

FILENAME: T-MarshallBurnett-2012-02-23

ORIGINAL FILENAME: T-Marshall Burnett-02-23-12-Newland Zach-1003-1017

INTERVIEWEE(S): Burnett Marshall (BM), Al Pearce (AP), Joan Marshall Eads (JME)

DATE INTERVIEWED: Thursday, February 23, 2012

WHERE INTERVIEWED: Hotel Floyd, Floyd, Virginia

INTERVIEWER: Zachary Newland (ZN), Melinda Wagner (MW)

TRANSCRIBERS: Various RU mentors and FCHS students

TRACKS: 1003 - 1017

AUDIO TOTAL LENGTH: 65:45 minutes

[selected excerpts from 18 page transcript]

ZN: I know you served a lot of time in Europe. Are there any interesting stories you have about Europe?

BM: Well, let's see. We covered England, France, Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, Germany, and Austria. In Austria we went up there for occupational duties, and we were scheduled to go to the Pacific and we were coming out of Germany and France to get ready to get to the Pacific, and got word that the war ended in the Pacific. So we got on down to France and stayed a little while, to be in Vienna, Austria, for occupational duties so we spent the last winter up there.

FILE/TRACK: 1009 4:52

ZN: Is there anything you would like to tell us? Any more things you would like to tell us?

MW: They are still scanning those, I guess. I'm wondering if maybe your daughter knew some stories that you had told over the years that we haven't heard yet. Is there anything that you can think of that Mr. Marshall?

JME: About Floyd County or about the war?

MW: Either way.

JME: Well, I just think it was interesting when he was growing up he and his brothers and friends, the fun they had. But during the war there was, like the thing that I thought was real interesting, was the dragon teeth that you were telling about that you had a picture of.

BM: Yes, it was a Seigfried Line. Have you ever heard of that?

ZN: No.

BM: On the west side of Germany, they had what you call a Seigfried Line. They had the concrete, and I have a picture of it, I'll show you. The concrete was in the ground so solid so that you couldn't push them over. They staggered in a row. That Seigfried Line, I'm not sure, but I think it ran for about 100 miles. All the way down to the west part of Germany, just a little inside the border. Then alongside of it, all these dragon teeth, they called them dragon teeth. [Dragon's Teeth] There was a ditch, pretty deep, so if a tank did manage to get through, they would hit that ditch you couldn't cross it, they'd fall in, with the tank. Isn't that right interesting?

-----

ZN: Is there any more interesting?

JME: The bridges, there is the map in the book that we brought that shows the bridges that they built. That was one of the main [jobs].

BM: I got another picture right here that you have probably never seen either. In Vienna, right in the heart of the city, the Austrian Army had some barracks, they had this whole block right in the center of town, and when the Germans took over they built a wall around the rest of it, the whole block where you couldn't see in from the street. There was only two entrances, there was a front entrance and a back entrance. In the back of these barracks there, they had this big bunker, it was round, and it was pretty high. And they said that they could house 10,000 troops in this one bunker. They had winding stairs going up, and you get on top of it you could see all around the whole city, but there was not one place from the street that you could see that bunker.

ZN: That's pretty interesting.

BM: Nowhere, not one place on the street, regardless of which way they run—you could not see that bunker.

ZN: Did you ever stay in one of the bunkers?

BM: No, no this wasn't one that you wanted to stay in. We would go up in there once and while, and go up to the top of it, and look around. I got pictures there sitting on top of it. And big guns on top of it. They had a lot of guns there.

FILE/TRACK: 1010 5:57

ZN: What was the main type of gun you carried during the war? What were you issued?

BM: I had a M-1 rifle.

ZN: Just a plain rifle?

BM: Yes, the officers and some of the First Sergeants, they carried a little smaller one, but we all had M-1's. The M-1 is a good rifle.

ZN: The war today, is there a difference on how they fight from back then?

BM: I think there is an altogether difference.

ZN: What do you think the biggest difference from back then to today in the war perspective?

BM: Well, they got different kind of machines and guns and everything now from what we had. We had a little carbine and that's what the officers carried, and we all troops had M-1s and of course we had machine guns. We had 30-caliber machine guns and 50-caliber.

ZN: It says here you were involved in a lot of river crossings.

BM: Yes.

ZN: How does that happen?

BM: Sometimes we had to build bridges before the infantry could get across and we had to build a bridge. The old river that was swifting and the Rhine, Rhine was a bigger one but it was smoother. I lost a good sergeant there, a sergeant in my platoon on the Ruhr River. He rescued two people the day before and then next day, he fell on the swift water and went down the river.

ZN: Anything else that you might remember there?

MW: I wanted to ask, when you met Dwight Eisenhower; do you remember what he said?

BM: Yeah, he said, "Where you from soldier?" I said, "Virginia," and he said, "Well, my brother was born in Virginia." So, he went on to tell me about that.

MW: Friendly little chat?

BM: Yeah, yeah, I enjoyed it.

MW: Was it just you and him?

BM: Well, it was in on a ship, on a hospital ship, but of course I had a box scattered around just me and him, about as close from me to Joan [Burnett's daughter in room] as anybody else.

MW: What about Clark? What was he like? [General Mark Clark]

BM: He was nice. He flew in from somewhere, and our company all went up this one building and he made a talk to us, and once the sergeants presented him with something, a plaque of some kind. Yeah, he was all right.

MW: Did you have any leaders you didn't really care for?

BM: No, not really.

MW: Everybody, you felt like everybody was pretty good.

BM: Yes, yes, we all felt like brothers. We had to work together, sleep together, and everything, so we had to get along.