

Men, HQ BTRY 194 FA GP #2 (Tape 4)

[Speaker 3]

Now this is Al Neering. I was born in Flint, Michigan on September 16, 1919. Grew up there, was raised there, and grew up there.

Ultimately it was inducted into the army from Flint and then of course went to Detroit. From Detroit where I spent probably what, one day I guess, went on to Camp Grand, Illinois. Was in Camp Grand probably a week, two weeks, and then took my basic training in Camp Roberts, California.

It was when the basic training was done and headed for Camp Claiborne, Louisiana is where we met Kenny Haig and a couple other guys was there and finally ended up at Camp Claiborne too. I was at the 185th regimental headquarters battery there at Camp Claiborne along with all the other National Guard guys that were there at the same time. After spending quite a bit of time at Claiborne, we were getting ready to go overseas and of course the entire regiment went to Fort Dix, New Jersey in preparation for embarking to go overseas.

It was about that time, as everyone probably knows, the army was streamlining itself and then we then left there and went back to Fort Bragg, North Carolina where we became the group headquarters on 94th Field Artillery. After a considerable length of time, additional training and acting as cadre for quite a while, we then went overseas and landed in Oran, went across Oran, across Morocco, was far over to Bizerte, went from there to Naples. Naples fought on up to Pisa, back down and over.

Some of us then went to, we all went to France. Of course some of us with the trucks went to Toulon, some went to Marseille. We all got together at Marseille and then went on up through all the rest of the campaign.

Finally was discharged in Salzburg, Austria on July the 4th, 1945. I went from Salzburg, Austria, and after the unit broke up there, to Compiègne, France, well through Munich, Compiègne, France, then finally to Camp Tophat at Brussels, was finally loaded on a victory ship with about 399 other people and headed for the states out of Antwerp, Belgium. Having left Antwerp, I of course went to the states where I was to be discharged.

I arrived at Newport News, Virginia and was taken from there to Indian Town Gap. I was in Indian Town Gap about, oh probably three or four days, at which time I was discharged. Now that was August the 8th in 1945.

Of course went home.

[Speaker 5]

Hi gang, this is Len Friedman, commonly known as Benny in the Army. I was born in Westview, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh, PA on February the 4th, 1916. I was inducted in the Army December the 2nd, 1941, five days before Pearl Harbor.

I was inducted at New Cumberland, Pennsylvania and was there for about seven days and then was sent to Fort Bragg for basic training on 155 howitzers. From basic training, I was

assigned to the 194th Group Headquarters after a length of time transferred to 194th Field Artillery Battalion. We left Fort Bragg and went to Fort Dix, and from Fort Dix we left Oran, went to Buzurti, up to Naples, to Casino, regrouped at Naples, and went to Anzio for three or four months.

While at Anzio, all during the day the Spitfires patrolled our area. Nothing happened while we were there until at night. The Spitfires left and that's when the Germans started.

They dropped anti-personnel bombs, threw everything at us that they possibly had, 88s, you name it. From Anzio, we fought our way into Pisa. From Pisa, we went to France, to Germany.

At the end of the war, we had landed at Oberammergau, Bavaria. At the end of our war, I had 87 points and was sent to Crouteau, France. While at Crouteau, we guarded 100,000 prisoners of war, waiting for a boat to come for our trip back to good old USA.

We finally come back on the Santa Rosa, and I was discharged at Fort Indiantown Gap. When we arrived at Indiantown, there were so many G.I.s there, they taught us to go home. Don't come back for 30 days.

After 30 days, we went back, and that's when they give me the Roger Duck. Amen.

[Speaker 10]

Leonard Friedman has since passed away since making this audio, as well as the next two men. Howard Rose and James Shoemaker. They have both passed away.

Howard Rose, Tucson, Arizona.

[Speaker 9]

I'm proud to be here as I can be, and if the creek, if the creek don't rise, I'll be here again next year. Thank you. This is Roger Boyko from Webster, Massachusetts.

This is my first time here, and believe me, it's a great, great feeling to see all the fellows again. I'm Bert Gibney from Denver, Ohio. I run a cheese store, and I would like to at this time to propose a toast.

Here's to those who wish us well, and all the rest can go to hell. Thank you.

[Speaker 2]

My name is Reinhard Tunn. I joined the 185th Field Artillery in 1937 in Davenport, Iowa, primarily to play baseball. My enlistment was up in September of 1940, but because the Selective Service Act was passed, I re-upped for another year to get my year in.

I went down to Camp Claiborne. We were federalized February 10, 1941. I went down to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, with 185th Headquarters Battery as a buck sergeant, at that time called the instrument sergeant.

In May of 1941, due to the inability of First Sergeant Crowley to continue his duties, he resigned and left home, and I was promoted to first sergeant. I remained with the 185th Field Artillery to Pearl Harbor when we were transferred to Fort Dix, New Jersey. The 34th

Division of the Iowa National Guard was then changed from a square to a triangular division, and we were transferred to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as the group headquarters battery of the 194th Field Artillery.

I remained with this unit until about September of 1942, at which time I went to OCS in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I received my commission in December of 1942 and returned to Fort Bragg to the 79th Field Artillery, 240 howitzer unit, just across the street from the old 194th. So during 1943, I was able to remain in constant touch with my old friends from the 194th.

At the end of 1943, we were alerted, and our first stop overseas was in Naples, Italy. Because of our heavy weapons, we had to wait until a port was cleared to unload the 240 howitzers. I stayed in Italy with the 697th Field Artillery, again side by side much of the time with the old 194th Gang.

I stayed in Italy until the late fall, at which time we were shifted to France, presumably for the southern invasion of France. As so many other outfits that fell through, we went back up to Italy again for another month and returned again to France when things stabilized there. We were in all of the action in France, Germany, and the end of the war in Salzburg, Austria, in May of 1945.

I was formally discharged from the Army on December 5, 1945, at which time I returned to school at the University of Minnesota. Oh, at the time of my—I'd see, I was finally promoted to captain in February of 1944 and served primarily as the assistant S-3 and S-2. My primary duties were survey and fire direction center control.

After I was discharged, I returned to the University of Minnesota, graduating in the summer of 1948, at which time I went to Milwaukee as office manager for the Herbst Manufacturing Company, which was a high-grade children's shoe manufacturing company. I stayed with this company for 34 years, holding a variety of management positions. The last 10 years, I was the corporate secretary.

My primary responsibilities were purchasing labor relations personnel and data processing. I retired in February of 1983 and returned to Davenport, Iowa. I have three children.

My oldest daughter is a physician in Vermont. My middle daughter is a schoolteacher in Jackson, Wyoming, and my son is a professor of zoology at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.

[Speaker 6]

John B. Knight. I'm born in Talmada, Florida, December the 30th, 1915.

I was conducted in the Army in January of 1942 and went to Camp Blanding and then was transferred from there to Fort Bright for training, which then left on fleetingly training. I was then attached to the 194th Field Artillery Battalion and then later was transferred to medics and then later to attend as a dental assistant. I was sensitive.

I went with all the fellows through Europe and Africa and so forth and whenever I come back was sent to Fort Dix and then back to Camp Blanding where I was discharged in September 1945. I went to, after getting out of the service, I immediately almost went back to work

with my family in our business making cosmetic perfumes, soap, pet medicine, and so forth. I became a recognized cosmetic chemist and also a recognized perfumer and this is my third reunion.

I was married shortly before I entered the service and now we have two children and eight grandchildren. And as of now, I'm still working in my own little business, growing orchids as a hobby.

[Speaker 1]

Hello Bill. I'm in Bill Brunner's room over here at the 50th reunion of the 185th Regiment of the Iowa National Guard and we're here having a good time at this reunion. My name is Lester Kaff spelled K-A-T-H and I'm one of the original members that left from Davenport, Iowa when the Guard was mobilized on the 10th of March or the 10th of February rather of 1941.

I was born up the river in Clinton, Iowa and in 1928 at the age of seven, our family moved from Clinton to Davenport. We stayed there from then on. So I joined the National Guard.

My brother Norman was already in the Guard at that time and I joined the National Guard in January of 1940. Went to summer camp with them that year to Camp Ripley, Minnesota at that time in the month of August. The thing that sold me on joining the National Guard was through the urging of my brother Norman and he felt that it would be good for me to get into the National Guard for various reasons, financial and otherwise.

But the main thing that appealed to me was Norm told me that they had a motorcycle out there in the headquarters with a side car and they needed a driver to drive that, that they just didn't have a driver assigned at that time who could drive the motorcycle. So about that time I was a graduate of high school, a recent graduate and I was working as an apprentice machinist at the Davenport Machine and Foundry and had acquired my first motorcycle. It was the first big item that I'd ever bought and this was my own personal motorcycle and I really enjoyed motorcycling.

So when Norm told me that they had this motorcycle position available in the headquarters battery of the 185th Field Artillery, Iowa National Guard, I decided well I'll go out there and talk to the people involved with it. So Norm took me out there, showed me around the armory and so forth, met various people including Captain Thomason, who was the battery commander then of headquarters battery. His first name was either Howard or Harold Thomason and he was the brother of a subsequent Thomason that commanded headquarters battery when we came on active duty.

There's a little story involved in that too. When we took the motorcycle up for the the summer training at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin in August of 40, I was assigned as the driver. I drove the motorcycle and the Lieutenant Virgil Moss was the convoy patrol officer and our job was to follow the convoy from Davenport, Iowa up to Camp Ripley, Minnesota and act more or less as escort personnel to direct the traffic through the various cities that we would meet en route to Camp Ripley.

So this we did. We would dash ahead of the column and stop in the cities, pull traffic back in the main intersections and allow the military vehicles of the convoy to pass on through and go on. So this was it.

I had a good feeling about that. I really enjoyed that. So that very briefly was my entrance into the National Guard and the reasons for getting on in there.

After that we came back from our summer training and the two weeks of normal training was extended into three weeks because of the war clouds on the horizon. They figured they better go ahead and give us another week of training. So we did get that.

While we were at Camp Ripley, both Captain Thomasson and Lieutenant Moss were killed in a tragic accident with a military command car that overturned and went off the road and overturned and of course it had a convertible type of top on it and both of these officers were killed in that vehicle. So this was a tragic loss for our battery and actually for the entire division. They had a military funeral, a military parade for them at Camp Ripley during that three-week period that we were there.

So that was the termination of both of those fine officers. So anyway after that as I say we had three weeks. We came back home, went back about our jobs after that three weeks.

So that was in August. The following February we were mobilized. The entire 34th Division was mobilized on the 10th of February 1941.

We were brought on active duty. We initially stayed at the armory out on Brady Street. The headquarters battery personnel and we actually had bunks and so forth assigned to us out there at the armory and once we were mobilized and brought on active duty we had to stay out there at the armory and await our turn to go to our first duty station in a mobilized status and that wasn't very long.

Later on in February we went and arranged to go down to Camp Claiborne. That was to be our training site. It was a new tent city.

It was established down in Louisiana about 10 miles out of a city called Alexandria. We mobilized and went on duty and eventually we left the armory there on Brady Street and proceeded in the wintertime to our new destination down at Camp Claiborne. I was in the motor section by that time and my job was to drive a truck, a deuce and a half, down there in convoy to Camp Claiborne.

We were taking the military vehicles down there in convoy and in those days while we slept overnight in either a high school or whatever we could find, a gymnasium and so forth. This was an exciting experience for me and we really enjoyed that aspect of driving down there. We left and then later the troop train left to carry most of the personnel down to Camp Claiborne.

They left a few days later than we did and that was an exciting time for the entire city of Davenport and I'm sure for the smaller communities in the area because here were these young men all leaving the city at one time and going to this new destination. So that's what happened. We went down to Camp Claiborne.

It's been very quickly from Claiborne we went up to Fort Dix, New Jersey and that is already on tape, that aspect, so I won't elaborate on that. From Fort Dix we were split up, the old 185th Regiment, part of us went down to Fort Bragg. The other part was personnel went over to North Africa.

I went into the group that went down to Fort Bragg. I was down there, we got down there in March of 1942. I spent the summer down there.

We formed the 194th Field Artillery which was redesignated from the old 185th. It became the 194th and I served with that until that fall, November of 1942. In the meantime, I was promoted to the grade of Master Sergeant while I was down there in May of 1942.

And as a new Master Sergeant, I was vulnerable for a levy that came along. A levy being a call by grade and position. I was called and assigned to Madison Barracks, New York State.

Up to Madison Barracks, New York State. I went up there and was briefly with the 15th Observation Battalion which was assigned at Madison Barracks, New York State. And from there I applied for Officer Candidate School and went to Officer Candidate School and went to what they call Preparatory OCS which was a 40 finale in Vermont for one month.

And I went there, served that month, came back and was assigned out to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for OCS. In the meantime, the woman of my dreams, I met down at Fort Bragg and met her just before I got reassigned to Madison Barracks. And we thought so much of each other.

We corresponded back and forth. I just had several dates with her before I left Fort Bragg. And we met and I corresponded with her at Madison Barracks.

In February, I went home. Well, I went home and explained to my folks that I was really in love with this girl and so forth and I was going to ask her to marry me. So in February, we became engaged and in June, after I graduated from Officer School, we were married out in Davenport, Iowa.

So after I got commissioned, I had applied for liaison pilot school training, became a liaison pilot, went through the training, and was at my first station of assignment was down in Texas. And I was assigned to the 11th Armored Division there. We went from there out to maneuvers out on the desert.

While out on the desert with the 11th Armored Division, I and about 10 other lieutenants were all levied at that time to go as artillery officer replacements, all second lieutenants, to go overseas. So we were given orders to proceed to Fort Dix in California and we went by our own transportation. I had Lois out there, my wife, in California.

She stayed there while I was on maneuvers and we climbed in the car with a couple of these lieutenants that I could load into my car and we all headed for the east coast because we were all destined to go overseas. So we did. We traveled over there the east coast.

Lois and I separated at that point. She went back to her home in North Carolina and I stayed there and went overseas. And at that time, this was in the early part of 1944.

And in 1944, I went over then to England, stayed there as a replacement officer in England, and went to Wales, part of Wales, served over there until D-Day came along. When D-Day came, we got orders as artillery officer replacements and we were sent down to Plymouth, England to go across the Channel. I took a group of the first assault artillery replacements, 50 enlisted men and two officers.

It was my responsibility in going over there. And while, while doing that, we left from Plymouth, crossed the Channel, got over there and went into the Utah beach area. We left the ship, another ship that could take us so far into the beaches.

Then they dropped us by a smaller boat, a landing craft. We climbed into there, 50 and two, and headed into the Utah beach, got as far as we could, beached the boat, jumped out of the side of that, and made our way into the beach. During this time, of course, there was still heavy fighting going on.

Battleships were still hurling their ammunition into the, into the newly held beachhead. So that briefly was the story that far. I stayed with these artillery replacements and as they were needed, they were drawn off, siphoned off, and sent to their units that had had their losses during the invasion, and eventually I got assigned to the 5th Armored Division.

In getting assigned to the 5th Armored Division, I've sold a lot to the artillery liaison pilot in the 490th Field Artillery Battalion of the 5th Armored Division, and I flew for them briefly. I flew 78-40s for that unit, and I got shot down on takeoff once, and had two crashes during that 78th mission period, and eventually I was processed because of the accidents that I had. I was hospitalized or in an ambulance for some time, and after that, why, I lost my depth perception in that accident to a great degree, and they wouldn't let me fly anymore.

So they took me off of flying status for the time being, supposedly, and assigned me to the division headquarters Q3 section, where I worked as a liaison officer. So from then, I served with the 5th Armored Division all through Europe, had five campaigns that we fought, was in the Battle of the Bulge, and so forth. So I don't want to take any more time here, but that very briefly was my combat experience.

After that, after the war, I served in the occupation of Austria. I was assigned into Vienna, Austria for a year in the occupation, and my job was, I got assigned to the hotel in the club section there, and I was assigned duty as a military manager of the Regina Hotel in Vienna, Austria, and I served in that capacity for a year. After that, I developed an ulcer on my stomach, had a perforated septic ulcer, became permanently physically disqualified as an officer from active duty, so I had to revert back to my enlisted status.

I still had my permanent rank as Master Sergeant, with date of rank of Mayo 42, so that I did. I came back home, reverted to enlisted status, and served the remainder of my career as an enlisted man. I became a sergeant major over in Europe.

I was the first sergeant major promoted for the Army into the grade of E9. That was a new rank. I was boarded for the E8 position and was fortunate enough to be designated the first E8 Army type in Europe, and then in April of 49, since I was the only E8 Army in Europe, when the E9 quota came down, I was the only one that could fill it because I was the only one on board.

So I became the Army's first E9 in Europe in April of 1959. I then was—remained assigned in Headquarters European Command until my retirement in 1962. After five years with Headquarters European Command, I came home and took retirement at Fort Bragg, where it practically all started for me.

So the circle was complete. I was back again at Fort Bragg, and I took my retirement out of the hospital down there because they boarded me for the operation that I'd had on my stomach some years earlier. So that terminated my status as a regular Army enlisted man.

I stayed out a year in 1963 to build our home in North Carolina. By that time, we had five children. So we built our home in 1963 outside of Raleigh, 50 miles from Fort Bragg at a city called Garner.

And in June of 1944, I went back to work with five children at home. I found out that my Army pension wasn't going to handle it, so I had to get another job. So I went and applied for work as a civil service employee in the Army Reserve, and that I did.

I was accepted for the job there. I became the senior technician for a regiment, a training regiment, the 108th Regiment of the 108th Training Division, which was a division stationed in the Carolinas as a reserve division. So I stayed with them from 1964 then until my final retirement in 1983, another 19 years.

So that about sums up my military career. It was a dandy. I really appreciate it.

I've met a lot of nice people, made a lot of good friends, saw a lot of the world, and I am thankful for every bit of it. I met my wife at that time, and she has been the love of my life. With the five children, we now have 14 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

So we don't lack for a place to go and spend our vacations and to visit. Thank you very much for your time.

[Speaker 9]

Thank you. I'm having a wonderful time. I'm from Michigan City, Indiana, and we enjoy this trip coming here every year, but sometimes in my mind, we won't be able to make it because I have a reason.

[Speaker 2]

This is Eddie Rocker from Moline, Illinois. I was inducted into service on February the 2nd, 1942. Went to Scott Field, had a little basic training there for about two weeks is all, and then went down to Little Rock, Arkansas, Camp Provincial.

Took infantry basic training down there, was transferred up to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 194th Field Artillery, Headquarters Battery. At that time, I had spent about six months with the unit and came home on furlough, went back to the unit, and shipped overseas. At that point on, we were all together in Italy, France, Africa, Germany, etc.

I broke away from the outfit and was transferred to Nancy France Arrest Center as a mechanic on buses.

[Speaker 8]

My name is Arnold Buckmeyer. I went in from Davenport, Iowa, with the National Guard. See, February the 5th, 1940, 1941.

We went to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, and got discharged September-October 24th from Fort Sheridan.

[Speaker 2]

Dick Edwards, I live in Sanford, Florida. Joined Honor the 85th, February 8th, 1940. Went to Fort Dix, and then to Fort Bragg, left Fort Bragg, went to Angel Island, Fort McDowell, over to Hawaii, 24th Division, 63rd Field Artillery Battalion, and came back September 11th, 1945.

Discharged September 15th at Fort Dix.

[Speaker 8]

Yeah, Chuck Weese. I was in the 185th Field Artillery before we went into active service for a year. Then we went into active service and went down to Camp Claiborne.

I was with a group in Claiborne for just about a year, and then I got transferred into the 63rd Signal Battalion. I was in the first boatload of soldiers that went overseas to Ireland with the 63rd, and then I got assigned to taking care of all the Eisenhower's equipment, and got discharged in 1945, came back to Davenport, Iowa.

[Speaker 4]

My name is Francis Fitch from Oak Ridge, Louisiana. I was living in Monroe at the time I got inducted into the Army. They sent us from Monroe down to Camp Livingston.

From Livingston, they sent us over to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where we were all tested, and then they put us on a train and sent us up to Fort Bragg in North Carolina to the training center, and at the training center, I went to cooking school. In the meantime, the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, and they cut the training from 12 to 13 weeks down to nine weeks, and they sent 1,500 or 1,800 of us up to Fort Dix, New Jersey to reinforce the 34th Division. When we got into the 34th Division, they sent me over on KP duty, and they found out that I could cook.

They were trying to fry chicken. They didn't have enough grease in there to fry anything, so then they took me in and made me a cook, and then Colonel Cook needed a new driver, and I was lucky enough to get that job, and I stayed with Colonel Cook. When we left in, I think it was July of 43, we left and went to New York and boarded the boat called Convoy.

We went to North Africa, to Austria, to Salzburg, and the troop ship came out of the river into the English Channel and came down through the English Channel and landed in New York, I think somewhere around about the 20th of October, and they sent us out to a camp in New Jersey. The next day at about three o'clock in the afternoon, we boarded a train, went over to Chicago, switched to another train that took us down to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. I was right back where I started from, and that's where I was separated.

[Speaker 7]

I was drafted on April 23, 1941, and inducted at Camp God, Des Moines, Iowa. Arrived in Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, the last part of April, and was assigned to Regimental Headquarters 185th Field Artillery National Guard. As we were the first group of draftees to help start bringing the unit up to strength, after having maneuvers in Louisiana and Pearl Harbor, the unit was moved to Fort Dix, where it was then changed from a 155th Battalion howitzer.

It was changed to 194th Field Artillery Group Battalion howitzer, who moved to Fort Bragg. After going overseas, stayed with the same unit through Africa, Italy, France, and Germany in the European theater. Came home by ship from Amherst, Belgium, and was discharged August 24, 1945.

Thank you.