

He said we're going to talk back about what it was after the war, your job?

After the war?

Yeah, OK.

Well, I might say a little bit more about the war and the Lost Battalion in Vosges Mountains, a number of us received a Bronze Star for our work there. And I also received a Croix de Guerre from the French army, the French. I didn't receive the medal until after I got back in civilian life. But I received it. It's a large medal with a cross and a star in the center of it. And it's equivalent to our Silver Star. But I was quite proud of that medal.

You still have that?

Yes.

Yes, I have it. My daughter fixed a frame for all my medals. And I have it at home.

Was there ever any question about the loyalty of the men that served with you?

Not at all. Not even when they were in camp before we left for Europe, and definitely not after that. We had a little misunderstanding with one of our officers. He ordered the men, one of our fort observers to do something they shouldn't have done. And there was a-- they were enforcing it. But he left the unit. And so, but as far as the loyalty of the men, there wasn't no doubt whatsoever. In fact they went overboard, I think, trying to prove themselves with what they were trying to accomplish.

OK. Anything else that you think--

Well, now after I'd done quite a bit of consulting work along the coast for myself, but in '63, I took a job with the Department of Interior with the government. And we moved back to Oklahoma with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It looked after the affairs of those where I was sent to, in the Muskogee region, looked after the five tribes, which were made up of the Cherokee, and Choctaw, and the Seminole, and the Creek. And they were from the Trail of Tears from Georgia. They moved back in the 1800s there to the Indian territory in Oklahoma.

See Oklahoma was all Indian territory back before the government opened it up in 1889 when my grandfather made the run. Well prior to that, it was all Indian land. But the five civilized tribes, rather than have tribal reservations, well there was one tribe, the Osage tribes in Oklahoma. They kept their tribe as a reservation, as a whole. But they were the only ones in Oklahoma. The rest of them were given allotments, 160 acres or so, different allotments according to the amount of blood they were and so forth of the Indian blood.

You're part Indian yourself?

Yes, I'm part Cherokee. My mother's side of the family was Cherokee. And my daughter's husband, my son-in-law is Indian. He's a Cherokee Indian also. And he's probably almost half-blooded. His mother is full-blooded Indian on his side of the family. And my grandchildren are on the road where they can get protection for health reasons and things like that. And I suppose I could, if I would trace my ancestry back far enough.

But I'm unable to trace it. Back then, it was hard to trace back, your ancestries. My grandmother and grandfather both had left home when they was right young. My grandfather Taylor had made the old Chisholm Trail, running cattle from Abilene, Texas, to Abilene, Kansas. And when I was right young, he would tell me the stories of meeting up with the Indians and all that kind of things. And he was quite a character.

But after I was with the bureau there, in their headquarters in Muskogee for about three years, and doing oil and gas work, and leasing the Indian land. And we took care of the leasing and the selling of the land to protect the Indians'

rights. Because the courts and everything was more or less in favor of the white man who would buy them out. And a lot of the Indians were not really educated enough to protect their own rights. And so that's the reason the government had stepped in and formed this Bureau of Indian Affairs to take care of their rights.

And it was a good thing because otherwise they'd lost a lot. And some of them that had kept their-- we insisted that they keep half their mineral rights. And in Oklahoma, there was a lot of oil discovered in the early '20s and '30s, and then on up to at the present time. And so a good many of the Indians were helped quite a bit from holding onto their land, especially the mineral part.

A lot of times they would sell the surface. And they would sell all the minerals, if we had let them. But we wouldn't let them sell them, except half of them. Sometimes we wouldn't let them sell any of it. But it depended on how good it might be. And I was transferred over to the Oklahoma City area where I still am in '66.

And then I looked after-- I was with the Geological Survey which was doing the same type of work. We looked after Indian land as well as federal land that we needed to supervise. And I've done that till '74. And I retired in '74. So since then, we've been traveling a good bit, and enjoying the retirement.

You do a lot of traveling.

But I prior to that, while I was still on the Gulf Coast around '54, when I got out of the reserve, I had this ailment I had there in Naples come back on me. And I had a bad operation, emergency operation over in Louisiana. I was over there on the well and I got sick, and started hemorrhaging blood. And they rushed me to the hospital. And I guess they thought they'd going to lose me. But I had two good surgeons. One was a Frenchman and one was an Italian that operated on me.

And they went in my stomach and they found some ulcers, but they couldn't stop the bleeding. And they had to go up to my esophagus, and I had busted in my esophagus. And they figured it was an old break that I had got over there in Italy.

Were you shot in Italy?

I wasn't shot. I was just taken ill, and hemorrhaged and bled over there. And I just convalesced over there in that hospital there really. But these doctors that operated on me in '54, they seem to think that it was from this same break, same thing. And so after I got out of that hospital in Louisiana in '54, in '61, I was rushed to the hospital in the VA hospital in Houston. And they wanted to operate on me again. But I didn't. The wife didn't want me to. So we got out of that operation.

And then I been in another VA hospital back in Oklahoma a time or two, but overall I've been fairly lucky that I've done as good as I have.

Well, you've done beautifully. There are a few other questions that several people would like to ask. And other than that--

I'd be glad to--

--you've done a beautiful job today.

Well, thank you.

You were wonderful.

Don, I just wanted to go back to the question about--

You can sit back. Andy will--

I want to ask you, go back to Judy's question about whether there was any question about the loyalty of your men. For the purposes of this film, we need you to say--

Say there was no question in my mind there was loyalty.

Well, there wasn't.

There never was--

You need to say that. Because, you said yeah, no there wasn't. That's all you said. We need to have you say the whole statement.

In other words, you need to incorporate Judy's question. In other words, we need you to say there was never any question in my mind.

Well there wasn't never a question in my mind. Now, when we were first formed in Hattiesburg, when the unit was originally formed, there was some question. That is there was some censoring done in the combat team as a whole on the personnel.

What kind of censoring?

Well they censored some mail, and also checked individually, asking people questions about it.

Which people?

And they were a very small number that were sent from our camp that left our organization in the early months of our unit. But as far as I'm concerned, there never was any question in my mind about them. And I was the S2 of the battalion on the staff. And I had quite a bit to do with the checking of the personnel. And I will definitely say that they were very loyal. Well, it goes to show that they're loyal if they volunteered in the first place for that type of thing.

And they've been showing a good example from the 100th battalion which when it had gone in earlier, I think maybe in '42, had gone in and fought in Africa and lower Italy, before we got there. And they really had shown their loyalty, the 100th battalion. And after they became part of our regimental combat team, well they still were very good.

Yeah, they were the best soldiers I've ever been up with. I'll put that up against any of them.

Thank you so much, Captain Taylor. I thought maybe--

I just had one more question, Judy.

I don't recall. This is many months ago but Don Shimazu was telling us about the capture of the general.

Oh, he already--

Oh, he already did?

Well, that was a different-- I think that was a different. That might have been a different general. The one Don was talking about I think was right at the end of the war. And it was down there close to Berchtesgarden on our way to Berchtesgarden, is when he found that one. Now, I don't know too much about that capture of that one, that general. But the one I had referred to later was after we were in occupation.

But we did run on to a lot of German soldiers, both SS and Wehrmacht, right at the end of the war on our way to Berchtesgarden there. And best I can recall, it was about two weeks before we really knew the war was over. Now, the war was actually over I think around May the 5th, the early part of May. But we were still moving and the Germans

were surrendering and moving back, and passing us. But as far as we had never received orders to stop. And that's when we came upon this general that Don was speaking about.

Do you want to tell us a little about that general? We didn't get that on tape.

Well, I don't know that much about it. Don knows more about that than I do. Because I don't recall it, that much about it.

OK.

I don't know if Judy's asked you this question. But if there is one instance that stands out in your mind about the 522nd, if you could you tell us about that.

Yeah, well I'll have to say that was in the Vosges Mountains when we were fighting.

Could you say, if there's one thing that stands out in my mind is--

One thing that certainly stands out in my mind that about the 522nd in combat was our campaign in the Vosges Mountains, when we were called on to rescue that Lost Battalion of the 36th Division, Texas 36th Division. And that was one of the hardest campaigns that we were in battles that we had during our time. Now the 100th battalion had had maybe worst conditions at Anzio and in Italy before they joined us.

But as far as our unit as a whole was concerned, both the 442nd and the 522nd was in the Vosges Mountains, there in the French sector. And the Germans were holding out there along that line before they crossed the Rhine. And they knew that once we got to the Rhine and got them whipped on the other side of the Rhine, well, there wasn't no stopping. Because they didn't have any defenses built up that they could hold. And that's why it became a fluent affair. And we just moved as fast as we could move.

Sometimes, we'd just stay in our vehicles. I mean we wouldn't hardly set up to do any firing at all, because we didn't have anything to fire on. And that 101st division that we were following in Germany, they were called the Battling Bastards of Bastogne. They had got caught in that Bulge, in France. And they were completely cut off at one time. And you probably read or heard about them. And they were a cocky outfit.

So when we got with them, when we crossed the Rhine, well they were still pretty cocky and really wanting to go and get the war over with. So other than that in the Vosges Mountains, well I suppose that one thing that brings out in my mind besides the Dachau liberation, would be along the Rhine River there at Heidelberg and Mannheim, when we'd done all the firing across the Rhine River.

Of course, we had some pretty good battles in the first six months we were in combat in Italy. And I recall one time I don't know whether-- we were told in training to always dig in on positions. And when we got over there the first time we tried to dig in the rock and everything, and we had the dynamite. And I told the colonel that we couldn't do that. He didn't want to get in buildings. But I told him, well, we tried to find wine cellars or some kind of thing to get in. So that's what we done from then on.

But the campaign around Leghorn along the coast up along the Arno River, it was a pretty big battle of taking Pisa and Leghorn. And when we got there and in position, we put our 105s, which was close support artillery. We had them behind some of the 8-inch and the bigger guns, and the 155 guns. Well that was one time we were farther away from the enemy than they were. But that was a kind of a plain there about three miles between where we were in and Pisa.

And I got out in the open there about a mile from there. And as far as I got on observation, and I would call back and then we were called to go over to Florence. And we went over there along the river in the mountains at night, blackout. And on these blackout trips, all we had was a little spotlight on a little strip on the vehicles, the vehicle behind us. And I would normally in the first vehicle.

And on that trip I remember, I don't know who was driving. But we upset. We didn't see where we were going. And we

upset on the mountainside. And we turned our Jeep over. And it landed down the mountainside the other way. And I went down a little bit and hung on to a tree. And got up and we left the Jeep. I believe the driver might have stayed with it. But I got in the command car with the colonel with the staff car, and we went on.

But there was quite a few incidents like that, the things that happened.

Captain Taylor, was there any particular instance or thought that really stands out in your mind, or feeling that you had about the liberation of Dachau when you saw those prisoners?

Well, yes. It brought to mind there was an awful atrocities of way to treat people. I mean like I said, I had heard of things like that before. But I never realized that they had a camp and death camps like that, and treated people that bad, that cruel. I mean that was just uncalled for, for that type of treatment of people. They just starved them to death, and then gassed them, and cremated them.

Thank you so much, Captain Taylor. That was really wonderful.

Well, thank you.

Beautiful.

I hope--

Thank you so much. That was beautiful. Just probably-- wow. Now that was-- we'll take it.

Yeah that was wonderful. Did you enjoy that?

I did.

You see?

Judy, did you want to tape the--

Well, I did. But now we-- they have to go to the dinner.

[AUDIO OUT]

OK, you can start.

All right, after we had come through part of Germany here, we came up on the Rhine River at the town of Worms, which is right here. It's northwest of Heidelberg, Mannheim and Heidelberg. And we done quite a bit of firing, of course, across the Rhine there, as I have stated before. And we took Mannheim and Heidelberg. And then we headed in a southeast direction through here, coming down to Augsburg and into Dachau and Munich.

And then after we had left Munich, we went south down about, oh about 50, 60 kilometer to Bad Tolz and Waakirchen, where we found the prisoners from Dachau that had been left when the SS had to move on down to Berchtesgarden.

Now Berchtesgarden was on down here, is south of here, of the map and in Austria. And it was Hitler's hideout. And I visited that Eagle's Nest right after the war. And our Air Corps had just flattened everything on the surface. But his tunnel was still there where his hideout was in that tunnel in the mountain. And those have been over there since then have seen that area. And after the war, right after the war, I visited from Berchtesgarden, I went over to Salzburg in Austria, and then on over to Linz. Let's see where Linz--

Well, I can't even find Salzburg. We can pretty well understand where that is. This is [PLACE NAME]. Where I traveled is from over here from Berchtesgarden, from Berchtesgarden I went to Salzburg. And we have traveled that

route since the war. I was over there, and we went the same route that we had traveled during the war. And then from there, at that time I went on this Audubon to Linz, on the Danube.

And I had a cousin that was in the infantry there. And I looked him up. And right across, he had the job of protecting the border from the Russians. And across the river here at Vienna and at Linz was the Russian sector. And the Russians were very strict there. They patrolled the area with their rifles and they wouldn't let any of our troops over there in that part of the country after the war. They were very strict.

Maybe we can look a little bit at the pictures that you have. Who is that now?

That's our survey crew, recon boys, Don Shimazu with the Lieutenant Langsdorf. He was head of the survey boys directly. They were directly under him. And I was in charge of them. And here's a-- is that all right there?

Yes.

This is a picture of I think it's battery C, some of the boys and battery C unit, battery. And this is a picture of a gun crew.

Let me get the battery C.

OK.

OK. And this is a picture of a gun crew and the guns. I'm not sure what battery that was.

And you took all of those?

Yes, I've taken these. And this is a picture of a gun by a building at a high elevation. You can see the elevation of the barrel was at the highest point. That's a high angle. Here's another one. This may have been the same building. I'm not sure. But this is another picture of a building with a high angle fire.

Is this where you got the name high angle?

Yeah. That's right.

Would you talk about what high angle is? This is the first I realized that call your [INAUDIBLE] at a high angle.

Yeah. They got that from the angle of elevation of our guns. This is a tent in the snow, showing the condition of the area in the snow. And here's--

You may think that's pretty large. But that doesn't hold too many men. This is a picture of the mountains, probably the Maritime Alps, or in the Vosges Mountains. And it shows the snow on the ground, and shows the Jeep stuck.

Then I have a picture here that's back in Italy. At Leghorn, before we went into combat along the coast line. A group of us, this is a group of the officers, but a group of the service men too. We would dig up the mines, mines in the water.

Those are mines?

These are mines here.

Well, see you got a picture over there.

Yeah, this is the same.

Actually you should be looking at it, so you can frame it right?

Yeah that's-- and then I have another picture here of the survey crew, Don Shimazu, he got into all kinds of pictures.

And here's a picture of Chaplain Yamada.

Is he still alive?

No ma'am. He passed away several years ago. When we were here in '72, he was too sick to see me. But he got me in touch with the other men of the unit. He was a good soldier as well as a good chaplain and a good person.

I have here a picture of them getting a haircut, some of the boys. I call them boys, they were older than me. But--

They call each other boys.

They were men. And here's another picture of our camouflage around the gun. See that, the gun? See, they camouflage the guns so the airplanes couldn't see them, or they couldn't spot them from the air. Here's a picture of at the mess. I think they're eating here.

This is a picture of my friend, Captain Kimura of the medics. He and I and Captain Johnson of battery B run around quite a bit together. What's his name? That's Captain Kimura.

Is he still alive?

I don't know. I've never been able to-- he's on the mainland, but in Los Angeles in some area, but I'm not sure whether he's still living or not.

This is a picture of some citation that we got.

Not the parking kind.

No. And here here's one, little nicer buildings down at the Nice when we were in the Maritime Alps. We would come back two or three days out of the week from the snow hip deep back down there where they would be swimming in the beach around Nice. And it was very warm and they had beautiful houses. And we took over some of the places, the big parcels. We had a service battery, the whole battery 160 or 120 or so men, we had them in one house, one yard.

One home? Whose home?

Yeah.

[BACKGROUND CHATTER]

I have a lot more pictures of mountains and so forth. I don't know what that picture over there. This might be of interest. This is a cut of air photos. And these photos, this photo maps is a map we used to locate the enemy and locate the places where we might occupy.

Oh, so you used this during the war.

We used the air photos and topographic maps altogether. That was the means that we had of doing our recon.

There is something that's circled here. What is that circled?

I'm not sure just what that is. It's some type of a building. I really don't recall what I circled that for. Here's another place down there in Nice where we had another citation.

OK, hold on. Let me get that citation.

This is a picture of-- the best I can tell this is a minefield in the background, and we had a picture taken of that. I believe that fencing in the background, there is possibly could be a minefield. Now some of the minefields we went through, they still-- we went through them so quick there in Italy, that they still had their signs up, men and signs that they were mine signs. And we were in one I recall some of the recon boys, survey boys and myself--

Are you getting a little tired there, I think?

We, well no. I'm all right. We got in this minefield. The sign was still up. But they started firing on us. They started shelling us. And we had to hop around them in the minefield. And the shells were coming in on us and it was quite an ordeal to getting out of there.

Trying to play hopscotch.

And I had some pictures here.

Who is that in the picture right there?

Here? That is Captain Johnson of battery B. He was a good friend of Captain Kimura and myself.

Is he the one whose wife was the nurse?

Yes.

And he's the one that died of polio just after the war. He was 29 when he died of polio. And he was going to make a career out of it. He was quite an athlete in Illinois. He went to University of Illinois. And he starred in basketball, I think, and football. He was quite an athlete.

Who are these?

This was an early picture at Camp Shelby. And it shows our officers. At that time now our colonel, this is Colonel Baya Harrison, Colonel Harrison, and right next was Major Wright. Now our S-3 at that time was Major Moye. There was one colonel, and two majors. And Major Moye is not here. I don't know why he's not in this picture. And the rest of us here were captains.

Can you point yourself out?

Well, that's my picture right there. That's Captain Taylor, just a few years ago.

And this is-- yeah, just a few. And this is Captain Kimura here. And I think this was Captain Johnson, and this was Captain James, that was the headquarters commander during the war. And he was a regular army sergeant and became an officer before he came to our unit. He was a good soldier.

I wanted to ask you too about before, because this time is running out. We wanted to say a few things about your family.

Yes, I did. When I came back from the service, of course, I never talked about anything about the war. And I would have, you might say nightmares and pretty bad thoughts about the war. I wouldn't talk about it. I couldn't go to any war movie or listen to anything about the war. And loud noises bothered me. Firecrackers even bother me. And the wife all through that had to raise the children and she's the one that suffered through all the-- and I have to give her a lot of credit for what she'd done after the war was over.

Thank you so much. I know your wife wanted us to get that on as well.