



Fort Smith Historical Society Oral History Center  
World War II Project  
Interview with Willie Newman

WN: Just Willie Newman, no middle initial. That's what they put in the Army, no middle initial, just plain Willie.

JW: And when were you born?

WN: (DELETED CONTENT)

JW: And where were you born?

WN: In Hon, Arkansas.

JW: Hon?

WN: Yeah, that's about seven miles west of Waldron on 28 Highway.

JW: Okay. And what was your parents' names?

WN: Jim Newman and Katy Newman.

JW: What was her maiden name?

WN: Ryburn.

JW: Okay. Did you have sisters and brothers?

WN: Yes. There's twelve of us, bunch of them.

JW: I guess so.

WN: I was next to the baby. I had a brother younger than me.

JW: What did your father do for a living?

WN: Farmed, raised cows and farmed.

JW: So that's probably what you did as you were growing up?

WN: Yeah, working on a farm, yeah.

JW: Well, did the Depression bother your family?

WN: Well, really not a whole lot. My dad was a pretty good whatever you call it, you know. He always had beef to butcher and hogs, you know, and had little odd jobs. Didn't make much money, but enough to get by, we made it pretty good.

JW: You all had about everything you needed?

WN: Yeah. Had a big orchard, my mother canned all of her fruit and dried apples and peaches and apricots and stuff.

JW: Where did you go to school?

WN: I didn't get much schooling. I went to Center Point, I just went to third grade. I had to work, so I didn't get no schooling; but I've made it pretty good through life.

JW: Right. Well, that was more common back then.

WN: Back then, yeah.

JW: Well, let's see, do you live there in Hon?

WN: Yeah, that's where I live now, yes, sir.

JW: You're still there? 2

WN: Yeah. Right close to where I was born and raised at. When I went to service, my mother and dad lived at Mansfield, between Mansfield and Hartford, so that's where they lived, that Hartford route, when I went to service. But I went from Scott County, Waldron, so that's where I was drafted at.

JW: Do you remember Pearl Harbor?

WN: Yes, sir. That was on my mother's birthday. I always remembered that.

JW: You remember how you found out about it?

WN: Yeah. One of my brothers, I was at my sister's and brother-in-law's and we'd heard about it. And Monday morning, my brother-in-law woke me and my nephew up and said "Get up, we're in war." So that's the first I heard. Everybody didn't have a radio then, but they had a radio and they heard it on the radio.

JW: Did you figure right then you were fixing to go to war?

WN: No, I thought, well, it'll be over with time I get old enough to go. But I went in '42, wasn't too long, but I thought it'd be over. I didn't think it'd last that long.

JW: They drafted you?

WN: Yes, sir. Went to Little Rock December the 2nd, me and Ridge Stewart and a bunch more, and Bick Salmon. They sent us home for a week, and then the 9th of December, we went back to Little Rock, inducted us in or whatever they call it.

JW: After they inducted you in Little Rock, where did they send you?

WN: I stayed there, I think five days, and I went to Camp House, Texas, at Gainesville, Texas, across the Red River. I trained there three months, I think until March. Let's see, last of March and the first of April, I went and got my basic over, you know, the three months. And they come through wanting a bunch to join the paratroopers. My buddy said, "Let's join", and I said, "No, I don't want to be in that." So he talked me into it and they wanted one out of a platoon and they took him down, he was flat-footed and he come back laughing, he said you're next. And the next day, they called me and I passed. So you want me to tell you, then I went to Vermont, Ethan Allen, Vermont, in this 1st Special Service Force, been held in Montana, but they come there for more training and more people joined up and I jumped in Vermont, took my jump training. Then we stayed there, June, I don't know, we jumped and done a lot more training. And then we went to Camp Stoneman, California, getting ready to go to Aleutian Islands. So they was afraid we'd all go AWOL and they put us on a little old island they called Adak. That was 4th of July, I think, in '43. Then they took us to Aleutian Islands. We took the island, Kiska Island. We was just a small outfit, we had one regiment in reserve to jump the second and the first, and I was in the third. We went in rubber boats and went across a lake. I don't know, we was supposed to went in a week early, and they said they was 3 waiting until a dark night. And we got out on that lake and it come out like daylight. But we took the island, the Japs left out when we went to invade and they left out. We didn't find no Japs, but we stayed there six days.

JW: Well, let me back up. Do you remember the first time you hurled yourself out of an airplane?

WN: Yeah, it was up there in Vermont. I was trying to think really the day, the first time to jump. They jumped, I don't know how they jump now. Back then, you trained, you jumped in sticks, six men, and then jump the whole plane load. But the first time, why, I was the tallest in our outfit. And old the jump-master said we're going to circle and come back, but we didn't. When we got over the jump field, we jumped. That's been a long time ago.

JW: I bet. I think that'd be something I'd remember.

WN: Yeah, you remember that, yeah.

JW: I've never done such a thing, and I'm real glad I've never done that thing. The Aleutian Islands?

WN: Kiska is the one we took. We was on, I believe it was Adak, we stayed there, I don't know, two, three weeks or maybe awhile before we went in rubber boats and then we took that island.

JW: Well, they didn't drop you on the island, you went by boat?

WN: We went by boat. But one regiment, in case we needed them, they was in reserve to jump, the second was.

JW: And when you got to Kiska, all the Japanese had run off?

WN: Off this island, Kiska Island, yeah, yeah. Good thing they did because we probably wouldn't be here to tell.

JW: That's what I was thinking.

WN: Yeah. They pretty well had it occupied. I don't know why. We had a pilot shot down like today, and we took that island that night and they was gone. So they got out of there pretty quick someway. I forgot how many thousand they claimed that was on there, but they got out. So we stayed on it six days and nights, make sure there wasn't any being in them caves and stuff. We was getting, we was short of water, we used all of our water up. We took Ranger Hale, and this big old stream of water went down that. And this old boy I was with, he was quite a dealer scrounger. And he said, "Boy, Newman, I found some water and it's cold." And I said, "Is it?" I don't know, we told the Sergeant. Somebody said the old medical doctor, Major Hammons from Tennessee, somebody said, "Better not tell him." He said, "What do you think I'm a doing?" He was done a drinking it, it was good water.

JW: Good. So where did you go from Kiska?

WN: When we invaded there, stayed there six days and then we come back to the States, and come back to Camp Stoneman, California, again and went to Vermont. But part of us had what they

called delay en route. So I had delay en route three days, and I stayed home seven. 4 So I decided to get married, stayed seven and I was AWOL. I got married. And then I decided I better get back to camp. I think the day I left, they wrote my mother a letter. But anyhow, got on a troop train, had these old mail buses then that carried the mail and carried passengers. And I got on that at Mansfield, caught one at Waldron, went to Heavener. I thought that'd be a long ride to Vermont. So I got on the train and somebody hollered, "First Special Service Force". And there's a staff sergeant and buck sergeant, they was both AWOL, so I didn't feel too bad then. Then we went to Vermont and this staff sergeant-- You want me to tell that? I mean he said, "I'll check us in", and MP said, "Y'all get in the barracks." Said, "Half the outfit is still AWOL." But anyhow, after that, they got us all lined up and then we went to Europe.

JW: You got married while you were AWOL?

WN: Yeah, September the 17th. I liked two days of being twenty-one. Somebody said why didn't you wait. I said I was afraid the MPs would pick me up.

JW: Well, I can't think of a better reason to go AWOL than getting married.

WN: But like I said, they got us all together, some were still AWOL and they picked them up and got us all lined out and we went to Europe. We landed in Casablanca.

JW: Did you go by boat?

WN: Boat, yeah. They didn't fly, haul them much by planes then, they didn't have, I don't guess they was big enough. But we got on a what they call a limey ship. I think fifteen thousand, lot of soldiers back then and they couldn't land us. We was supposed to went to Naples, Italy, and the ship was so big, they couldn't get into harbor. Do you want me to tell you that? And we landed at Casablanca and I believe we stayed there three weeks. And then they put us on a troop train and we went to Oran. That's closer to Naples and they put us on small ships and took us in around them ships that was sunk, you know, or partly sunk. And a little old town out of Naples, I can't think of it, an old Army barracks had been blowed about halfway, so they put us in that. And they got us ready to go up in the mountains in Italy. It was getting cold then, it was snowing.

JW: Do you remember the name of the ship that took you over?

WN: That limey ship? No, I can't think of the name. It was a British ship, it wasn't the Queen Mary, I don't know. It was one of them big ships they had, but I can't think of the name of it. Had to land us, they could land us in there, like I said, Casablanca.

JW: Did you get seasick?

WN: Yeah, but I never did-- some of them, oh, we had to carry some of them off. Talking about seasick, when we went to Aleutian Islands, we was on a liberty ship. And they just, oh, I got a little sick, but I kept eating. Lieutenant Mitchell, he said, "Now, Newman, you need to 5 keep eating." And he'd bring me coffee down and then he'd say get in the chow line and he'd say get ahead of me. They had to get in line. And so I made it all right. And bigger ships, I never did get seasick; but them little old liberty ships, when we went to Europe, I never did get sick.

JW: Well, I've heard those stories. And I've heard some guys got sick on all of them and were sick the entire time.

WN: Oh, yeah. Some of them, they just, I mean that one boy, we was on the liberty ship seventeen days. And he was sick, we had to carry him off on a stretcher. I was able to help get him off when we got there on this island, but boy, that was seasickness.

JW: Did the liberty ship have a name?

WN: I don't remember. Seemed like the one we come from there on was named the Bail or something like that, but I really can't think. It was a big American ship. We had to climb, the trainers climbed them ropes, we had them packs on our back and rifles and stuff, we clumb that. They couldn't get into harbor so they took us out in small boats and we clumb them ropes up the side of them ships. That was a pretty good chore, but we made it. Anyhow, we got on that ship and the ship commander says dirtiest bunch of soldiers he's ever had. And our general, well, he was just a full colonel then, Fredricks, and he'd come to states, you know, place for us. And they told him what that ship commander said. And when we got in the harbor, he got on that ship and he went to the ship commander, and he said, "I want to send you a compliment." Said, "This is the dirtiest ship my men was ever on." Said, "They been in combat." Said, "You ought to respect them more than that." Boy, he took up, he was a good general. Well, he was just a colonel then, but in less than a year, he made two stars. He was pretty smart, or I thought he was. He left us after we took Rome. But like I say, we landed in Naples, I can't think of that little old camp, and we went to combat one little old place, but the main two was Mount Majio and Mount Defense. Mount Defense I think where we had to carry stuff up this mountain. One outfit had took it. I don't know how many times they'd lose it, they couldn't hold it, it was the highest point there. And this general, I'll tell you that, too, had the

7th, if you want me to, had the 7th Corp, but I can't think of his name. I always thought he was two star, and him and Mark Clark. So I was talking about taking that mountain. And this old general told our colonel or was a general after that, Frederick, he said, "You Hollywood cowboys can't take that." He said, "My Hollywood cowboys can, and we'll hold it if we take it." And we did when we took it, hold it. We'd carry rations up under the branches of the trees where the Germans couldn't see us. But anyhow, if I had this book, it shows it in that tape where this second regiment clumb this cliff on them ropes and took the Germans by surprise. And they was just about the top, one old guy lost his helmet, and the German didn't think anybody'd come from that side, but we took it. I told them that was the first time I ever seen a guy with concussion. He 6 was carrying machine gun ammunition. And when he fell, why, he just-- and the shell hit close to him. And got ready to advance and he didn't move, and called the medics and he was dead. And medic said concussion, he didn't even have a spot on him.

JW: Just the shock of that shell hitting the ground?

WN: Yeah, and killed him. That's the only one that I know, probably killed more than that, but I'll never forget that one. I think that was Mount Defense, though. And then we took another, we was I think in combat, yeah, we took that Mount held, and then we pulled back. And that old general come apologize to us about being Hollywood. Then they got us straight again and we started pushing again. And I don't know how long we'd been. I think I'd been sixteen days, we'd been in these mountains, snow a foot and a half deep. And we was taking, me and the sergeant, we was leading the Company, I believe it was Sergeant Smith I was with. Me and him was going on, was going to take a bunch of pillboxes. Germans, they was shooting at us, using their ammunition. And we got on up close, they went to throwing hand grenades and snow was a foot and a half deep. And it hit between me and this sergeant and I got a piece in the arm. He didn't even get a scratch. He said, "Newman, did you get hit?" I said, "Yeah." I said, Did you? He said, "No, but I got scared you know what." So we went ahead, and this Lieutenant Mitchell told them, said, "Tell Newman not to throw that rifle away." And he said, "Well, he ain't plumb out of action yet." So we went ahead and took the pillboxes and the Mount and went on top and took it. Then went down to the general hospital, I can't think the name of that big old hospital, tents, you know. But I was cured and that them Germans had a deal shelling them places. So I went down there and it was real cold and they was supposed to operate on me at two o'clock, I believe. And I was cold and that old captain, he said if we put you asleep, you'll never wake up. About two hours, they got me and they cut the shrapnel out and I stayed there awhile. And then I went to convalescing hospital there. During this time, the rest of them stayed in twenty-one days in that snow and stuff. And then after that, they pulled back and went to the Anzio beachhead. And they sent me to a convalescing hospital, getting ready to go back to your outfit or they put you in limited service. And they called me in a interview, wanted me to stay with them. And said you lose your jump pay, I was T-4 at that time. Said you keep your rating, but you lose your jump pay. I said I believe I'll go back to my outfit. I didn't want to be back there, I thought I ought to been. So I went back to them at Anzio, they'd been there I think five days, and we stayed there a hundred and twenty days. And then if you want me to, I'll tell you, the company, I was with the platoon, Mitchell's platoon. When I come back, well, Captain said he

wanted me in company headquarters, laying communication wires and stuff, so I done that for quite awhile. But this sergeant, he's in these pictures I brought, 1st Sergeant. The Company CP was in an old two story building, Italian, and you look out and see lot of times, see the Germans. And one morning, I don't know what I was 7 doing, making coffee or something, he said, "Newman, get your field glasses and come here," the old 1st Sergeant did, me and him was pretty close. And I took off up there, and he said, "I seen something moving in that hay stack." And I said, "Yeah. You know what that is?" And he said, "No." I said, "It's a 88 on that tank." And he said, "Is it?" And I said, "Yeah." And I said, "They're pointing it this way." He said, "We better get out." I said, "Yeah." So we took off and he told the Captain, he said, "You better get your stuff and get back." We had foxholes dug back of this building. And we just got out of it and they sent a tracer, or whatever they call it, see if they hit it. And then, boy, they laid it in there, they just flattened that building out. I mean always something, I didn't know whether you wanted me to tell all that or not. But anyhow, we stayed there, like I said, a hundred and twenty-one days.

JW: And that was where the big gun was that kept--

WN: Yeah. Had it camouflaged and stuff. It's a good thing he was up there looking that morning. We generally go up and have a look. I generally go with him, but I didn't that morning but he hollered at me, had that old 88 pointed it right at it. Good thing. So then the Company went back, dug a big hole down Mussolini canal, we was on it. And they dug, fixed a big deal down there for the Company CP, everybody had foxholes along there. And I helped lay communication wires and break up rations and stuff. And me and this Sergeant, we'd been a laying and getting pretty good daylight and we come across kind of a little old field coming to the Company CP. And we got pretty close. He said, "Newman," he said, "I see some Germans down there talking." And the captain and them went on a little closer. And there was two of them. We got on up talking to them. And this one, he looked at me and he said, "You're a German, ain't you?" And I said, "Yeah." The Captain, he looked at me and I bet he thought what kind of an outfit am I in. My grandpa come from Germany, some little old town over there, I don't know. But anyhow, we stayed there and then we pushed off to Rome. But anyhow, we went going to Rome and we were supposed took a bridge, railroad bridge and a bridge and held them. And boy, the Germans, they got so hot, our Captain pulled us back and we went up a big draw and we got back, they just laid mortars and shells in there. Good thing we pulled back or we'd all been hit. So the next morning, they had to go back and get new orders. And Captain Diamond said-- Colonel Borne, that was our old colonel, he said, "You guys want to say something about your company?" And they was telling about how they could fight. And this Captain Diamond said I've got to run this company and this outfit. Anyhow we went on up, we was on the way to Rome, up one of them mountains. And me and this boy went and laid communication wire. We come back and they was shelling us, we just got Company CP and kind of a dug out deal and there was holes all over. And there's shelling, and he said, "Newman, let's jump in that hole, they're shelling." Instead of going to Company CP, we just jumped in there and big old tree, one of them big old 88s hit a tree burst behind, 8 and he got a big piece in the back, it killed him. And I got four little old pieces in the arm.

JW: Was it shrapnel?

WN: Yeah, yeah. And he got a big piece in the back, killed him there, you know. I stayed with him. Old company commander, Captain Diamond thought I was about half shell-shocked. And I said Bob just-- we called him Bob, his name was Robert. And I said, "Bob just got killed." He said, "Do you mean he got hit?" I said okay, you know, I didn't argue. And he told the medics to go and he told me to go with them, show them where he was. I reached down, got his hand, he got down, he said, "He's dead, ain't he?" I said, "Yeah." And he went back and the Captain said, "Where's Bob?" He said ain't no use of bringing him in, he's dead. You know, you always run into different, you hear a lot of stories but that was-- Then we went and took Rome, went on in and took Rome then, and we was fighting down them streets. Had one old boy, he broke out a big glass window, he said, "We'll be safe in there." And Old Sergeant said, "I'm not going there. Are you, Newman?" I said, "I might want to run." He said, "Me, too." And we went ahead and finally took the bridges. I think we took nine prisoners, and course there's a lot of bridges in Rome across that river. And we took and we held it, and they relieved us then, a combat outfit, I think, about eleven or twelve o'clock that day at noon. Me and this Old Sergeant, we was standing guard, some guy come down, he said he's from the States, I don't know, had some kind of business there or something. He said, "When do you y'all get off?" Sergeant said, "About fifteen minutes." And he said, "You see that motel?" Said, "Come down there and we'll fix you a breakfast." Old Sergeant said, "Newman, we'll probably get down there and be full of Germans." And I said, "Yeah." But he fed us our breakfast, really good after them C-rations.

JW: What did an old Arkansas boy think of Rome?

WN: Boy, I mean that was--

JW: Things you never saw?

WN: Yeah, yeah. It was a big, yeah. It was an open city, they didn't bomb it, but really had no fighting in it, but the Germans tried to hold. They claimed, now, I don't know, I didn't see them, they claimed they had all of them set to blow up. But said we got there too quick or something. But they wasn't supposed to blowed them up anyhow, you can hear a lot of stuff. But anyhow we took Rome and then they pulled us back, went to Southern France, two little old islands. And I went back to hospital and then we was on Southern France on the line in Italy. We stayed up there quite awhile, and then our outfit broke up. The Canadians wanted them to come back to regular Canadian Army, help train younger guys. So we had a choice to go to the 82d or 101st. And Old Sergeant said, "Where we going, Newman?" I said, "I ain't made up my mind." He said, "Let's go up to 101st." So I spent the rest of the time, but I didn't remember them places like I did when I was with the old outfit. We was so close, I guess is the reason. But we crossed the 9 Rhine River with the 101st Airborne.

JW: You were heading for Germany?

WN: Yeah. We fought on up in through there at Germany until it was over there then. Little old places, lot of them, you'd pull into them, maybe stay a night or two and then be gone again.

JW: Did you encounter a lot of German people?

WN: Yeah, after we got-- Yeah, they was nice.

JW: They were pretty whipped by that point. I mean not necessarily talking about soldiers, but just the German people. They were tired of it all.

WN: Yeah, they was tired. A lot of them German boys, soldiers give up, they said we're just tired of it. Old Hitler, he just, you know, and lot of times we'd run across, when we crossed the Rhine, there was a lot of them in them hedgerow stuff. That was only time we fixed bayonettes, never did use them. They went to giving up, the Italians and Polocks and stuff, different, some of the Germans give up, too. They just tired of it. They had all they wanted of it.

JW: Did you run across any that was hungry and starving?

WN: Yeah, they was pretty hungry, lot of them was. We would run across a camp. I don't remember what town that was where they had them prisoners, but they wouldn't let us stay there. Boy, they moved us when they took it, they moved us on out. But boy, that was a bad looking place. Like I said, we just barely seen it.

JW: One of the big prison camps?

WN: Yeah, where they had Americans and all different ones. They just didn't keep us there long. We moved out and then I don't remember what town we was at when the war was over. And then the war was over and high pointed us to go home. I think I had ninety-five points. But we went to Berchtesgarden. I think we stayed there three months, waiting. And I asked the Sergeant, I said, "What are we going to do?" Said, "Japan don't fall, we'll go to Japan.", but they fell.

JW: What did you do in Berchtesgarden?

WN: Well, I went to helping them cook, helped cook. They'd be off, too, stand guard and just mostly nothing. They'd play ball and stuff.

JW: Were you staying in houses or--

WN: Old Army camp, had barracks.

JW: An old German Army camp?

WN: Yes. I never did get up to Hitler's hide-out, lot of them did. I don't know why I didn't, I probably could have, had enough time off. I guess I didn't think about it then. We stayed, like I said there, I think it was three months.

JW: That was right after the war, right after the Germans had given up? 10

WN: Yeah, yeah.

JW: Well, I imagine that the day Germany surrendered, there was an awful lot of whooping and hollering?

WN: Yeah, there was a lot of celebrating going on. I was over there not quite two years, I just lacked-- Well, I went over I think the last of September, then I left home anyhow. And then I got back home the 20th of September, day after my birthday. I got discharged on my birthday. But yeah, I mean it went by pretty fast. I knowed we was at that beachhead a long time, but I couldn't figure us being there a hundred and twenty days. One day we was going to Rome.

JW: That was pretty solid fighting at Anzio?

WN: Yeah, yeah. They had a lot of SS troopers on one spot over there in Anzio. I think reason they was held up so long there, they was getting that front ready for Normandy. We took Rome the 4th of June and they took Normandy the 6th of June. I guess that was one of the roughest battles there was in Europe. They had some in Japan or over in there, but I believe they claimed, I've seen the History Channel. I think they killed forty-one thousand and something on that Normandy invasion. There was a bunch.

JW: It was a terrible, terrible thing.

WN: Yeah. They had a whole 1st Allied Airborne Army jumped there. I wasn't in the 101st, they was in it, and the 82d and the British, and I don't know who all. Had a whole Army made out of paratroopers that jumped in there. But lot of them didn't even get to the ground, they shot them in them trees and stuff, it was rough.

JW: It was sure rough.

WN: I got seven bronze combat stars for different combat zones.

JW: Well, after you left Germany, what did they do with you? Did they send you home?

WN: Yeah, sent us home. And I went to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. We got up there the 18th, and they discharged me the 19th, which was on my birthday.

JW: May 19th?

WN: September 19th.

JW: 1945. So you were free to go home?

WN: I was ready to come home.

JW: How'd you get home?

WN: On a bus, an old bus. I don't know, I guess it was just an old civilian bus. We didn't get very far until they had a blow out. And they had to call, they come in, I don't know how long we was on the side of the road. But back then, they didn't have a lot, like they got now. I guess they just drove them until they blowed out back then. And I went to that GI school then and farmed some. 11

JW: Did the bus come into Fort Smith?

WN: Yeah, it come in. And then I caught another bus from Fort Smith.

JW: So there weren't people waiting on you in Fort Smith?

WN: No.

JW: Did they know you were coming?

WN: No, they didn't know I was coming. My bud drove a school bus. I got off at Mansfield. My parents still lived between Mansfield and Hartford. And there was an old lady there at the school, had hamburger joints then, her name was Johnny Taylor. And I went in and hollered at her. And she said, "Well, when did you get in?" So she called my bud, he was over at the school, and called him. And said, "Now, you hide behind the door. When he comes in, tell him I got a surprise and you jump out." Then my youngest bud, I think it was close to December when he got out. He was over fighting the Japs. There was seven boys, and me and him's the only two that had to go, others too old. We had one brother died young, but he fought over there.

JW: Was your wife living with your parents?

WN: Yeah, mostly stayed with them, yeah, when I went overseas, yeah. She could have stayed with hers, but she just stayed with mine.

JW: So you surprised them all walking in the house?

WN: Yeah, yeah.

JW: I bet that felt good.

WN: Yeah. My dad, I guess he lived to be about ninety-four years old, quite a long time. His dad, my grandpa, come from Germany, some little old town, I can't think of the name of it over there. But like I said, there's a lot of them things you think about lots of times, wonder how I ever made it back. Lot of them didn't.

JW: Well, you came home and had a wife. How well did you know your wife?

WN: I'd known her quite a while. We never even did go together. We had anniversary one time, and one of my daughter-in-laws or my sister-in-law, she was going to take down how long we went together and stuff. And I said you won't need a pencil and paper. She looked plumb funny.

JW: Well, what happened next? You just move in?

WN: Yeah. I stayed with my parents awhile, we did, and then we moved out. And like I said, I went to that GI school.

JW: Where was that?

WN: That was Mansfield first, and then I moved to Waldron later on. We had one, our boy was born '47, we lived at Mansfield then. And then we had a girl born, we lived in Wichita, Kansas, I worked up there some on construction. Our daughter died when she was thirty-six years old, she had leukemia, she had four girls. 12

JW: That's rough.

WN: Yeah. The Army, well, it wasn't bad. My dad always said I don't know why they want to send you overseas to fight. I said I'd rather be fighting over there than fighting here in the States. A lot of old people think, well, why'd they send you over there? I'd rather be over there fighting than been here fighting. That's what I told my dad. And he said, well, I guess that's right. They don't figure how many might get killed. That's what I told him. I said there are a bunch, there's some going to get killed, individual people. But I guess the most I've seen when we took this hill I was telling about that they

took and lost so long, we had to hold it six days and nights. Said to hold it two days and nights, but we had to hold it six days and nights until they'd fight around it. I don't know. That was a small outfit, didn't really know, but everybody got along real good. We had a good company commander. All our officers, I reckon, was good. Well, 101st was, but you wasn't with them just like we was in this smaller outfit. Colonel, we had a Colonel Walker and all them, nice bunch. Canadians had good men, good soldiers.

JW: Well, what were you learning in the GI school?

WN: Well, about this farming, like fertilize when you plant it. And when it gets up, lay it by. They pushed that ammonium nitrate then, so you side dress it with that.

JW: So you were going to be a farmer?

WN: Thought I was, but wasn't enough money in it. I got a few cows and I decided it wasn't, so I worked on construction then. I worked last fourteen years, I worked for Kraus Construction over here on South O Street, I worked for him fourteen years. I worked with him eight when he worked for Clyde Jones, he was estimator and stuff. And then he went on his own and I went to work for him and then I retired. When I retired, I think I went back and worked four years parttime. He said we might need you sometimes, so they'd call me and I'd go back and work three or four months or two months, whatever they needed me.

JW: Did you run a piece of machinery or something?

WN: No, I never did run no-- I was on construction all my life. We used to get young guys that didn't know nothing about it, and Robert say, now Will can't run one, but he can tell you how to run it. But I never did, I generally pressure their lines, hook ups, set meters and stuff, just had a small crew. Old Robert, he was real good to me, he was a good one. I don't guess me and him ever had cross words.

JW: That's pretty good.

WN: Yeah. I lost my wife this, well, be a year last December the 17th, was a year ago. We was married sixty-two years and three months to the day. That's quite awhile, wasn't it.

JW: Sure was. But I don't reckon you got sick of her.

WN: No, no, no. Always talking about fixing stuff to eat, didn't 13 matter what she fixed, I just eat and didn't say nothing about it. Like I said, she was a good cook and everything. Went to little old church there at Hon. Yeah, you never get tired of them. Then you miss them when they're gone.

JW: If you're lucky enough to get a good one, I don't guess you ever get tired of them.

WN: No, she was a good one.

JW: Well, they didn't catch you for Korea?

WN: No, I didn't get-- I didn't get on that. I had a cousin, he was in World War II, he was over there where I was. And he come back, he signed up for the Reserve or something and they called him back. Boy, he said why'd they call me. And course, drew a little check or something, I don't know. Somebody said, "Well, did you sign up for that?" He said, "Yeah." But I didn't get in on, some of them did.

JW: I think about all of them that joined the reserves--

WN: Yeah, got it. That's what he was in, the Reserves, yeah. They tried to get us and wondered if I hadn't join, but I just didn't right then, so I never did. When he got a chance, he got out then. Like I said, I seen a lot of places up there in Germany but I can't remember them. Like I said, I remember crossing the Rhine and them little places.

JW: That's a long time to try to remember a name you probably couldn't pronounce.

WN: Yeah, couldn't pronounce it anyhow. We was up on line of Italy and France, Nice, France, was the little old town there. It was pretty clean little old town, Nice. We was up on the front and lot of them boys deserted from the front lines. And they had them fixed up with hay, sleeping on hay. And this old Colonel Walker, he was in charge of us then. He went down there and he told them to throw their hay out, they'd sleep on the ground like the men on the front did. He made them throw all the hay out of their tents and stuff and sleep on the ground.

JW: This was our guys?

WN: Yeah, had deserted the front lines. Said they ain't no better than the rest of us, they have to sleep on the ground. I bet they hated that. Talking about in Italy, that's where Colonel Darby Rangers, seven hundred of them, got killed at one time in between them mountains just before Anzio there.

JW: Just before the war was over, too.

WN: Yeah, wasn't too long, yeah. We got what few was left as replacements. They had one of those, I believe he was a staff sergeant, he was something about the artillery. They had them little pass out 75s, and he was forward observers on, and he could have them old boys zero them in. One morning, I don't know if they seen some tanks or something, but they called him to put the artillery, and they knocked them out with them little old 75s. He kept directing 14 until they got them direct hits. He was a good one. I guess he done a lot of training.

JW: Knew how to do his job.

WN: But all them, like I said, they was all good. When I trained for this First Special Service Force, we was in Vermont. And Canadian Sergeant, I don't know why I was with him, we was on them speed marks you supposed to run so far, supposed to do at certain times. And some little old town there, we went through it, and there was some guy over there, he'd fell out. And he said, "Newman, you see that guy?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "We won't see him anymore." He said, "We don't want nobody to fall out in this outfit." And I thought, boy, I don't know whether I'll make it or not, but I did. Got back, he was barracks bag, they shipped him out.

JW: Did you say the name of the town or the camp in Vermont?

WN: Yeah. Ethan Allen, Vermont. Part of it was an old army camp. We jumped back, I thought it was west, but it was a pretty good little old camp. Like I said, there was part of it kind of a new camp, but they had the old rocks or whatever and in the old part, it was a pretty nice little old camp. Then went to Camp Stoneman, California, why, there was some Old Sergeant, he was drilling them officers, close starter drill. I think there was some of them majors, had lieutenant and captains, and I think majors. Old Sergeant, he knowed how to really drill. There was a lot of them old sergeants pretty smart. This 1st Sergeant we had, they put him up to make lieutenant and he didn't much want lieutenant. And finally decided he would if he could take a platoon, I don't remember which one it was in the Company. Anyhow, they come with the idea he had to take a patrol out and I think there

was fifteen of them. But me and the wire sergeant, we was supposed to laid wire and decided to just use telephone. He took fifteen men and they went out to this old house and they set up. When the Germans got there, they was there waiting on them. I don't know how many they killed that night and wounded. He didn't get a man wounded. So they went along until he made 2d Lieutie, he was a good sergeant. But the tape I got, it showed us this deal climbing that mountain and stuff, it showed all that. And when we went to this camp I was telling you about, he told the name of it and that general and all that. And then went to Anzio and then to Rome and then we broke up and stuff. One of my nephews borrowed one and he never did send it back, kind of like my book. And then another woman, she had this tape made, didn't cost, I don't know, not very much. But it showed, like I said, it showed training in Montana where they trained, but I didn't train in Montana, I trained in Vermont. They took ski training up there. Them old boys, they'd really train, that'd help you if you was along with somebody that's had good training, always did me. They could learn you a lot to help you later on, or I thought they did.

JW: Well, that was supposed to be why they were training, to be of help somewhere in that mix. 15

WN: You wonder, well, why all that walking and stuff. And after you get in combat, you keep walking, you wonder, like I said, went to Rome. Said how far'd you ride? I said we didn't, I said we walked and fought all the way. That's what they trained us for. My brother, I think just before Japan fell or something, I thought he was-- he was a gunner on a mortar; but anyhow, they sent him to a kitchen. He'd been a little CC Camp back there, cook and stuff. And he took over as Mess Sergeant in some company. He stayed there until the war was over, he was Staff Sergeant. They tried to get him to come back, but he never did go back.

JW: You weren't in the CCC, were you?

WN: Yeah, Dutch Creek. And it broke up and then I went to Buckknob and stayed I think three or four months over there and then got out, yeah.

JW: Where is Buckknob?

WN: It's on down towards Mount Ida. Before you start up Blowout Mountain, it was on the lefthand side there. And Dutch Creek was down out of Waldron, there on 80, Dutch Creek was, fourteen miles. I told them there was a man, Lester Wade, his name, he had a pickup with a camper on it. I think charged us a dime or something to ride to Waldron. Certain time he come by, me and this old boy, we decided we'd wait awhile and there was three of us. We walked that fourteen miles, we got in camp next morning two o'clock. From then on, when the truck left, we was on the truck. We didn't do that no more.

JW: What did you do in the CCC?

WN: Well, when I first went in, I worked on a rock crusher, had to put them rocks up. An old loader, you had to put them up there by hand. And then I worked the kitchen awhile. I had a brother that was in Dutch Creek six years, he was first cook, Bob Newman. I was in there to wash dishes but I didn't do that long until I got on what they call a Hotshot Crew fighting fires. I think there was a truck driver and a leader and I believe there was six men worked around the camps. So we'd be the first to take off to the fires. I went on a few of them like that, but when I went Buckknob then, they kept me in the outfit, we went over there at the old ranger station, I believe is name of it. We'd go over there every day and clean up and mow the lawns and wait on them to have a fire, just piddling mostly.

JW: How long do you think you were in the CCCs?

WN: When I was in?

JW: How long?

WN: I was in, I think I was in I believe it was fifteen months altogether in both camps. But my brother, he stayed down there, that was a long time, six years. But there wasn't nothing to do then. He was what they call a leader, I guess, and I think they drew forty-five. Assistant leader drew thirty-six. And just going in, you draw thirty and your eats and clothes because there wasn't no work back then. 16

JW: The Depression. Well, they let you keep five dollars and send twenty-five home?

WN: Yeah, yeah, send the rest of it home. Yeah, you just got twenty.

JW: I bet your family was glad to see that, though.

WN: Yeah, I sent mine to my mother. Yeah, back then, that was a lot of money. Somebody said, boy, you can buy a lot of stuff with a dollar back then. Even a penny, you could buy something; but now you can't buy nothing for a penny.

JW: Seems like there was a lot of guys went out of the CCC and into the Service, there seemed to be. One guy told me that the CCC was really kind of a military operation as far as them getting you-- getting your mind going.

WN: Yeah, you was talking about that. When I went to Camp House, Texas, make up your bed. And the Old Sergeant, he'd come by and check your bed, he'd hit it and pop up. And course when I was in the CC Camp, them leaders, when I was in the kitchen, my brother, he was our inspector, and boy, he was pretty strict on that stuff, too. He was kind of like the Army, them old beds better bounce back up. I had that Old Sergeant hitting everybody's bunk. He got to mine and he said, "Where'd you learn to make a bed at like that?" And I said CC Camp. And he said, "Well, they learned you something, didn't they." I said, "Yeah." And they stood reveille and retreat. I don't know if they did at first, but when I was in there, just like the regular Army. They learned you a little something.

JW: Right, right.

WN: Lot of them company commanders, they was captains from the regular Army. They had, I can't think of his name now, I think he was in there, but he left out right after I got there, I think. But my brother, Bob, was his name, he always liked green tomatoes. He'd cook them, and they'd get tomatoes and some of them'd be green and he'd put them and cook. He said, boy, one morning, he said about ten-thirty, eleven, said I had an old skillet, you know, fried some. And said the captain come in and said, "What do I smell?" Brother said, boy, I figured I was fixing to get a eating-out. He said, "Fried tomatoes." He said, "I never heard of them before." He said, "Can I taste of them?" My brother said, "Yeah." He said, "Can I eat some?" And brother said he eat them nearly all up. He said, "Keep all them green tomatoes and fry them." He said from then on, he had fried tomatoes with that old captain.

JW: That's good eating.

WN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Always learn something, you know.

JW: I remember being that age. It's kind of hard to get much into a kid's head at that age.

WN: Yeah, yeah, it is. Someone said about eating. I said when you was in the Army or CCCs, you eat what they had. You learn to eat a lot of stuff you might not really like, but later on you get to where, you 17 know--

JW: Well, I imagine after you'd had rations for about six months--

WN: All of them would be glad to have about anything put on a plate, yeah. We had some pretty good Army cooks, most of them was. I always liked, if you got there in time, they didn't put them in them cans, but you get the hot cakes as they come off the grill, most of them could really cook. When I was in Vermont, seemed like every weekend they had what they call cold cuts. Boy, course, back then, baloney and ham and stuff. And I believe they had tater salad, I think about every weekend nearly, they had that. Somebody said you get tired of it? I said, no, if you was hungry, you just eat it and go on, but it was always good anyhow. I never did see the Red Cross but one time help over there, cup of coffee and one donut. And I got a cousin, he was over there somewheres and he asked me one day, said "Did the Red Cross give you all a lot of coffee and donuts?" I said, "Well, one time we was in Italy." And he kind of grinned and he said, "That's all I ever got." Said I don't know whether I was in the wrong place or the way it was. Don't ever know, you know, just one of them deals. After we got, like we was talking about them civilians, we give them stuff to eat. We wasn't really supposed to give, but if we did, we was supposed to give them rations back for them. They could make that summer sausage, I mean it was good. One time, this was in Germany, old man and lady lived in a house and I guess kids were probably at war. But anyhow, me and Old Sergeant, bunch of us, I don't know, four or five, went upstairs, had upstairs, couple of beds and we went up there. And Old Sergeant said, "I smell something, Newman, smells like apples." We got to messing around and there was an old closet over there and it had apples, had them wrapped up in papers, and we eat one or two apiece. And he said, "Now, when y'all leave in the morning, dump your rations." Said, "Give them old people rations." And we all give them extra rations.

JW: I've heard nice stories about our soldiers and the German people in that time period.

WN: They communicated pretty good, like I said. The people, like you said, I think they were fed up with it. I thought they always was, the way they acted. But they never did try, everybody thought they'd try to blow us up or shoot us, but they never did. We'd take a place, we'd just stay in it most of the time. We wasn't supposed to mistreat them or nothing. Course, we didn't. I think some of them did. We took a prisoner one time or a bunch of them. This one had a pretty watch, and course, they all stripped their watches. And I thought, well, I like, I had a watch, I don't know, and I went to get it. And he could talk good English, he said, "My mother got that for my birthday." Oh, boy, I don't want your-- but I bet they stripped it when he got on further back. I said, well, I didn't want his watch after he told me that. I wouldn't have took it if he'd have give it to me, but a lot of them did.

JW: Well, war brings out the best and the worst in people. 18

WN: Yeah, yeah, it does.

JW: Well, I guess if the war had never come along, you'd have been stuck there on that farm for the rest of your life, would have never saw anything.

WN: No, because I never had been, I think Fort Smith a time or two, and Heavener once or twice. I thought it was a big place then. Then I went to Little Rock and then went to Camp House, Texas. Boy, getting big, and then Vermont. I knowed it was big, then went to California.

JW: California is a pretty wonderous place if you've never been there.

WN: Yeah.

JW: Did you have any trouble coming back and going to school and going to work?

WN: No, I was pretty good.

JW: Just got right back in the swing?

WN: Fit back in, yeah. Had one brother, me and him one year, I guess that year my boy was born, seemed like it was; but anyhow, we had cotton and corn raised together. Course that's when come a lot of fertilize and side dressing and stuff. But anyhow, me and my brother-in-law, me and my bud, and then me and my brother-in-law, we were working together a big old corn crop and we fertilized it and then ammonium nitrate. Boy, we had corn. Everybody said that's the prettiest corn, they could see it from the road, that was out between Mansfield and Hartford. Boy, I don't know the corn we made, but you got to put it in there to get it out anymore. But anyhow little fertilize, kind of like raising a garden.

JW: Well, so you found out pretty quick you weren't going to get rich farming?

WN: Yeah. I went, like I said, I worked on construction. It paid pretty good, course I wasn't educated; but anyhow, ole Kraus, he always treated me good and always done what he wanted me to. Course, he was the boss. Some of them'd get him about this and that. He said, "I own the company, don't I, Willie?" And I said, "I thought you did." I said, "You always sign my checks." But me and him never did get-- And I retired, I think it was right close to when I was sixty-five, maybe lack a day or two. It was on a Thursday, and he come brought our checks. And he said, "Superintendent said you was ready to retire." Said, "I ain't got much to do right now anyhow." But he said, "You don't have to retire until you're seventy-five if you don't want to." And I said, well, you know. And he said okay. So he furnished me a pickup. And I said, "What do you want to do with the pickup? Bring it up Saturday or Monday?" He said, "You can bring it up Monday." He had them short wave radio and said take the radio out. So he give me the pickup. Pretty nice.

JW: That your retirement gift?

WN: Yeah, like I said. And I went back and worked four years part-time. I guess he done pretty good for hisself. I hadn't been 19 back to see him, I need to. Yeah, the Army changed a lot of them I guess. Some of them went on better and some of them just--

JW: Well, you know, if this was California, it may not be the same thing, but an awful lot of guys that I talked to here said that their future was a farm and never being farther than fifty miles away from home. And the next thing they knew is like you, marching through Rome. Who'd have ever thought that was going to happen.

WN: Never would've thought it. Yeah, I was, let's see, I think we was in Germany. No, southern France, yeah, when I become twenty-two. I just come twenty-one and then went overseas. And then I was in southern France when I come twenty-two. And then when twenty-three, I got discharged on my birthday. Yeah, we walked to the, like I said, to the middle of Rome, to the river. I think they called that about where we crossed, that was about the middle of Rome, I guess. I don't know, I've heard the name of that river, but I forget it time I turn around twice, but it was a pretty place anyhow.

JW: Well, I sure thank you for talking to us.

WN: Well, I didn't know much. I mean I'd know a lot if I'd had my book, I could have showed you. Like this mountain we took and all that, you could've seen them climbing. I wish I had it, but that boy never did bring it back to me. But that tape, I don't know whether you watched the tape or not.

JW: I haven't watched it yet.

WN: I mean if you want to watch it. Well, the first of it shows where I trained in Vermont. And the rest of it is like I said, when we went to the Aleutian Islands. I wish I'd had that book to show you this. This 5th Company, 4th, they come to relieve us, I think they had an old bridge up there they kind of set up a kitchen. You go back there and stay, I think, a week; but anyhow, it was kindly sunny. And they come in on the side of the Germans, we was at the back. And they come on up on that sunny side and the Germans, I don't know how many killed and shelled them.

JW: This is at Anzio?

WN: Yeah, that was at Anzio. The Captain said, "That Lieutenant ought to knowed better than that, Newman, oughtn't he?" And he said, "Me and you'd knowed better than that." And I said, "Well, yeah." I said, "He knowed the Germans were there and could see them." Because they was what, no-man's land, we could see them at times. And I don't know how many were killed and wounded, seemed like it killed four or five, and you know, they just laid the mortar shells in on them. Take a lot of chances, some of them did or something. Really uncalled for, really. Then one bunch of them, they had old bridge down there and then had them a cow, they milked that old cow, them boys did. Course it was cold, the milk wouldn't ruin. Always do something. Always made coffee and we started to Rome, and old Captain said, "Newman, you need to take the coffee pot." And I said, "We'll get a new one when we get there. That one is too black." I guess all of them got different tales. You say that one guy's over there in Italy and 20 stuff, huh?

JW: He was an infantryman and went all through Sicily and then all up Italy and then into southern France. And I think he was in southern France when the war ended.

WN: He was?

JW: He didn't make it up heading for Germany; but I think he was with, if I remember correctly, he was with Patton's group and he was with Darby.

WN: Darby's Rangers? Yeah.

JW: Well, he wasn't with them. They were with them--

WN: Attached to them.

JW: He said that Darby found out that he was from Van Buren, Arkansas, and he used to come hang out at his tent every once in a while. And they'd talk about stories of home and who's here and who's dead, and all that stuff.

WN: They said he was a good general.

JW: This guy said that he was just really pleasant, really nice guy, and was real glad to run into somebody from our neck of the woods. So then he said he went on, that Darby went on like a thirty day leave. And when he came back, they put him in a different outfit, associated him with another outfit and that's when he got killed.

WN: When he got killed.

JW: Yeah. He was just back from a thirty day leave.

WN: Yeah, I think he'd made general, hadn't he? Just made. I believe I got a book on him and told he hadn't been general long, he was colonel quite awhile there.

JW: Have you ever been to the Darby House?

WN: No, I never have.

JW: I'm going to work on having an event there. I just went and looked at it last week and--

WN: I bet it's got a lot of--

JW: We ought to have a little gathering down there and make sure everybody sees, because it would mean a whole lot more to someone like you, than it does to me, because you'll see things that you remember.

WN: In there over in Italy, probably. I wasn't in Sicily, but Patton started out in, well, he was something in World War I or something; but anyhow, I think he done a lot of starting out over there in north Africa, I think. I got a nephew that lives in Greer, Tulsa, north of Tulsa. He said I watch all the Patton movies. He wasn't in the service but he likes Patton.

JW: Well, all the guys that I've interviewed that actually saw Patton 21 said that he was just, what's the word for it? You either loved him or you hated him because he was just like-- they were somewhere and there was all this commotion, and Patton comes riding up in either a Jeep or an armored personnel carrier or something like that, and he was yelling, "Get out of the way, let real soldiers go to work," or something like that. It was always something that was--

WN: Yeah. When I went to 101st there, when they surrounded Bastogne, well, Patton broke into them. And them old boys, 101st, said that him and Taylor, Taylor had the 101st, but he was somewhere else. And when they got penned in and said when the first tanks broke through, Patton and Taylor was riding the front tanks. Said all you could see was stars, one of them on one side and one on the other side of that tank. Lot of them boys told me that.

JW: He was just--

WN: He wasn't afraid.

JW: He wasn't afraid and he liked a good show.

WN: Yeah, yeah. Patton. Yeah, he had a good tank outfit. I believe he was a hundred miles, I forgot something, told from at Bastogne, and there was another outfit closer; but Patton told them he had loaded with ammunition and fuel, he was ready to move. And they give him the order, so he went to moving. He wasn't long getting to them, I forget how-- he traveled pretty fast with them tanks. I don't know what they run, but I believe it was a hundred miles. They called the 101st the "Battered Bastards of Bastogne" for a long time, that's what they went by. Talk about that one, I guess that was after we crossed the Rhine, had a deal, Eisenhower made the 101st speech. And I never forget, I was in the wire section, and old Sergeant Brown, he said, "I'm going to get us out of going to that inspection, tell them wire's cut." Old Captain said, "That won't hurt to wait another two hours." Said, "You boys going to parade." And we had to go to parade. I'll never forget that. Brown said, "My rank didn't help, did it?" I said no. Said everybody would go. I was over there when Roosevelt died. We'd just pulled off, no, after he died, I guess, we was pulled off the front. But then had a deal for him and everybody had to go. I think all the cooks had to go, too. I believe they made everybody go. Eisenhower having a big old-- somebody said, boy, if I was five star, I wouldn't be half as close, pretty close to the front. But he was up there. He was from Kansas. I thought he was borned-- He

was borned in Texas and they moved to Kansas. I heard that History Channel, I watch that sometimes and he--

JW: Yeah. He was born in Abilene, Texas, as I recall.

WN: Yeah, and moved to Kansas. I can't think one general, I forgot, was borned in Arkansas, but I can't think which one it was.

JW: MacArthur was born in Little Rock.

WN: Yeah, yeah, MacArthur. That's who I was trying to think of. I never did hear that until here lately, all that time. 22

JW: From what I can tell, MacArthur didn't think much of being born in Arkansas, he didn't spread it much. But his dad was the commander of the little post down there, and that's what they were doing there. So it wasn't like they were from here, but he sure enough was born in Little Rock.

WN: I kept thinking, I know there's one general, I heard them tell it. He was smoking that old pipe, I could just see him on that island where he said he would return. I guess Truman fired him. They didn't get along on something on them islands.

JW: Korea.

WN: Korea, wasn't it, yeah.

JW: From what all I read about it, MacArthur thought he was the boss and Truman thought he was the boss, and Truman showed him who the boss was.

WN: He was the boss, so he got rid of him, yeah.

JW: I'm sure that happens now and then.

WN: I had my cousin, he was in on that Normandy invasion; but I don't think he was right in the first phase of it, I don't think. A lot of that first phase didn't get in.

JW: Right, right. I talked to three or four guys that were like there on the second and third day, and it was still bad. Ain't nothing like that first batch.

WN: No, they didn't get nowheres, did they. We was going to Rome, like I said, when we took Rome, the 4th, and they took Normandy the 6th of June '44.

JW: Well, they said that Tom Hanks movie, it was really amazing how much they managed to make the movie like actually being there on that day.

WN: Yeah.

JW: And I think all of us can be thankful that we weren't there.

WN: Yeah. I said, well, I was proud I was on the Rome front. We was on the road to Rome or took Rome.

JW: Well, that big gun that gave them so much trouble at Anzio is at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland. It's been there since they took the gun.

WN: Oh, has it?

JW: They shipped it to Maryland then. And I got to looking last year and it's still up there.

WN: Still up there. Big one.

JW: Yeah. And the guy from Fort Smith is the one that arranged to ship it from Anzio to Aberdeen.

WN: Oh, heck. 23

JW: He's a ninety-six year old.

WN: Ninety-six.

JW: He's still going strong.

WN: He was an officer or something, wasn't he, probably.

JW: He was some, I can't remember off the top, but yeah, he was a little ways up there. And it was his duty, if they captured weapons, enemy weapons, and it was something unusual, it was his duty to get it packed up and sent back to America so they could study it. And that's where they studied it, was Aberdeen. I haven't seen him yet to tell him that his big gun is still up there.

WN: He's ninety some years old?

JW: Ninety-six, drives a car, lives by himself. He's outlived two wives.

WN: There's quite a few guys when I was in there. Lot of them been over there. I always thought the war, well, it'll be over before they call me. And first thing I knowed, well, I was old enough to go. Yeah, I always remember Pearl Harbor as my mother's birthday.

JW: Well, did you know when they told you, did you have any idea where Pearl Harbor was or what it was?

WN: No, I didn't. I said where's that place at.

JW: Lot of guys have told me, they said they bombed Pearl Harbor and they said what's Pearl Harbor, there was a few that knew.

WN: Well, my brother-in-law did; but like I said, you know, where is that at and he went to telling all about it. Course he kept the radio going, we was eating breakfast and the radio telling all about it and stuff. When did they declare war on Germany, you know, I forgot.

JW: It was there like within a week or so.

WN: Wasn't long, I didn't think. I must have known, but I forgot about that part of it.

JW: I don't know if we declared war on Germany, or German declared it on us.

WN: They might have declared on us. Seemed like might have done it, after you got to talking about it, yeah.

JW: Well, it was a good thing, it was a good thing that they dropped the bombs and you didn't have to--

WN: Go to Japan. Now, that'd been rough going on their homeland, you know it. Boy, everybody'd been booby-trapped. Them young kids and everybody'd had a weapon or something, wouldn't they, or I always thought, you know.

JW: Well, they had tunnels with whole trains and planes and all that stuff in there. They were ready, they weren't going to quit.

WN: No, they was going to the last man. That atomic bomb got them. 24

JW: It took two. The first one didn't get them.

WN: Didn't do it, so they put another one on them. I guess they thought the next one might come on the mainland. It's a wonder they hadn't dropped that second one on the mainland, but I guess they hated to damage it. Truman done that, didn't he? All this talk about war and stuff, I said Roosevelt might not could walk, but I said he had to be smart, had a bunch of smart men to keep them fronts going. That took a lot of machinery, tanks and guns and ammunition to furnish all that, or I thought it did.

JW: It took lots of toilet paper and underwear and hands of corn, too. That's something that, I was born ten years and fifteen minutes after the Japanese surrendered. And one thing that has been real interesting to me doing this Veteran's Project is it never occurred to me before that you got to have toilet paper, you got to have tooth brushes, and you got to think of all this stuff ahead, and you got to get all this stuff over there on all these different fronts and food and--

WN: They had to be, like I said, quick as they started them wars, I mean they had to be to get it all the supplies in there. They built it day and night, though, didn't they, they didn't stop, they'd build her day and night.

JW: But it's amazing because the little kids, little boys grow up thinking about guns and bullets. Well, that was just a minor part of what had to be made and packaged and sent, and know where to send it and make sure they got it.

WN: Like you said, that toilet paper and all, you was talking about that. I worked up Wichita, I can't think of his name now, I believe Charlie Springs. Anyhow, he was a pilot. And he said that plane, said I believe there's three planeloads and they all had toilet paper. He said you never seen so much toilet paper in all your life, three planeloads. But said that didn't go far as many G.I.s was over there.

JW: I just never thought about all that kind of stuff. All I thought about was--

WN: Someone talking about, I said, well, he was smart and had a bunch of smart people working for him. (Daughter entered the room.) We was talking about Roosevelt. Me and him had a good talk. I don't know whether you found out much or not.

CB: I think you did.

JW: Well, I haven't heard anyone say, I haven't had anyone badmouth Roosevelt yet. I think every soldier there ever was thought the world of him.

WN: I said, well, they done that so quick, you know what I mean, to get production rolling on everything, guns, tanks, getting that food ready and all that, them C-rations and stuff. We're talking about the war when Roosevelt was getting all that stuff ready. Daughter: Are you? Did you tell them your story? Are you still interviewing? 25

WN: We had a good visit. Enjoyed it. Didn't tell him a whole lot.

JW: You told me a lot. There's some guys that just can't remember anymore. They're sad about it and I'm sad about it.

WN: If I'd had that book, you could have gotten a lot that I didn't detail. We ever get it, why, bring it up and let you give it to her and she can show it to you. (Talked about Mr. Newman's grandfather.) You know, they was pretty smart. Lot of times, we'd capture first aid wounded, they'd help treat our boys. Lot of them could read that first aid deal. And lot of them, they'd help, and their doctors sometimes. In a way, I wish I could have told you more.

JW: You did fine. I'm happy, I'm really happy.

WN: Yeah, I got wounded January the 6th, '44, and then May the 28th in '44 on the way to Rome. And the other was up in Mount Majio. Mount Defenso was that other mountain where they clumb the cliff. Shows them boys on that tape climbing that cliff. And we went around under trees, and then we went to carrying rations. Course, just a few held the line, they wouldn't do much in the daytime. What they do, that other outfit, they took it and they wouldn't take up enough ammunition. But when me took it, we'd carry a wounded guy down, we'd carry I don't know how many boxes of ammunition they had unpacked, though. Seemed like it was three boxes of ammunition you carry up on your back. Our old general said don't take nothing down you can shoot or eat, leave it up here and get you some more and bring it and come back.

JW: Well, I thank you for telling us.

WN: I wish I could have told you more.

JW: You did just fine.