

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Howard L. Nauth
4th Armored Division, U. S. Army
World War II
2003

[Edited by Howard Nauth, April 2004]

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Nauth, Howard L., (1920-), Oral History Interview, 2003

User copy, 2 sound cassettes (ca. 80 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master copy, 2 sound cassettes (ca. 80 min), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

ABSTRACT

Nauth, a Rhine (Wisconsin) native, describes his experiences in the 4th Armored Division during World War II. Nauth talks about graduating from high school in Kiel (Wisconsin), working on his grandfather's farm until he found work at a chair company, and then being drafted into the Army before World War II. He mentions basic training at Fort Sheridan (Illinois), learning tank mechanics and maneuvers in Kentucky and Tennessee, and desert tank training in California. He left for England via Boston (Massachusetts) on a ship (once used for transporting bananas) in a convoy. Nauth arrived at Devizes (England) in late 1942 or early 1943 where he was assigned to be a small arms mechanic. Not long after arrival, he mentions being assigned as a half-track driver on LSTs and landing in France. His commander found out Nauth could speak German so he was assigned to liaison duty on the front lines. He details the effects of massive bombing near the Brest peninsula with the smell of the dead and "human beings and pieces of animals hanging" in electrical lines. Nauth describes his experiences during the assault on L'Orient (France) that forced him to "crawl out on my hands and knees." He temporarily lost his hearing as a result of shelling in L'Orient, which resulted in him being put on battle fatigue. Nauth mentions being a half-track command vehicle driver during the Battle of the Bulge and losing his musette bag. He later found his musette bag in a pile of GI equipment the Germans had thrown it in. Nauth talks about the cold 1944-1945 winter in Belgium and seeing General Patton riding in a jeep showing his white-handled revolvers. Nauth recalls stories of shooting chickens and a bull to eat and one incident of a French man taking Nauth and some friends to a steak meal they had prepared for him. He talks of shooting down a German plane that hit a nearby building killing nine civilians and reflects of how that bothered him. Nauth describes several instances of artillery or plane bombardment and seeking shelter in local French farms. He discusses being in charge of German POWs, a shooting incident in Czechoslovakia after the war, and 4th Armored Division reunions. Nauth concludes by discussing his feelings regarding Germany's chances of winning the war and that later in the war his thoughts changed to feeling that he would never get out alive.

Biographical Sketch

Nauth (1920-) served with the 4th Armored Division, U.S. Army in the European Theater during World War II earning five campaign battle stars.

Interviewed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2003.

Transcribed by John K. Driscoll, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 2003.

Transcript edited by John J. McNally, 2007.

Interview Transcript

John: This is John Driscoll, and today is December 3, 2003. And this is an oral history interview with Howard Nauth. Howard is from Brookfield, Wisconsin, and we are meeting at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, in the conference room. And Howard, welcome to the museum and thanks for agreeing to do the interview.

Howard: Okay.

John: Can we start off with your early life? When and where were you born?

Howard: I was born in the town of Rhine, Wisconsin, 1920. I went to school in a country school where we had to walk about a mile to go to a country school. After that, I graduated there and went to high school in Kiel, Wisconsin for four years, and graduated. After that, I looked for a job. They were hard to find. And I finally farmed my grandfather's farm. I put in all the crops and all the other, and kept looking for a job at that time. And I finally did find a job at Sheboygan, at Phoenix Chair Company. And I worked there a while, and I started out at thirty cents an hour. I got a raise to thirty-five cents an hour. And shortly after that I got my notice I was drafted into the Army.

John: Now, this was before the war?

Howard: This was before the war. I was drafted and I went to Plymouth, Wisconsin, and from there I went to Fort Sheridan. From Fort Sheridan, I went to Kentucky for basic training. And after that I was assigned to the 4th Armored Division. The training [indecipherable]. After that, they wanted me to take a course in tank mechanics and I had to take a test for that. And I didn't want to do that. So I made sure that I failed the test. But, anyway, it turned out I went, anyway. And after I did the three months of that, I went for maneuvers down in Tennessee and Kentucky.

John: What kind of tanks, what model of tanks were you using? Before the war?

Howard: What model of tanks? Well, I personally was involved with the light tank and the medium tank. And after that maneuvers, we went to California, the desert, for desert training. And I was assigned to the 37th Regiment, and somehow they found out that I had the ability, I missed it, that I took a course in welding before the war. And they found out and they transferred me to ordnance. So then when we did maneuvers out there in the desert, idler wheels on tanks and half-tracks wore down rapidly. We had to build them up by welding hard-surfacing on them. Then, okay, after that training, we went to Texas, the central part of Texas, for much more rigorous training. And that is where a lot of the fellows, they were

advanced age, were dropped out. And after that was completed, we went to Boston and left for England. And as we embarked on the ships, we were put on a little S. S. Exchange was the name of the ship. And it was in a convoy that we went across. It took thirteen days, which normally would have been five or six days, but the problem was after we were out a little while, the engines broke down on this ship which was, it was a ship that was used for transporting bananas, before the war. And it broke down. So we were left out by ourselves, not in the convoy any more.

John: Oh, wow.

Howard: We were a good target for U-boats at that time. But we were fortunate that we didn't have any of those problems, although the sea was very, very rough. And we were not allowed to go on deck but some of us did, including myself. Two of the fellows went way to the forward end of the ship and were washed overboard. They perished.

John: Oh, wow.

Howard: Those were the first two casualties. After that, we arrived on the sea between Ireland and England. And it took a while. We disembarked and we landed in Cardiff. From there we went to Devizes where we had barracks that were old English barracks, and they had three floors. They were older buildings, and that is where we were for six months.

John: Any idea of how to spell that?

Howard: Devizes, or something like that. That is probably not right.

John: I'll check on it in the atlas. [Devizes]

Howard: If you draw a line between London and Bristol, it would probably be half way in between.

John: Okay. Now, about when was this?

Howard: It was in 1942. '42? Or '43? Somewhere in there.

John: Okay.

Howard: There we had training for landings and now I had the honor, or dishonor, of being moved around to different things when I was in the service. Probably more so than any other GI. But we had aptitude tests for dismantling and putting together

machine guns, and we were blind-folded, and we had to take apart and put together a .50 caliber machine gun, blind-folded. Okay, I passed that test where most of them didn't. So they made me a small arms mechanic.

John: Okay.

Howard: Okay, that meant when the weapons came in that we mounted on a vehicle, I had to take the cosmoline out, take them out of the cases, along with others that helped to do it. I didn't really actually do a lot of this myself, but I kind of master-minded it. And, okay, after that was done, well we had a lot of free time. So, then they put me on another detail that was to instruct GI's on map reading. The European maps were far more detailed than we had in our country at that time. And so I gave instructions on that. I didn't know any more about map reading than any body. But, anyway, that was part of my job. Okay, when that was done I volunteered for the Rangers. But they didn't accept me, my buddy, as well. They didn't accept us because they didn't want to lose us out of the company. We were already short of men, as it was. So, okay, they put me as driver of a half-track and that half-track is what I drove off the LST when we landed in France. It was well equipped. It had one machine gun in the ring mount, .50 caliber, and it had another one in the right hand side, .50 caliber, and another .30 caliber on the opposite side. It had mines along the side, which we never used. But anyway, we landed in France. Then we bivouacked at the town of Berneville, in France. After two days there, I was in ordnance, but after two days there they transferred me into liaison duty. And somehow, some way, the captain in the company found out that I could speak German. Well, some. And that meant instead of being further towards the rear at the front, the third day I was in the front lines. And it was, well, nothing really happened much. We had three casualties. And that was by, I think it was by mortar fire. But the first night, I ended up manning the machine gun. And some of the Germans were filtering into our unit, observing. And the .30 caliber machine gun that I was at, I had a helper that fed the belt. And as things got very dangerous my helper decided to go for help. So that left me alone, and I couldn't really manage that gun alone very well. Had it been a .50 caliber, it would have been easy, but a .30 caliber, no. So I sat there all night, but nothing really happened. But we had three casualties, and after that, for about two or three days. We made a break-through. Our initial holdings were probably ten miles inland, at that time. And then we had a massive, massive bombing before we broke through the lines, toward the Germans. It was so bad that it was hard to breathe because of the smell of the dead. I found in the electrical lines, pieces of human beings hanging, pieces of animals, and what have you. And it was bad. But when we broke through, there was no opposition. We crossed the Brest peninsula. And it was summer time, and the weather was beautiful. And we had a good time. Although there was not one thing going wrong. It was just like a trip, nothing but pleasure. The weather was perfect. The last night I played catch with three of my buddies. There were four of

us. We had a glove and a baseball, and we really enjoyed it. We were briefed that night by a general. It was General Daeger. That we were going to attack Lorient. Lorient is the port off the Brest peninsula, the western part of France, that had fortifications for the U-boats. We had no means of bombing that out, because it was so well fortified. And the Germans meant to protect it. But we gave them an ultimatum to surrender before we went in. And they refused. We went in, and we were, well, it was bad. It was so bad that I personally crawled out of that on my hands and knees, and if it had not been for the hedgerows that were there, amongst all the fields there, had it all been flat terrain, casualties would have been higher. But they were bad. They opened fire. First of all they opened fire with machine guns and I could see them go over my head. At dark, we spread out in an apple orchard. And that was where the Germans wanted us to go. So what happened, we parked the Jeep. And I was in liaison, I was in a Jeep with two other people. Lieutenant Burkett and a guy named Keats, and myself. It was my job there to run a decoding machine, and also I manned the .30 caliber machine gun, which we had on a post on the Jeep. But we parked the Jeep under a tree. And we heard one shell go off to the left, and one down the center, and another one to the right. Three. It didn't take the third one for me to realize what was happening.

John: Yea, bracketing.

Howard: After that, the fourth shot took out the command car, direct hit. And we had Major Nash, that died. And some of his aides. After that, General Daeger was in a light tank. And he made a run for it, and he ran towards the Germans to get under the arc of fire. And he survived. We didn't have any problem with him. But other casualties, it was a complete rout. And I personally took refuge in a hedgerow. The hedgerow was big mounds of overgrown stuff and stones, and what have you. And they usually had a little ditch alongside of them, and this is what I crawled into, around the field until I got to the road. When I got to the road, I crawled through the culvert to the other side of the road. When I hit the other side of the road, there were two guys in front of me. Both got hit. And they were standing, I could reach out to either one of them. They were that close to me. And I was fortunate I didn't get hit. After that, I made a run for it. I tried to get back to the town. Well, anyway, in less than a half an hour we had, I think, about forty-two dead and I don't know how many wounded. Something like, I don't know if there is any record, or my memory is what somebody else had told me. And casualties were quite high. But it didn't end there. It took a while after that. The next night we were still being shelled. And one night, I was in one of the trenches that the Germans dug and there was about six inches of water in there. I spent the night in there. But it was okay. And, after that, of course, I lost my hearing, almost entirely at that time. And that came back in several years, it came back quite a bit. But even for some of the activities from there on until we hit the Chateau Salons area in France, and the Nancy area, and Metz and Strasbourg, in that triangle there, I

didn't have too many memories of what happened. But when it came to that part of the war, I was taken off liaison duty, along with the other two fellows, and we were put on what they called battle fatigue, for a couple weeks. A rest period. Then I'd go into Nancy and I'd go up to the front, and the front was only about five or ten miles away. But we ran into kind of a stalemate then. Nothing really happened to us, and when something did happen, it was the Battle of the Bulge. We went north. And I was put back on driving the half-track command car again. So, after that, I didn't have that many bad encounters in the Battle of the Bulge that I had in some of the other previous times. Although I lost all my equipment, the Germans captured my musette bag and everything that was in it. And the funny part after the Battle of the Bulge was over, we had a big pile of GI equipment that the Germans just threw it on a pile. And I got back my bag. Can you imagine? You'd never believe that, it was like finding a needle in a haystack.

John: Yea. That's great.

Howard: And after that, after the Battle of the Bulge, we were in Luxembourg, and spent some time, and we replenished a lot of our losses. We organized and got ready for the big push into Germany. And then it was a matter of crossing the Rhine and getting into Germany. Now, there are a few things that ought to be off the record.

John: Okay. [Pause with recorder off.]

Howard: Now we got to another situation that we were trying to cross the Saar River, a tributary of the Rhine, and we had the pontoons. And two of them were knocked out by the Germans. And the third one a plane came in, and I just happened to be right in the ring mount of the half-track. He came in and I knew how to operate that gun, because I knew that if I was a soldier, I would have to act as one. And there were probably a lot of my buddies that would never have had it, taken that plane down. But what happened, I opened fire and I took the plane down. And what bothered me so badly was that when the plane crashed, it hit one of the buildings and killed everybody in it.

John: Oh, that was bad.

Howard: That is war. You know, it took me a long time. That is one thing, you know, when soldiers are involved. It is another thing when civilians are involved. And I think about that war in Iraq, and I am a big critic. I tell you. But, in fact, nine people perished in that building, far as I could find out. Then, well, to go on, it wasn't really dangerous thing as far as I was concerned at that time. But then when we went further, when we got closer to the Rhine, there, the shelling that took place from the Germans was terrible. We didn't have, well, the weather was so bad that we didn't have any air cover. When we didn't have air cover, we had problems. I

don't care what anybody says, I know we had problems when we didn't have air cover. We didn't in this instance. And I took refuge in the basement of a bombed out, shelled out building, and I looked out of that basement window and that field right next to us was absolutely strewn with American dead. We had an officer there, a Doctor Giovalle [?] that was there and if I could shake somebody's hand, I tell you, he was a hero.

John: Say it again.

Howard: Giovalle. I don't know how the word is spelled. An Italian. And I know not too many years ago, he lived out west, he survived that. That field was just intense shelling. We had so many. He was there, taking care of this one, taking care of this one, that was obliterated by shell fire. Then we had a guy come at another instance, we had one of the guys come with a motor cycle down the road and he popped right in the basement, right with all that shell firing, didn't get hit. Took refuge right next to me, looking out the same window that I was, and he was telling me about how many Germans he had shot down with his machine gun on a little stream just a little way from us. He got out of that building, hopped on that cycle and got hit by a shell.

John: Oh, wow.

Howard: Right beside the building. And I mean, that was one of the things that happened. They were, I mean, you missed being hit by inches. There were many times this day we were strafed by German aircraft but there were times.

[End of Side A of Tape 1.]

John: Okay, you were talking about a German plane coming in.

Howard: Yea. Once I only had enough time to jump out of the Jeep, you know. I jumped out of the Jeep and hit the ground. The best you can do is get flat on the ground.

John: Right.

Howard: Right next to the blacktop, I was probably only inches away from that blacktop, when he opened fire, each shell hit just like a sewing machine, and missed me by only inches. But those are incidences that happened many different ways. I was tremendously fortunate. The only injuries that I had was from crawling on my hands and knees where my arm had gone right through the skin. And, but anyway, from that, after this incident of shelling, we ran into bad weather and we had to, I say, retreat. But they called it something else.

John: Sure. Sure.

Howard: We took refuge in a French farm. Many of the farms in those areas, you know, were tiny little plots, but this one was a big one. And the buildings were in a circle. A barn where the cattle were was on one end and at another end was the granary, and then there was servants' buildings and the owner's building. And it was all built in a circle, and in the center had a big water trough in it to feed the cattle. Well, we took refuge there and there was a forest right beyond there, and we had two tanks that were firing into that forest, where the Germans were, and I thought at that time, it was kind of a dumb idea, because of all those, they used canister shots. And most of that hit the trees rather than do any damage. But, anyway, the company ahead of us, from what I was told, was wiped out.

John: Oh, wow.

Howard: Except for two men, and it was me and my buddy that took care of those two men. Right behind what I illustrated, where the granary was, one of them had his arm shot off. The other one was completely shell shocked, completely useless. In fact, we dragged them into that granary area and we covered them with blankets. We had accumulated a lot of blankets that were picked up as we went along. And the next morning, we only had one option, and that was to try to get out of there. And we did, and we were lucky, because it was so foggy, nobody could see us as we were going. So we left these two guys and the French were in that granary, they weren't in their building, they were in the granary because the granary was on two levels. There was a lower level that was, I don't know why it was built that way. That's where they were, they were all saying prayers. They weren't helping us but they were saying prayers. But, anyway, the next morning we got out of there, got out of trouble. And after that, took a while for us, and the weather cleared, and we got the opportunity to cross the Rhine. And when we got to a town by the name of, I can't think of the name of the town. Anyway, there was a concentration camp to the south of that, just a little ways. And when we got to that town, after we took it and kind of cleared it up, everybody went in a truck to the concentration camp to view it. I didn't. I felt that somebody had to take care of the vehicle and machine gun, and I did. And a plane came over, and I started firing on it, and the gun got caught, and I fell down and hit my butt on the ground. But I had a back problem for a long time along with that. I am telling you. Well, after that, there were a lot of little incidents, you know, things that happened. And I took care of a lot of German prisoners of war. It was my job to line them up and take their arms. I never had any trouble with any of them. Those that I knew, I really, I gave them a command and they would obey.

John: You could speak German?

Howard: Yea. And for that reason I had done. But, then, after that, they were picked up and taken to the rear and God only knows where they ended up. But when they were first captured, they knew they answered to me. And I spoke to some of them, and some of them said there was someone that said, "Well, I'm glad that is over with." And there were others, one instance we tied him down on a stake. A very, very abusive. And I tried to talk to him. And I treated him, I always thought I treated anybody and everybody, prisoner of war, or what have you, in a good manner.

John: Sure. Sure.

Howard: But as I did talk to him, he spit in my face and then I just left him alone. But then after the war ended, we ended up in Czechoslovakia. And the war was over, and we had a lot of little instances, and the thing about them, we became kind of bitter by that time. It required, a buddy and I were laying on the ground with a little stream there, you know, and the war was over. And a German guy came out of the bushes and took a shot. And he missed me. I pulled my, I always kept an automatic in my back pocket because you couldn't even, I felt I couldn't even trust the Czechs. And I pulled out my gun, and my buddy was right next to me, and pulls the gun out of my hand. He fired it but he never hit anything. And that was one incident. The war was over. Then I went to the town. We were right outside of a village there. And I hadn't been in there before. And there was a shoe repair store managed by a German. And I had one of my boots torn. So I thought I would go in and have it fixed. We had one guy standing on both sides of the door and telling me not to go in there. Me, I kind of said, "Well, you go to hell." And I walked right in. And then I left my boot there and I came back out, and there was really a big guy, and he comes running towards me. And he was really going to do me in. Well, I pulled out my automatic from my back pocket. He stopped. I don't know what else I can say there. So many different things happened.

John: You were with the 4th Armored all the way through?

Howard: Yea.

John: After the war, Howard, did you guys ever get together? Reunions?

Howard: I belong to the Regional 4th Armored Division Association, and the National. We have gone to both. Oftentimes, we missed a get-together but many times. I have a whole bunch of stuff here.

John: Oh, yea.

Howard: Now, this is five, five campaign battle stars.

John: Oh, yea.

Howard: This picture, my wife.

John: Yes, very lovely.

Howard: That was in that musette bag.

John: Oh, that you lost, and got back?

Howard: Yea. And it was riddled with shrapnel, that had holes all over it, but this never got hit.

John: That is fantastic.

Howard: Isn't that something?

John: That's great.

Howard: It's just a matter of...

John: Well, let me ask you another question. The winter of 1944-1945 was the coldest on record in Europe. You were out of doors in that, moving and fighting in that. What was it like?

Howard: I'll tell you, I've seen guys that had their feet wrapped in rags. I don't know where they found the rags. That big, with frozen feet. And we got into one town in Belgium that, it was so cold. I was on guard duty. That was the only time I was on guard duty. I was never on guard duty because I always was on special duty. But after I was relieved from that, then I did have guard duty. And it was so cold. Imagine standing out there for three hours, holding a rifle. But we were in that town, and this is where I was on guard duty. Patton comes through that town, and he was sitting way in back of the Jeep. He had that seat built up, the seat built up, with his white handled revolvers sticking up. That is the only time I saw him. But we got in that town and not only did you freeze your feet but you didn't have anything to eat.

John: Okay.

Howard: And in that particular town, I got in a building. They were kind of shot-out. I was in the kitchen. I looked out of the kitchen window, and there was a chicken. I took my carbine and I shot that chicken.

John: German chicken.

Howard: Yea. I shot the chicken, and Keats, the guy that drove the Jeep for our unit, he fixed up that chicken. And we had chicken. Then there were no cattle there but there was a bull there. And the guy said, came to me and asked me, "If you take a .45 and shoot that bull in the head, will that kill him?" I said, "It sure will!" They shot the bull, and they butchered that bull. That wasn't the first time that I had meat that was thrown on the ground. I know one time they threw a quarter of beef on the ground and they took their trench knives and carved a piece off of it, and then they fried it on the Coleman stove. You know, a Coleman stove doesn't get too hot. So, it was about the same as the shoe leather on my shoes. No way you could bite a piece out of it. But here are some pictures.

John: Oh, yea.

Howard: This guy here used to come and visit me all the time. He lived in New Hampshire. He died. He was a pilot in the war, but he never joined the Air Force. He was in the Armored Corps. Here is more pictures, here, and there. Another one. And that is me.

John: That goes back, doesn't it? Oh, that is great.

Howard: These pictures here, in Landshut, that is where I ended up.

John: Where?

Howard: Landshut, Germany. Here is another story. This young guy. I was talking about being in a rest area a little way away from Nancy for two weeks. I went into the town by myself. No, I had another guy with me. And we were looking for something to eat. Restaurant, or a grocery. We went in there and I stood there and I was wearing an automatic on one side and my trench knife, and the this guy here grabbed a hold of my pants and he started pulling on me in French. And I wasn't good on French. I could say a few words, monsieur and what have you.

John: Yea, the basics.

Howard: But what he wanted us to do was to come with him and they were going to fix a meal for us. But, you know, you are always kind of afraid to do that since the front line was only about five or ten miles from where we were. And you couldn't really trust anybody. But we did, anyway. We went with him. And these people fixed steak for us. And wine, that they hid from the Germans. And that is the guy that pulled on my pants and tried to tell me. I finally got the message.

John: That's great.

Howard: And they were going to try to get to the United States. They wanted to leave France and come to the United States. Here is another picture of him. That is out in California, in the desert. And here, that is Norman Bishop. He was quite a guy. You know, he went to the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge in St. Louis, and he wanted me to join him, but I had a bunch of other work to do, and I didn't do it. And I regretted it, ever since. And this is the tank, before I was transferred to ordnance.

John: Oh, yea. Okay. Now, that is not a Sherman.

Howard: Well, that is an early one. When I took, I mentioned that I took tank mechanics in school, and they had radial engines in tanks at that time.

John: Oh.

Howard: And it didn't take long until they changed that. And they had a 76 millimeter gun that was absolutely no good. They replaced them with a 76 high velocity weapon later that was not comparable to a German 88, but it was better than what was original. Here is another picture. I took a lot of something. I got them.

John: Oh, yea.

Howard: Another one, here.

John: Oh, yea.

Howard: There. This is my brother. He [indecipherable] too.

John: Oh, yea. Oh, yea.

Howard: Here are a couple more. I took a lot later. That's a German 88.

John: That's an 88, oh yea.

Howard: A heck of a weapon. I thought some of our artillery, one in particular, one of our tanks. You know, how heavy that turret was. Five or six inches, on each side. An 88 hit that with an armor piercing shell, it went through one side and came out the other side.

John: Very high velocity.

Howard: Yea.

John: Wow.

Howard: When they fired on us, with those 88s, and they used canister shells, and the others that detonated on the branches of the trees, and they spread the shrapnel out all over the place. That is where I lost my hearing.

John: Yea.

Howard: I totally lost my hearing on this ear, because this side I had down all the time, so it was kind of protected. Well, this is an old picture, right after I got home.

John: Oh, yea. The old juke box, in the back.

Howard: That was in Milwaukee, 27th Street. And this is down in Biloxi, Mississippi. Before the war.

John: Okay. Ah, let me ask you a question. Why did you volunteer for the Rangers?

Howard: Oh, well, here was the reason. If you went to the Rangers and the landing was completed, you went home.

John: Oh.

Howard: You were replaced by regular troops, so you were done.

John: Okay.

Howard: And that is, we knew that before we volunteered.

John: Okay. Well, let me ask you another question, just going back some. Do you remember what you were doing on Pearl Harbor Day? Do you remember that?

Howard: Yea. I was at home on the farm, and we had a radio on the table. It was powered by wind chargers. Yea. Battery. We didn't have electricity. And the announcement over the radio. And you know, before the war, there were a lot of people that didn't know what was going on in Europe, you know. The Nazi regime, and all of that.

John: Sure. Sure.

Howard: I wasn't one of those guys. I knew exactly where Poland was, where Austria was,

Czechoslovakia was, and where Holland was, and Belgium, and France. I knew my geography. And I also knew what was taking place. But I don't believe it was any benefit to me, in any way. But, the attitude that I had when I was in the service, or when I was in combat. Like I mentioned when we went across the Brest peninsula, I thought, this war, how in the world could the Germans possibly win? That is the way I looked at it. With three fronts against them at that time. And not even that, even before that, before they had invaded Poland and Austria and Czechoslovakia, France, I always thought any one of these times they are going to be ridden and it's going to be over. It didn't really turn out. I had that idea even when I was in combat, all the way across most of France, but we reached a certain point in Germany when I changed my mind about that. In fact, my view was that I would never get out of this. I never expected to get home alive. Because we had so many incidents that were so, you know, close calls. And that is just how I felt. Not only that, but then, and you find that now with the guys in Iraq, they become bitter, you know. And that is bad.

John: Well, this is a remarkable story. I write, and a very good friend of mine, Stephen Ambrose, just died. Stephen wrote a lot on World War II. I was with him once, and he was talking to a bunch of World War II veterans, and the conversation had kind of gone along the lines of we didn't really do an awful lot. And Ambrose said, "You men were giants!" And they backed up. And he said, "You went out and saved this world!" And then they just sat back a little bit and started thinking, you know, we did. You had a very rough time. A lot of fellows were in a supply depot in Missouri during the war but still everybody did their part and as he said, you guys were giants. You were, you saved the world. Remarkable story.

Howard: Well, I'll tell you, when you are talking about guys in combat, during the war, there is all kinds of people, that react differently and do things differently. We had one guy in our company, and his name was Tiebalt.

John: His name was what?

Howard: Tiebalt. He always was slow. From kind of slow mentally. And when we were over in Europe, he was discharged with a Section 8. And we had another guy like that.

[End of Side B of Tape 1.]

John: Okay, this is the beginning of Tape 2.

Howard: Well, I kind of get things all mixed up.

John: That's okay.

Howard: The captain we had, that was Beck was his name. Tall, slender, good looking guy. He just passed away about a year, year and a half or so, two years ago. He was at the 4th Armored convention. He had open heart surgery before that, a little while before that, and he went to that convention and all of a sudden he got sick and had another heart attack, and he died. I never expected that because he looked years younger than what he was. But, anyway, we got to this town I was talking about where Hodge shot himself. When we got in there, a German guy, elderly man, not too long, knifed this native. We took him in and I happened to be at the C. P. [command post] and Captain Beck called me in and he said, "Take him to headquarters." And he gave me a driver and the driver was Passulo [?]. He was, I am backtracking. When I was in California, I was in a tent with a bunch of guys. Two of them were taken out of penitentiaries in Florida, that were in my tent. He was one of them. So he was my driver. So we went down the road with this guy and a little way down the road, I told him to pull over because I didn't know where the headquarters is, and there was another unit bivouacked along side of the road, and it was up a little bit of a hill. I walked up the hill and I looked back, and there this guy got out of the Jeep and he made believe he was going to take a leak. And I watched that for a moment and then all of a sudden he made a run for it. He ran across the road. I pulled my pistol. I was going to fire a shot over his head. But the driver took his carbine and nailed him right in the back. Dead as a door knob. I went down that road, I think it was a week and a half or so later, well as I can remember, and he was still laying in the same place. His hat was about six feet in front of him. Nobody picked him up.

John: Wow. Tremendous story. I need to get a release from you. This, as I said, allows students and that to have access to this. Is this your address? Then I can just use this for the address.

Howard: That is my home address.

John: Sure.

Howard: We have lived there for forty years.

John: Oh, that is great.

Howard: We have one picture here that shows part of it.

John: I am going to shut this off.

[End of Interview.]