVERAL FOUNDATIONS ..TONYA IS ONE..GAVE MONEY TO DEVELOP THE PARK..SPENT 8 MILLION. THIS IS NOT GOVERNMENT MONEY..BUT FOUNDATIONS OF CHATTANOOGA THAT GAVE THE MONEY. SOME OF THESE CARVERS WERE DOING IT FOR THEIR OWN PLEASURE..AND SOME FOR THEIR OWN HOMES, ETC. THIS PARK HAS MADE HEADLINES IN WALL STREET JOURNAL...USA TODAY, ETC. WELL, CHATTANOOGA HAS BECOME A BEAUTIFUL CITY WITH TREES AND SHRUBS AND FLOWERS GROWING IN THE DOWNTOWN PART. AND CHATTANOOGA USED TO HAVE THE REPUTATION OF BEING A POLLUTED CITY WITH SO MUCH MANUFACTURING. THEY HAVE BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS NOT ONLY IN THE CITY BUT ALSO IN COOLIDGE PARK AND WARNER PARK AND OTHER PLACES...AND WE RARELY HAVE VERY COLD WEATHER IN THE WINTER. NOT ONLY IS THE CAROUSEL IN A LARGE BUILDING BUT THERE IS ANOTHER WHICH IS USED FOR PARTIES AND LARGE MEETINGS.

Q. WHAT DID YOUR PARENTS DO? WERE THEY FROM CHATTANOOGA OR SIGNAL MOUNTAIN.

A. MY DAD STARTED THE CHATTANOOGA PRINTING AND ENGRAVING COMPANY IN 1910...AND THAT IS WHERE I WORK NOW. MY MOTHER WAS MOSTLY A HOME-MAKER..BUT SHE ALSO DID THE PAYROLL FOR THE COMPANY..AND SOMETIMES WORKED THERE...WHEN NEEDED. THEY HAD THREE CHILDREN..MY SISTER IS THE OLDEST..I THINK SHE MAY BE 83 YEARS OLD..MY BROTHER IS 2 YEARS YOUNGER..81..AND I AM 2 YEARS YOUNGER THAN HE IS...79. WE'VE HAD A GOOD LIFE..THE LORD HAS BLESSED US...I DON'T TAKE ANY CREDIT FOR WHAT I DID IN WWII.. WHERE I WENT AND WHAT I DID NO HUMAN COULD DO IT. I WAS THE ONLY MAN LEFT IN MY PLATOON FIVE MONTHS LATER THAT HAD MADE THE INVASION OF FRANCE. NOT ALL OF THEM WERE KILLED..SOME WOUNDED..SOME KILLED AND SOME RECLASSIFIED..BUT A LOT WERE KILLED. SCM

Q. HOW MANY DAYS WERE YOU IN THE FRONT LINES..TOTAL? DO YOU KNOW?

A. I WAS IN THE FRONT LINE 357 DAYS....THAT'S OVER A PERIOD OF 20 MONTHS..BUT WE WERE IN COMBAT...THE DIVISION WAS IN COMBAT 20 MONTHS. WE WERE MOBILIZED FROM THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD UNITS ON NOVEMBER 25th, 1940. WE TRAINED AT CAMP BOWIE IN BROWNWOOD, TEXAS. WE WERE NICKNAMED THE T-PATCHERS..OR ARROWHEAD...THE SHOULDER PATCH IS A LARGE ARROWHEAD WITH A T IN THE MIDDLE..WE WERE THE FIRST AMERICANS TO INVADE HITLER'S EUROPEAN FORTRESS...SPEARHEADING THE ASSUALT LANDING AT SALERNO, ITALY ON SEPTEMBER 9, 1943. MAJOR ACTIONS WERE AT THE RAPIDO RIVER, CASINO, AND THE CAPTURE OF ROME ON JUNE 5, 1944...CAPTURED FIELD MARSHALL HERMAN GOERING AND GENERAL VON RUNDSTEDT....SUFFERED MORE THAN 27,000 CASUALTIES..THE 3rd HIGHEST OF ANY DIVISION...OF THOSE 5,974 WERE KILLED IN ACTION..ITS MEMBERS EARNED 15 MEDALS OF HONOR, 80 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSSES, 2,354 SILVER STARS, 5,504 BRONZE STARS AND 12 PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATIONS. AND I HAVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR, I HAVE A SILVER STAR AND A BRONZE STAR AND I ALSO HAVE THE PRESIDENTIAL CITATION.

Q. DID YOU WITNESS THE CAPTURE OF GORING OR VON RUNDSTEDT?

A. YEAH. I SAW GÖRING..OF COURSE, THAT WAS AT THE END OF THE WAR. YOU KNOW WHEN YOU OVER RUN THEM THEY GIVE UP..THEY DON'T FIGHT... THEY QUIT..YOU THINK THE GERMANS FIGHT 'TIL THEY DIE..WELL, THEY AREN'T LIKE THE JAPANESE.

Q. WHERE DID YOU SEE GORING?

A. I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT TOWN IT WAS..BY THAT TIME EVERYTHING RUNS TOGETHER. WHEN THEY START COMING OUT OF THE HILLS BY THE HUNDREDS...YOU COULD GO DOWN THE ROAD FOR MAYBE 2 MILES WITH JUST GERMANS WALKIN WITH THEIR OVERCOATS AND EVERYTHING THROWN AWAY..THAT'S THE WAY YOU CAPTURED THEM. YOU'VE GOT THEIR VEHICLE..WE WENT TO THE HOUSE WHERE HE WAS..IN FACT, I HAD SOMEONE JUST RECENTLY WRITE TO ASK ABOUT THE HOUSE WHERE WE GOT HIM. I TOLD YOU I WENT UP TO THE CP ONE NIGHT WHEN THEY PRESENTED ME WITH THE MEDAL. IT WAS HIS HOUSE..BUT I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT IT. I HAD A MORTAR SHELL HIT THE EDGE OF THE HOLE WHERE THERE WERE 3 MEN IN IT..AND I PULLED THE FINS OUT OF A MAN'S BACK.

Q. YOU PULLED WHAT?

A. THE FINS..YOU KNOW THE MORTAR'S GOT A FIN ON THE TOP OF IT..WHEN IT'S COMING DOWN ..IT MAKES IT COME DOWN STRAIGHT. WELL, THE POINT WHERE IT DETONATED HIT RIGHT IN THE EDGE OF..THE OUTSIDE OF THE FOXHOLE. BUT WHEN IT DID, THE FINS KEPT COMING ON DOWN. WHEN THEY DID, IT WENT RIGHT INTO A MAN'S BACK AND I JERKED 'EM OUT OF HIS BACK..THAT MAN DIED ABOUT A YEAR AGO..GEORGE FERGUSON WROTE ME JUST RECENTLY AND TOLD ME THAT FELLOW DIED ABOUT A YEAR AGO. WE WERE FIGHTING IN FRANCE THEN. IN FACT, I HAD A LIEUTENANT CAPTURED BY THE GERMAN'S AND THEN HE GOT AWAY..IT HAPPENED RIGHT AT THIS SAME SPOT.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER, CHARLES..DID YOU SEE GOERING UP CLOSE? WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?

A. NO, I DIDN'T SEE HIM UP CLOSE..WELL, MAYBE I DID BUT I COULDN'T TELL YOU MUCH BECAUSE THEY WORE THOSE BIG OLD HEAVE OVERCOATS..AND BIG HEAVY UNIFORMS. BUT I COULDN'T DESCRIBE HIM.

Q. A LARGE MAN OR...

A. BIG MAN, YES.

Q. AND YOU DON'T REMEMBER HOW TALL?

A. OF COURSE, MOST OF THOSE GUYS WERE BIG..THEY ATE PRETTY GOOD. THEY WEREN'T LIKE THE ONES IN THE FIELDS.

Q. RIGHT..SO COMBAT..HOW WOULD YOU SUMMARIZE COMBAT, CHARLES.

A. WELL, THE WAY WE FOUGHT IT EARLY IN THE WAR..WAS TERRIBLE. WE WENT 30 DAYS WITHOUT A PIECE OF BREAD WHEN WE MADE THE INVASION OF SALERNO...WHEN WE MADE AN INVASION, THEY GIVE YOU 3 D-BARS..YOU KNOW WHAT A D-BAR IS, DON'T YOU?

Q. NO..TELL ME.

A. IT'S ABOUT 3 INCHES LONG AND ABOUT AN INCH THICK AND ABOUT 2 INCHES WIDE..YOU GET 3 FOR 3 DAYS. YOU CAN EAT IT ANYTIME YOU WANT TO BUT YOU WON'T GET ANY MORE FOR 3 DAYS...UNLESS YOU TAKE IT OFF A DEAD BODY...OR MAYBE A WOUNDED PERSON THAT'S GOING BACK..THEY WILL TELL YOU TO TAKE HIS. THAT'S WHAT YOU GET..I WEIGHED 196 STRIPPED WHEN I LEFT CAMP EDWARDS..IN MASSACHUSETTS..BUT WHEN I GOT BACK HOME I WEIGHED 144 POUNDS INCLUDING MY WOOL OD& AND COMBAT BOOTS...I WEIGHED 144 LBS. WHAT'S IT LIKE? YOU FIGHT TO GET FOOD...I TOOK IT OFF GERMAN'S..OFF AMERICANS..ANYWAY YOU CAN GET IT.

TAKE IT OUT OF THE FIELDS..ANYWAY YOU CAN GET IT.

Q. AND THE WEATHER..WHAT WAS THE WEATHER LIKE..ESPECIALLY IN THE WOODED AREA?

A. WELL, OVER IN AFRICA, IT WAS HOT. BUT WHEN WE GOT OVER IN ITALY AND LATER ON IT WAS COLD..THEN IN FRANCE AND GERMANY, IT WAS REALLY COLD..DURING THE BULGE, THE SNOW WAS KNEE DEEP..I SAY, KNEE DEEP..ANYWHERE FROM A FOOT TO FOOT AND HALF OUT IN THE WOODS. I WEIGHED 196 LBS. BEFORE I WENT OVERSEAS..IN CAMP EDWARDS, MASS. BUT WHEN THEY SENT ME HOME, I HAD MY WOOL O.D.'S ON ..THAT'S FIGHTING CLOTHES..BOOTS..AND I WEIGHED 144 LBS. WHAT'S IT LIKE..I TOOK IT OFF DEAD GERMANS..ANYWHERE I COULD GET IT..TAKE IT OUT OF THE FIELDS. YOU EAT WHAT YOU CAN.

Q..AND THE WEATHER? WHAT WAS THE WEATHER LIKE..ESPECIALLY IN THE WOODED AREA?

A. WELL, OVER IN AFRICA, IT WAS HOT..BUT WHEN WE GOT OVER INTO ITALY, GERMANY, IT WAS REAL COLD..DURING THE BULGE, THE SNOW WAS KNEE DEEP...MAYBE ANYWHERE FROM A FOOT TO MORE OUT IN THE WOODS.

Q. OH, AND SO YOU WERE ATTACKED DURING THE BULGE?

A? WELL, WE WERE AT LEMBERG WHICH IS REALLY SOUTH OF THE BULGE..IT'S DOWN CLOSE TO NANCY..WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE BULGE? SEE, PATTON TOOK THE TROOPS AND MOVED THEM UP AND LEFT A VOID THERE, AND WE WENT IN THE VOID..IN OTHER WORDS, HE SENT THE 36th UP THERE TO FILL THE VOID. SO THAT'S THE REASON ON CHRISTMAS DAY WE HAD TO GO BACK INTO THE LINES...ON CHRISTMAS DAY..WE HAD BEEN ON THE FRONT 133 STRAIGHT DAYS..THAT'S THE RECORD..WITHOUT RELIEF. WE HAD BEEN ON THE LINE FOR 133 STRAIGHT DAYS..THEN WE HAD TO GO BACK TO THE FRONT ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

Q. WHAT WAS THE DESTRUCTION LIKE? I KNOW I HAD READ A LOT ABOUT IT..LIKE THE HORSES THE BIG BELGIUM HORSES THE GERMANS HAD.

A. OH, WE WOULD KILL THEM EVERY CHANCE WE COULD GET..I MEAN THE SHELL OR SHRAPNEL HITS THEM...EVENTUALLY THEY BLEED TO DEATH. THEY HAD A LOT OF HORSE DRAWN ARTILLERY AT THE END..THEY HAD RUN OUT OF GASOLINE..SO HAD TO USE WHAT THEY HAD..AND THEIR VEHICLES GOT KNOCKED OUT..BOMBED..WHOEVER HAS THE AIR SUPERIORITY IS GONNA WIN THE WAR. YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF PEOPLE LIKE WE HAD..A LOT OF NERVE..WE WERE INDIVIDUAL THINKERS..WE WEREN'T REGIMENTED LIKE THE GERMANS. IN THE GERMAN ARMY IF A CORPORAL

OR SGT. TOLD YOU SOMETHING, YOU DID IT..BUT WE WEREN'T REGIMENTED LIKE THE GERMANS. IN THE GERMAN ARMY IF YOU WERE TOLD SOMETHING TO DO, YOU DID IT BUT IN OUR ARMY, WHEN YOU GOT UP TO THE FRONT, IF YOU KNEW A BETTER WAY, YOU WERE GOING TO DO IT YOUR WAY. YOU KNOW, IT'S HARD FOR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN THE REAR. AND OFFICERS DON'T LIKE FOR YOU TO TALK LIKE THAT..I'VE GOT A LT. THAT YOU COULD TALK TO, LT. AINLAY..THEY SENT HIM UP TO OUR OUTFIT..HE CAME IN THE FALL OF '44...SENT HIM DOWN TO MY PLATOON. WHEN HE CAME, HE INTRODUCED HIMSELF..AND TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN SENT TO TAKE OVER THE PLATOON..I SAID, "GLAD TO HAVE YOU." BUT HE SAID, "I'M AN ATTORNEY AND NEVER BEEN IN COMBAT AND I THINK THE BEST THING MIGHT BE FOR YOU TO CONTINUE LEADING THIS PLATOON LIKE YOU HAVE BEEN DOING AND WHEN YOU THINK I KNOW ENOUGH, YOU LET ME KNOW AND I WILL TAKE OVER..AND I SAID, "THAT'S FINE." AND MY WIFE AND I HAVE BEEN TO VISIT HIM AND HIS FAMILY AND HE HAS BEEN TO VISIT US SEVERAL TIMES TOO. WE HEAR FROM THEM EVERY CHRISTMAS..HE'S 82 or 83 YEARS OLD ..HE HAS A LOT OF ATTORNEYS THAT WORK FOR HIM..IN GOSHEN, INDIANA.

Q. CHARLES, TELL ME A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION AND THE DAMAGE YOU SAW. YOU SAID YOU SAW A HORSE-DRAWN ARTILLERY..WHAT ELSE?

A. WELL, ON CERTAIN TOWNS..IT WAS JUST COMPLETELY RUBBLE..PILES OF RUBBLE..WHEN YOU WENT INTO SOME OF THE TOWNS WHERE THEY HAD BOMBED...YOU WONDERED HOW THESE PEOPLE COULD CONTINUE FIGHTING. THE WHOLE TOWN WAS A PILE OF RUBBLE. ITALY WAS WHERE THE WAR WAS..COMPLETELY DESTROYED IT. AND OF COURSE, IN ITALY UP UNTIL YOU GOT TO ROME, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT STANDING. FROM THE TIME WE STARTED GETTING THE AIR SUPERIORITY OVER IN NORTH AFRICA, THEN WHEN WE GOT TO ITALY, WE PICKED UP MORE AND MORE SUPERIORITY. NEAR THE LAST YEAR OF THE WAR, WE WERE BOMBING THEM DAY AND NIGHT. I DON'T KNOW HOW THOSE POOR PEOPLE SURVIVED. FROM THE TIME OF D-DAY ON.. EVEN BEFORE THAT, THEY BOMBED THOSE POOR PEOPLE TO NO END. THAT WAS WHAT I SAID WAS SO GREAT IN FRANCE, WE BACKED UP AND LET A WHOLE GERMAN ARMY ...MAYBE A REGIMENT THAT WE HAD TRAPPED IN SOUTHERN FRANCE..WE BACKED UP ON HILLS AND WATCHED THEM COME ...YOU COULD GO FOR 20 MILES AND SEE THE LITTER OF EQUIPMENT THAT HAD BEEN DESTROYED,

AND YOU WONDERED HOW THESE PEOPLE COULD KEEP FIGHTING. AND I SAID TO ONE OF THE CIVILIANS, "HOW LONG HAS THIS PLACE BEEN TORN UP LIKE THIS?" HE TOLD ME THAT 30 DAYS AGO, HIS TOWN DID NOT LOOK LIKE THIS. BUT NOW IT WAS A PILE OF RUBBLE... THE WHOLE TOWN. IN ITALY, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT STANDING UNTIL YOU GOT TO ROME. ITALY WAS WHERE THE WAR WAS. IT WAS LITTERLY DESTROYED. NEAR THE LAST OF THE WAR, WE WERE BOMBING DAY AND NIGHT. WHAT I SAID WAS SO GREAT..WE LET A WHOLE GERMAN ARMY... REGIMENT OR DIVISION..THAT WE HAD TRAPPED IN SOUTHERN FRANCE..YOU COULD GO FOR 20 MILES AND SEE THE LITTER OF EQUIPMENT..DESTROYED, BURNED UP ON THE ROAD.

Q. AND GERMAN CORPSES, AS WELL?

A. OH YEAH. THEY WERE EVERYWHERE. THAT WAS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE..GOING UP INTO GERMANY..ALL ALONG THE HIGHWAY..IT WASN'T ACTUALLY JUST ONE TOWN...IT WAS ALL ALONG BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH ARTILLERY TO STOP THEM AND I CALLED TO ONE OF OURS AND ASKED IF THEY COULD FIRE JUST ONE SHELL..AND THEY DID AND WOULD YOU BELIEVE, THEY HIT A TANK AND I SAW THE BODY BLOWN OUT WHEN IT HIT THAT TANK.

Q. IT WAS A GERMAN?

A. YEAH

Q. AND DID YOU SEE IT HAPPEN?

A. ABSOLUTELY...IT HIT THAT THING WITH A 155 MM GUN AND EXPLODED THAT TANK..THE CORPSE BLEW RIGHT UP IN THE AIR..BLEW HIS CLOTHES OFF..JUST A NUDE BODY COMING DOWN.

Q. WHAT KIND OF A TANK WAS IT, DO YOU REMEMBER?

A. MARK IV, I THINK, OR MARK VI..BUT THERE WERE..THE WHOLE ROAD LINED UP WITH TANKS AND ARTILLERY AND VEHICLES.

Q. WHERE DID THIS OCCUR..WHERE YOU SAW IT HAPPEN?

A. LET'S SEE..SEPTEMBER..OR EARLY OCTOBER..I'D SAY SEPTEMBER.

Q. WHERE THE TANKER WAS KILLED?

A. OH, I CAN'T RECALL THE NAME OF THE AREA..THE TOWN..BUT IT WAS IN THAT AREA THAT ONE OF MY LIEUTENANTS GOT CAPTURED.

Q. WELL, CHARLES, WERE YOU IN THE WOODS WHEN YOU SAW THIS TANK BLOWN UP?

A. WELL, I WAS ON THE SIDE..ON A HILL AND I WAS HIDDEN..I HAD A FOXHOLE BECAUSE I HAD A MACHINE GUN THERE WITH ME. BUT BINDER WAS WITH ME AND WE CALLED BACK TO THE ARTILLERY TO GET HELP..WE COULD SEE THE GERMANS ALL BELOW US BECAUSE THEY WERE TRYING TO GET TO A PLACE TO LET THEIR EQUIPMENT GO THRU. WE JUST BACKED UP AND LET THEM GO THRU AND THIS LET US GET THEM WITH ONE SHELL..WE WERE RUNNING OUT OF SHELLS AND THIS WAS THE ONE THEY HAD LET ME HAVE...AND WE GOT THEM WITH THAT ONE SHELL THEY LET ME HAVE. THIS MADE US FEEL GOOD. THEY TOLD US WE HAD KNOCKED OUT ALL THE TANKS. YOU COULD SEE FOR 20 MILES..WE HAD CAUGHT THE WHOLE ARMY AND LITERALLY DESTROYED IT.

A. BILL MAULDIN HAD SOMETHING ABOUT IT...I USED TO HAVE A CARTOON..BUT I DON'T FIND IT NOW..THE AMERICAN TROOPS MARCHING UP THRU FRANCE..GOT AN MP STANDING THERE TELLIN' THE GERMANS TO COME ON THRU..GOING TOWARD THEIR HOMELAND.

Q. OKAY. THAT'S FASCINATING. SO YOU WERE ON THE SIDE OF THAT HILL..IN A TRENCH..TELLING THE GERMANS TO COME ON?

A. YEAH, I WAS IN A HOLE..WE NEVER DID BUILD TRENCHES..JUST DUG A HOLE..THE ARMY DIDN'T LIKE THAT EITHER..BUT I WOULDN'T EVER LET ONE MAN STAY IN A HOLE BY HIMSELF. TOO, IF HE HAD TO DIG A HOLE HE GETS TO THINKING HE IS DIGGING HIS GRAVE...BUT WHEN YOU HAVE 2 MEN, THEY CAN TALK ABOUT DIFFERENT THINGS..THEY DON'T PSYCHE OUT.

Q. JUST ONE LAST QUESTION...ON THIS TANK THING..DID YOU SEE THE SHELL COME IN ON THIS TANKER AND THE GUY FLY OUT?

A. NO, I DIDN'T SEE THE SHELL COME IN BUT I SAW THE SHELL EXPLODE ON THE TANK.

Q. WHERE DID IT HIT ON THE TANK? DO YOU REMEMBER?

A. NEAR THE TURRET..AND IT LITERALLY BLEW THAT TANK APART. IT BLEW THE GUY OUT OF THE HATCH.

Q. AND HE FLIPPED IN THE AIR?

A. OH, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE FLIPPING PART..BUT IT BLEW THE GUY OUT OF THE HATCH. IT DIDN'T BLOW IT APART..JUST BLEW THE GUY OUT OF THE TANK...BURNED OFF ALL HIS CLOTHES..

Q. WOW..WAS THE TURRET KNOCKED OFF?

A. ALL I KNOW IS IT KNOCKED THAT TANK OUT...AND THAT GUY BLEW OUT THE TANK..LIKE I SAID, IT BLEW OFF ALL HIS CLOTHES..AND KNOCKED HIM IN THE AIR..WE HAD A HUNDRED AND

SOMETHING TANKS KNOCKED OUT AT THIS LITTLE TOWN..AMERICAN TANKS..THEY SUCKED US INTO THIS TOWN. WE TRIED TO TAKE IT WITH AN INFANTRY REGIMENT. THEY CAPTURED A HUNDRED OF OUR MEN..TIED THEIR HANDS BEHIND THEIR BACK AND SHOT THEM IN THE HEAD..THE BACK OF THE HEAD.

Q. WHERE WAS THIS..DO YOU REMEMBER?

A. A LITTLE TOWN RIGHT AT THE RHINE RIVER. THEY DID A CLOSE ORDER DRILL OUT THERE. OF COURSE, I NEVER DID. I DIDN'T TAKE SASS OFF ANYONE..NOT EVEN EISENHOWER IF HE'D COME UP THERE. IT WAS BECAUSE I WAS THE ONE DOING THE FIGHTING. THEY NEVER MESSED WITH ME..LIKE I SAID, THEY WOULD SAY, "THAT GUY'S CRAZY"..BUT THEY WOULD ALWAYS GIVE ME THE TOUGH JOBS..THEY WOULD SAY "LET COOLIDGE DO IT". YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

Q. UH-HUH.

A. AND I DON'T TAKE CREDIT..I SAY THE LORD PROTECTED ME. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY FEAR. I EVEN HEARD PATTON SAY THAT A MAN'S A LIAR WHEN HE SAYS HE WASN'T SCARED AT TIMES. BUT I TELL YOU THAT I WASN'T SCARED UP THERE. I SAW MEN FALLING ALL AROUND ME. LIKE I SAY..BUT I GIVE GOD THE CREDIT. HE GAVE ME THE COURAGE THAT'S UNBELIEVABLE.

Q. UH-HUH SO THE GERMANS..THEY CAPTURED A HUNDRED OF YOUR MEN AND THEN THEY EXECUTED THEM? DID YOU SEE THE BODIES?

A. YEAH,..TIED THEIR HANDS BEHIND THEIR BACK AND SHOT THEM IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD. BUT WE WERE TRYING TO TAKE THIS TOWN..EVENTUALLY WE FOUND OUT THAT THESE 113 TANKS HAD BEEN KNOCKED OUT TRYING TO TAKE THE TOWN..THEY HAD FIVE GERMAN TANKS UP THERE. MARK VI~~s~~ UP THERE AND PICKED THEM OFF ONE BY ONE. THEY GOT UP THERE AND GOT TO DRINKING..AND THESE GERMAN TANKS CAME IN AND BLEW THEM ALL OUT. WHEN WE WERE ATTACKING THRU WATER..YOU WOULD GO AND THERE WOULD BE A HILL..IT WAS ROLLING LAND NEAR THE RHINE RIVER...THEN THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER HILL..AND WATER...WHILE WE WERE STOPPED ONE TIME.. I SAID, "I'M GOING TO GO SEE WHERE ALL THOSE TANKS ARE." WHEN WE LEFT THEY HAD TOLD US THAT THE "STEEL" WOULD BE COMING UP..THEY DIDN'T WANT THE GERMANS TO KNOW THAT THE STEEL WE WERE TALKING ABOUT WAS THE TANKS...BUT TANKS WEREN'T GOING TO GO THRU THAT WATER. I HAD SENSE TO KNOW THAT. I THOUGHT I HAD BETTER GO BACK AND SEE WHERE THE TANKS WERE..MAYBE THEY WERE SITTING THERE WAITING FOR US...WAITING FOR US TO PUSH

A. LIKE I SAID..MAYBE THE TANKS WERE WAITING FOR US TO PUSH OFF WHEN WE GOT THRU..
I WENT OVER AND THE DAD-GUM THING..THE TANK HAD BEEN HIT BY AN ARTILLERY PIECE OR AN
88 AND IT HAD BLOWN OFF THE LID...AND THE MEN WERE LYING THERE ON THE GROUND ..DEAD.
AND I THOUGHT..LORD, THEY DIDN'T TELL ME THAT THERE HAD BEEN 113 TANKS KNOCKED OUT..
BEFORE WE EVER TOOK THE TOWN...AND THEN THEY ARE GOING TO SEND IN A REGIMENT OF MEN
IN TO TAKE IT.

Q. NOW, YOU SAID THERE HAD BEEN PARTYING GOING ON?

A. WELL, THEY'D DRINK A LITTLE WINE AND WHEN THEY'D GO IN AND TAKE THE TOWN, YEAH.

Q. THE TANKERS, YOU MEAN?

A. YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT..THAT WAS THE WAY OF LIFE. WE LIVED FROM MINUTE TO MINUTE...
DAY TO DAY.

Q. RIGHT, DO YOU THINK THAT IS THE REASON WHY THEY GOT THE TANKS KNOCKED OUT?

A. NO, NO..I DON'T MEAN THAT WAS THE REASON..THE REASON WAS THE GERMANS SNUCK' IN
ON THEM...AND WHEN THEY DID, THEY HAD THE BEST FIRE POWER. THEY HAD AN 88, AND WE
ONLY HAD A .75 MILIMETER. OUR TANK, THE .75 MILLIMETER WOULDN'T KNOCK THEIR TANK
OUT...BUT THEIR 88 KNOCKED OURS OUT.

SEE, WHEN WE FIRST WENT OVER, WE HAD WORLD WAR I STUFF..BUT THE GERMANS HAD THE BEST
STUFF..THE LATEST STUFF..THEY WERE TELLING US WE HAD THE BEST EQUIPMENT IN THE WORLD
AND WE WERE DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE IT UNTIL WE LEARNED OTHERWISE.

Q. CHARLES, I KNOW THAT IT SAID IN YOUR CITATION HOW YOU TRIED TO KNOCK THE TANK OUT
WITH A BAZOOKA.

A. BUT THE BAZOOKA DIDN'T WORK...IT DIDN'T WORK BECAUSE IT DIDN'T HAVE ANY BATTERIES
IN IT..I LATER FOUND OUT.

Q. WELL, DID YOU EVER DO THAT SUCCESSFULLY..WHERE YOU DID USE A BAZOOKA TO KNOCK OUT
A TANK?

A. I NEVER DID BUT I HAD BOYS WITH ME THAT DID KNOCK OUT TANKS..IN FACT, WE KNOCKED
OUT THAT TANK LATER ON..THAT TANKER..I GUESS IT WAS THE SAME ONE.

Q. LATER ON, WHEN?

A. WELL, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIDGE, WHEN WE WENT UP..TOOK THAT HILL AND WENT DOWN
INTO THE VALLEY..THEN WHEN WE WENT UP THE HILL..THAT'S WHEN THE TANK GOT KNOCKED OUT.

Q. LATER ON WHEN? THIS WAS IN FRANCE?

A. THAT WAS UP IN THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS.

Q. DID YOU EVER GET IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT?

A. OH YEAH, THAT'S PRETTY CLOSE TO WHAT WE WERE DOING ON THAT MOUNTAIN. I COULD HAVE TAKEN A KNIFE AND CUT THEM. BUT I KILLED A MAN 6' FROM ONE OF OUR MACHINE GUNS ONE NIGHT..AT RIQUEWIHR IN FRANCE.

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE? WHAT HAPPENED?

A. YEAH. THAT'S WHERE LT. AINLEY..CHARLES AINLEY CAME LATE TO OUR OUTFIT. WE WERE IN A HOLE...WE WERE UP ON THAT RIDGE...THERE WERE 20 OR 28 OF US..AND WE TOOK THAT HILL THAT NIGHT. IT WAS RAINING..WE HAD FOUND THIS HOLE THAT THE GERMANS HAD LEFT. IT WAS A GREAT BIG HOLE..WHAT WE CALLED "A HOME" ON THE FRONT LINE. LT. AINLEY HAD FOUND IT. AND, OF COURSE, THE ARTILLERY OBSERVERS CAME UP. THERE WERE TWO CAPTAINS..AINLEY WAS A FIRST LT. AND I AM A SERGEANT..OF COURSE, THAT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING WHEN YOU ARE ON THE FRONT LINE. YOUR RANK, I MEAN..DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING. SO THESE TWO FORWARD OBSERVERS..ARTILLERY OBSERVERS..WANTED TO USE THAT HOLE. AINLEY SAID TO ME THAT WE HAD TO GIVE THIS HOLE TO THEM..I TOLD HIM, "THAT THEY WEREN'T GETTING THIS HOLE..MAN, THIS IS A HOME".SO WE ARGUED BACK AND FORTH UNTIL ABOUT MIDNIGHT OR ONE O'CLOCK..AINLEY SAID THEY WOULD "BUST HIM". TO TELL THE TRUTH, I THINK HE WAS ABOUT TO CRY..TEARS WERE IN HIS EYES. HE SAID, "I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO..I'LL DIG THE HOLE IF YOU WILL GET THE TOP." WELL, I WASN'T GETTING ANY SLEEP ARGUING SO I SAID TO HIM.."OKAY, BUT YOU DIG THE HOLE WHERE I TELL YOU TO." SO I GOT OUT OF THAT HOLE. I LIKED WHERE IT WAS..I HAD 2 MACHINE GUNS ON THE RIGHT AND 2 MACHINE GUNS ON THE LEFT..AND I WAS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE..I TOLD AINLEY..I WANT YOU TO DIG IN RIGHT BETWEEN THE STUMP..AND I SHOWED HIM HOW. I KNEW WHERE THE GERMANS WERE AND I SAID, "DIG IT RIGHT HERE". AND I ROLLED OVER AND WENT TO SLEEP..IT WAS RAINING. I HAD A SHELTER HALF AND I PULLED IT OVER ME AND WENT TO SLEEP. ABOUT 4 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, I HEARD HIM HOLLER.."COOLIDGE, COOLIDGE" AND I ANSWERED.."WHAT DO YOU WANT?" HE SAID, "I GOT THE HOLE..YOU GOT THE ROOF?" AND I ANSWERED, "YEAH, I GOT THE ROOF." I REACHED UP IN A TREE AND

GOT ME A FEW LIMBS..AND PULLED THAT SHELTER HALF OVER IN THAT FOXHOLE BUT I SAID, "WHEN IT GETS DAYLIGHT, WE'RE GOING TO PULL THE TOP OVER. NOW HE SAID, YOU WOULD GET THE TOP IF I DIG THE HOLE..WHERE'S THE TOP?" "I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO GET SOME WOOD." I SAID.."YOU DIDN'T SAY THAT..JUST GET THE TOP..THIS SHELTER HALF IS THE TOP." ANYWAY, WE GOT IN THAT FOX HOLE..WE STAYED UP ON THAT HILL FIVE DAYS. WHEN WE WENT UP WE HAD 28 MEN AND CAME BACK DOWN WITH ABOUT 7 OR 8. BUT WHEN WE TOOK THE WORST BARRAGE I EVER TOOK DURING THE WAR..AT MIDNIGHT ONE NIGHT, PROBABLY THE 5TH DAY, WE WERE BOMBARDED AT MIDNIGHT. THEY STARTED ABOUT 11:45 PM OR 12.. WE TOOK THE WORST BARRAGE THAT I EVER TOOK DURING THE WAR. THEY STARTED ABOUT A QUARTER TO 12 AND ANYWHERE I AM, I GOTTA GET GRENADES..GET ALL I CAN GET..I LOVED GRENADES BECAUSE OF THE FRAGMENTATION. YOU CAN HIT A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH GRENADES. SO I TOLD ONE OF THE MACHINE GUNNERS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME..MY NUMBER ONE GUNNER.. "I WANT YOU TO LET A SHOT BURST OFF AND LET 'EM KNOW WE'RE UP HERE. AND THE GERMANS YOU COULD HERE THEM ..BUT THE GERMANS ARE USUALLY PRETTY QUIET EXCEPT WHEN THEY ARE ATTACKING. SO I STARTED THROWING GRENADES..HE SAID HE COULDN'T GET THE MACHINE GUN TO WORK..SO I KNOW WHERE MY THREE AND FOUR GUNS WERE..I HAD TO GO A PRETTY GOOD WAYS TO GET TO THE THIRD GUN. AND I WENT OVER AND TOLD BOB HEALIS, "HOW COME YOU AREN'T OUT THERE ON THAT GUN?" HE TOLD ME HE COULDN'T GET TO IT. "THE GERMANS ARE OUT THERE." I SAID, "WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU CAN'T GET TO IT?" I HAD A GRENADE WITH ME AND I PULLED THAT THING OUT OF MY BELT AND I THREW IT RIGHT AT THAT GUN." I WENT OUT THERE AND YELLED TO FORD TO START FIRING RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME. WELL, IF I STAY UP THERE A DAY OR TWO, I'VE ALWAYS GOT A MACHINE GUN..YOU CAN STAKE..HIT THE STAKE AND IT WILL STOP..AND THE BULLETS GO WITHIN TWO, THREE YARDS UP AT THE FRONT OF EACH ONE OF THOSE GUNS. THAT'S THE WAY WE LINED THEM UP. IF ANYONE COMES CLOSE YOU CAN CUT THEM DOWN BEFORE THEY CAN GET YOU. SO I GOT THE NO. 1 AND NO. 2 GUNS GOING AND WE STOPPED A WHOLE GERMAN BATTALION ..AND THE REASON I KNOW IT..THEY WENT TO OUR RIGHT AND WENT AROUND OUR BATTALION..WENT DOWN BACK INTO TOWN..AND THE REASON I KNOW IT..THEY HAD TO FIGHT WITH OUR COOKS..WELL, TO MAKE A LONG STORY SHORT, WE DID REPULSE THE ATTACK..WE LEARNED THAT WE HAD KILLED ONE OF THE GERMANS RIGHT OUT IN FRONT

WELL..WE HAVE A CERTAIN WORD FOR A GUY WHO MESSES UP IN THE ARMY ALL THE TIME. THIS GUY HAD BEEN IN THE ARMY A LONG TIME..JUST FROM PILLAR TO POST..EVERYBODY KNEW HE WAS A "MESS UP" AND THEY SENT HIM DOWN TO MY PLATOON AS A REPLACEMENT. SO THE FIRST TIME..THEY SAID WE GOT TO DIG A GARBAGE PIT IF WE'RE GOING TO STAY HERE AWHILE SO I SAID TO THIS GUY OUT IN FRONT OF OUR PLATOON..I SAID, I NEED SOMEONE TO DIG..WHOSE TURN IS IT TO DIG? AND WHOEVER IT IS, SEND ONE MAN WHO'S TURN IT IS TO DIG..SO THEN AFTER THEY PICKED THE MAN, THIS GUY WALKED UP TO ME AND ASKED HOW COME I DIDN'T SEND HIM TO DIG THE LATRINE? I TOLD HIM THAT IT WAS BECAUSE IT WASN'T YOUR TURN. HE TOLD ME, "WELL, EVERY COMPANY I HAVE BEEN IN SO FAR, THEY GIVE ME THE DETAIL". I TOLD HIM "YOU WON'T HAVE TO DO IT IN MY PLATOON..EVERYBODY IS EQUAL HERE..BUT IF I EVER TELL YOU TO DIG, YOU BETTER DO IT."

WELL, UP ON THAT HILL, THE GERMANS..HE WAS ON THE MACHINE GUN AND THE GERMANS SAW HIM ..LOOKING OUT TO SEE WHAT HE COULD KILL..HE WASN'T FIRING THE GUN..THEY SHOT A BAZOOKA OVER THERE AND HIT HIM AND THE SHRAPNEL FROM THE BAZOOKA CUT HIS FOOT OFF. IT WAS HANGING WITH A LITTLE BIT OF SKIN AND HE TOOK HIS KNIFE OUT AND CUT IT OFF AND SAID "WELL, I GUESS I'M NOT GOING TO NEED THAT ANYMORE. IT WAS HANGING WITH JUST A LITTLE BIT OF SKIN. AND I PICKED HIM UP AND I CARRIED HIM TO THE AID STATION. HE WROTE ME A LETTER FROM THE HOSPITAL AND THANKED ME. HE SAID THAT I WAS THE FIRST MAN IN THE ARMY THAT EVER TREATED HIM DECENT. OF COURSE, HE WASN'T GOING TO FIGHT ANY MORE. HE TOLD ME THAT I WAS THE FIRST MAN IN THE ARMY THAT EVER TREATED HIM RIGHT. I CARRIED HIM TO THE AID STATION AND DIDN'T FORGET THAT.

Q. WOW!. THAT'S A GREAT STORY..IS HE STILL LIVING?

A. I DON'T KNOW. I NEVER HEARD FROM HIM AGAIN..OF COURSE, YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER IN COMBAT, WE DON'T HAVE ADDRESSES..GOT NO TIME..NO PAPER, NO PEN, NO ENVELOPE TO SEND IT IN.

Q. RIGHT. I UNDERSTAND THAT. CHARLES, YOU SAID THE GERMANS WERE QUIET..BUT WHEN THEY ATTACKED, WERE THEY LOUD?

A. WELL, THEY WERE NOISY BECAUSE OF THEIR EQUIPMENT..JUST CARRYING EQUIPMENT MAKES IT NOISY...HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A G.I. WITH ALL THAT EQUIPMENT. WELL, THEY'VE GOT

THE SAME KIND OF STUFF WE HAD EXCEPT THEY GOT PANS AND SPOONS AND ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF THAT MAKES NOISE.

Q. AND THEY TAKE THAT STUFF WITH THEM ON AN ATTACK?

A. ABSOLUTELY. AND NOT ONLY THAT..THEY GOT A SHOE BRUSH AND SHOE POLISH IN THEIR PACK.

Q. WHY DO YOU KNOW THAT..DID YOU FIND IT ON THEM?

A. ABSOLUTELY..ALL THE TIME..IF YOU FIND THE GERMAN..YOU FIND THE SHOE POLISH AND BRUSH..AND THEY WOULD WEAR THEIR DECORATIONS INTO COMBAT TOO. WELL, WE DIDN'T EVEN WEAR OUR STRIPES INTO COMBAT. THEY'D KID ME A LOT ABOUT THAT. I'D SAY I AM NOT AFRAID TO WEAR MY STRIPES INTO COMBAT..I PUT THEM ON AND I NEVER TOOK THEM OFF.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER SEEING THE GERMANS WITH THE IRON CROSSES ON?

A. OH YEAH.

Q. THEY'D WEAR THEM IN COMBAT..WOULDN'T THEY?

A. RIGHT, THEY'D WEAR THEM EVERYWHERE.

Q. DID YOU SEE A HIGHLY DECORATED GERMAN OFFICER IN COMBAT?

A. NO, BECAUSE MOST OF THEIR OFFICERS WEREN'T UP THERE..NOT ON THE FRONT LINE. NOW, WE'D SEE THEM WHEN WE PUSHED THRU THE LINES. THE GERMAN OFFICERS WOULD LEAD THE TROOPS IN..WE KILLED SOME OF THE OFFICERS COMING IN...MOST OF THEM WERE LIEUTENANTS THO'..WHEN THEY WERE COMING IN LIKE THAT.

Q. WERE THEY GOOD LEADERS..THE OFFICERS?

A. WELL, YEAH, AS LONG AS THEY WERE ALIVE..THEY WERE GREAT.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY SPECIFIC CASES WHEN YOU PICKED OFF THE OFFICERS?

A. WELL, THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND THE GERMANS..WHEN YOU PICK OFF ONE OF THE GERMAN OFFICERS, THEY'RE KINDA WITHOUT A LEADER..WHEN YOU PICK OFF ONE OF OUR OFFICERS, WE NEVER KNEW THE DIFFERENCE ..OUR GUYS JUST FILL RIGHT IN..AT LEAST THAT WAS MY EXPERIENCE.

Q. AND THE 88 GUN, DID YOU EVER COME UNDER FIRE OF THOSE?

A. THE 88s, THEY'RE DEADLY..THAT'S WHAT I TOLD YOU, THEY HIT MY BLANKET ONE TIME.

ANY TIME YOU STICK SOMETHING OUT FOR AN 88, HE'LL HIT IT WITH ONE SHOT. HE DOES NOT HAVE TO "WARM UP"..HE CAN GET IT THE FIRST SHOT. THEY'RE TERRIFIC..THOSE 88s. SEE, THEIR TANKS HAD 88s ON THEM. WE WERE HIT BY ENEMY PLANES...STRAFFED AND BOMBED. IN FACT, I HAD A BUDDY IN MY OUTFIT WHO HAD SIX BROTHERS IN THE GERMAN ARMY. WE WERE GOING INTO SAN PIETRO..I TOLD YOU ABOUT THE THING THEY WROTE THERE. WE WERE GOING INTO SAN PIETRO AND I LOOKED OVER AT AARON AND I SAID, "AARON, HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU WALKED OVER YOUR DEAD BROTHER? I MEAN WE WERE WALKING OVER A LOT OF DEAD GERMANS..AND HE SAID, "I WOULD A HELL OF A LOT RATHER WALK OVER HIS DEAD BODY THAN HAVE HIM WALK OVER MINE."

IN ABOUT 15 MINUTES, THE GERMANS CAME OVER AND STRAFFED AND BOMBED US AND HE GOT A BULLET WOUND IN THE BACK OF HIS HEEL...WENT THRU AND CUT THE BACK OF HIS FOOT.

Q. NOW, THAT'S AN INTERESTING STORY..THIS GUY HAD 6 BROTHERS IN THE GERMAN ARMY.

A. EITHER 6 OR MAYBE IT WAS 5 AND HE WAS THE 6TH..OR HAD 6 AND HE WAS THE 7th. HE WAS LIVING IN NEW YORK AND GOT DRAFTED INTO THE ARMY.

Q. WHERE WERE HIS BROTHERS..LIVING IN GERMANY?

A. YES, THEY ALL LIVED IN GERMANY. HE HAD MOVED TO AMERICA AND GOT DRAFTED.

HIS NAME WAS AARON...THAT'S ALL I CAN REMEMBER..AND HE GOT HIT IN SAN PIETRO, ITALY.

Q. THAT'S AN AMAZING STORY.

A. BUDDY, I'VE GOT THEM..I WAS UP THERE FOR 20 STRAIGHT MONTHS.

Q. DID YOU NOTICE THE COMBAT INTENSIFIED AS YOU WENT THRU AND GOT CLOSER TO GERMANY?

A. NO, IN FACT, IT SLACKENED..NOW, YOU HAD BATTLES THAT INTENSIFIED BUT NOT ANYTHING LIKE ITALY...AND DOWN THERE IN SOUTHERN ITALY, IT WAS UNREAL. IT WAS CONSTANT..SHELLING DAY AND NIGHT.

I RETURNED HOME IN JULY..AND BY AUGUST 8th, 1945, THEY HAD MADE PLANS TO HONOR ALL THOSE RETURNING FROM WWII...CLOSING ALL THE BUSINESSES IN THE CITY OF CHATTANOOGA AT NOON AND THE MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM WAS FILLED TO CAPACITY...MOST ALL OF THESE HAD VETERANS RETURNING FROM WWII..AND AT THIS CEREMONY IS WHEN THEY NAMED A PARK FOR ME. COOLIDGE RIVERSIDE PARK...WHICH WAS A PARK WITH BASEBALL DIAMONDS AND TENNIS COURTS BUT AS TIME WENT BY, IT WAS FORGOTTEN AND MOST OF THAT ACREAGE WAS SOLD..UNTIL ONE DAY, MY WIFE TELEPHONED THE COMMISSIONER OF PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS AND ASKED WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PARK..SHE HAD BEEN DUSTING THE PROCLAMATION HANGING ON A WALL IN OUR HOME. WELL, THE PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS COMMISSIONER WAS SURPRISED THERE WAS SUCH A PARK..WHICH THE LAST 8 ACRES WAS BEING OCCUPIED BY THE MARINES/NAVY..HOWEVER, THEY MADE A CONCRETE MARKER AND PLACED ON THE REMAINING ACREAGE...AND THAT HAS NOW BECOME COOLIDGE PARK..WITH THIS BEAUTIFUL CAROUSEL...AND ANOTHER BUILDING WHERE ONE MAY HOLD MEETINGS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS..EVEN BIRTHDAY PARTIES ARE CELEBRATED IN IT..AS WELL AS CLASS REUNIONS, ETC.