

Franklin, Ben C.-5-6-98-2 of 2

[Speaker 1]

But I believe it is really possible to train human beings to react in combat situations. You understand the difference? Absolutely.

And I think that the American Army, because of its... First, my regiment had a lot of old regular army sergeants. You've got to remember that.

We had a lot of old regular army officers. My regiment had been stationed in Fort Jay, New York, from 1919 until 1942. But all the officers who graduated, not all, but most of the officers who loved New York City, who graduated up the Hudson, naturally wanted to be in a regiment that was in New York City.

So they would volunteer for the 16th Infantry. Most of our commanders, our company commanders, had graduated in 1938 from West Point and commanded companies in the 16th Infantry. Most of our non-coms, when I joined the regiment, had been in the regiment for 10 or 12 years.

They were old sergeants, really old, bum sergeants, you know. Our commanders, like battalion commanders, had graduated from West Point in 34, 35, because they wanted to be in a regiment there. It would be unfair for me to try to equate my regiment and the people that I personally know with the rest of the American Army, because the rest of the American Army, like I say, were picked up from here and picked up from here and thrown together in hope that we got a good homogenized result out of it within the First Division.

They were stationed in New York City and upstate New York for 25, 30 years. And they got good people, and they got dedicated soldiers, and they got people who couldn't find a job in civilian life who were listed in the Army and become sergeants, you know. So I was not disappointed in sergeants and our own officers.

I was not disappointed in the training I got. Of course, I was disappointed that there was no way they could make me a hero. There was no way they could inject—I would give anything if they had a pill.

It was a courage pill that I took, and I suddenly become brave. They didn't have that, and I don't think they ever will have it, because I shit my pants as often as anybody did. There was absolutely no way to—when a tank is running over your ass, firing a machine gun, there is no way you can prepare a man for that.

You can prepare a man for a tank running over him, but to have a gunner shooting a machine gun at you as he runs over you, you can't be prepared for that. And I don't know of any way you could ever prepare, except, you know, after Kasserine Pass, if it would have happened again, which it did in deep western Sicily. It was not so bad.

You know, I ran in a cave and hid in there. Oh, big deal, you know. But in Africa, it was—it's all new.

Everything was new. We had three regimental commanders in Africa. Three reg—we went in.

We made the invasion with a man named Kirk. He was replaced by a man named Colonel Fouché. Both of them were wounded.

Then we got a man named George Taylor, who stayed with us until he'd become a general. He stayed with us still up in Belgium or around Aachen. Then he went—he'd become a general and went over to the 4th Division.

Terrific officer. Terrific. Absolutely lucky to have been in a regiment that had those officers.

On the other hand, I hated the son-of-a-bitches, you know, because I have had to go on combat patrols where they take a machine gun along to capture a prisoner. Prisoner. This is a combat—they'll take a squad of infantry and a machine gun and then you go out with a lieutenant or a sergeant and you join these tournaments and bring them back for interrogation.

To me, this was superfluous. What damn difference does it make what number of regiments across from where it's a 10th, or a 9th, or a 2nd, or a 15th? Who gives a damn?

It's the enemy. That's all that you've got to know. But back in the back, they want to know all the details.

And they don't hesitate to send your ass out and get it shot off. Give them something to tell the colonel. You know, can you imagine how good they must have felt?

Colonel, we've got the 72nd Division out in front and they have their capabilities and blah, blah, blah, and they have this and that. And they got this all from Rockland going out and capturing people. And it always annoyed me.

It still annoys me even now. Of course, that's the way the system is. You can't bug the system.

I hope I haven't annoyed you, sir. Not at all, not at all. It's a bad thing.

But I'm not rushing you off, sir. I'm in no hurry. My wife, she's talking to her golfing friends on the telephone, so don't worry about that.

If you want any more information. What was your opinion of the British people? Absolutely fabulous.

Well, first of all, the British people, as a people, they are capable of more, even deeper than that. For 1,000 years, maybe even 2,000 years, British women have been saying goodbye to their lovers, their husbands, their sons. Because they come off in the Navy and come off to wars and come off to the colonies and they've always said goodbye.

But for the first time, other than since, I guess it was we and the conqueror kicked their butts and invaded, for the first time since then, Hitler was going to invade them. And they were ill-equipped, ill-prepared, but the people had the heart to get ready. And they endured bombing and they endured hardships and they had nothing but admiration for the British people.

Absolutely the courageous people. It's unfortunate. And they had a system.

All British royalties were the first to die. And a film I had. Outside my village was a castle, and the original headquarters was in that castle.

Colonel Tigger loved castles. The damn castle in the air, we had to take it for him. But he loved castles.

The original owner of this castle was the first man, the first pilot in World War II in the British Royal Air Force to get lost and to be killed in World War I. The first pilot had one of those little spades, you know, that little airplane, which is equivalent to our Congressional Medal of Honor. In World War II, his son was the first to get the Victoria Cross, pilot in a Spitfire, both of Royal Blood.

And what happened when the American officers got there, and English officers were all of Royal Blood, and lived in castles, then all of them wanted to immolate them. They all wanted to make people think they were of Royal Blood. In fact, we called them America's Royalty.

That's what we called those dumb Rafflemen, you know. Down there goes another Royal son of a bitch. Did you see that in North Africa?

I mean, what did you think when you got to North Africa and you saw your first British soldier? Oh, well, no, I saw my first British soldiers in England. Oh, okay, in England.

In England and Scotland, yeah. Okay, and then when we went to Africa... We saw them in combat.

We saw them in combat up around Maserati. We were under the British First Army up at Maserati. And they're highly disciplined, highly disciplined infantry.

Highly, really, really, and they'll bow those damn, they'll play those damn bagpipes and walk right into hell, you know. This is because of their royalty. You know, royalty has walked into the breach for a thousand years, and they're used to it.

Germans are the same way. They have their counts and all these commanded regiments and dupes and all this bullshit, and the same thing with England. But they were expected to do that.

The Americans, we got our officers. Most officers were not, they were not so lucky as the First Infantry to have those west borders and have all these old soldiers. Another thing that made us so good, you know, we had professional officers.

Were relations pretty good then between officers? Sounds like between officers, yeah.

[Speaker 2]
And enlisted men?

[Speaker 1]
Absolutely not. No? No, no, no, no.

We were enlisted men and was almost an untouchable. If you've ever been around Indians in India, you know, you have a certain class of people that you just, the upper class would not touch. Right.

Now, this is the way the Army was when I went into it by regiment. My first sergeant from the company. We had a company commander that was on the pole.

He had a horse, and they had polo matches between other regiments, you know, and he wore riding breeches and boots and things that stick out. And sometimes in the afternoon, he'd come down and walk through the company. But the first sergeant run the company.

But he'd been running companies for 10 or 12 years. He knew what he was doing. And the company commander signed a few papers.

And, of course, the first sergeant and the officers had some mutual respect. And I'm not saying that the officers did not respect the lower rank enlisted men, but they had no association with them until you get into combat. Now, you get into combat, and now you've got a young lieutenant, not someone who graduated in 1938, but someone just in June of 1942.

Now, he comes to you, and he's got to sleep with you in the mud. He's got to endure whatever hardship you do. Now you have a very close association, particularly he and the platoon sergeant.

They're like brothers. Now, the enlisted men, again, are a little off. It was the same with the platoon sergeant.

The platoon sergeant was a little standoffish. Now, you became a sergeant major. So when did that happen for you?

Well, it happened. I became a sergeant in the war, and then I got busted after the war. But then slowly I went up through the ranks in the regiment.

I stayed in the regiment. And they had to promote me. I was the oldest man there.

I'd been there longer than anybody, and I'd become the sergeant major of the regiment. And my association was this was absolutely did not exist. I was responsible only to the colonel.

I would go in the morning at 7.30 on a normal day. The colonel would come in at 8. We'd have a cup of coffee together, and he'd tell me what he wanted me to do that day.

He'd say, I want you to take the H-13 helicopter and go out here and see what A company is out there doing out in the field. Check B company. And I'd go and look at A company and B company, and I was only responsible to him.

No other officer told me what to do. I didn't tell any other officer. I said good morning and saluted them.

They called me sergeant major. Very formal. But my colonel and I were like this.

Of course, it worked out great, because if one of the companies was having trouble, he'd say, sergeant major, I don't know what the hell's wrong down at B company. And I'd go down to B company and say, first sergeant, let's go have a cup of coffee. First sergeant, I'd go to the mess hall and say, get your two sergeants over here.

Let's find out what's wrong. And I'd say, the colonel's concerned about what's happening, whatever it was, so many DIs are dying and all that. And I'd say, what's wrong?

And they'd tell me what's wrong. I couldn't tell the colonel. He'd leave a lieutenant or kick somebody's ass or something.

And that's the way the sergeant major went. That's the way. It's a complete difference.

It's a little different. Well, are you learning anything, Todd? I sure am, I tell you.

Were you ever wounded at this point? No, I was wounded three times. I had a sergeant who I really liked.

His name was Bottomley, Jim Bottomley. He had false teeth from Brooklyn, New York. And 42 years old, 43 years old, he was a staff sergeant.

He got wounded in Osceleta. And he was not a Syrian. He went to the hospital.

They sent him to the 34th Division. And he went AWOL in 1944 and come back to A&R with Johns. That was a great one.

Of course, when we heard that when she got to the hospital, they were sending her to different offices, we didn't even go to the hospital. They got her wounded in the leg. And I didn't even go to the hospital.

Of course, I was afraid they'd send me to an outbick. So your loyalty was that strong? There was always a loyalty to fear.

I couldn't imagine getting sent to a damn National Guard outbick where the banker was the colonel and the city sheriff was the company commander. I couldn't imagine. I'm like, when I've been with these regular Army people, these professional soldiers, there is a difference between professional soldiers and non-professional soldiers.

There is a big difference. It's not only an attitude. And, of course, they had a way of identifying us.

If you're a serial number, like me, I was Private Benjamin C. Franklin, which meant regular Army, 1-4. Well, 1 said that I was enlisted.

4 said I was from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas. But 4 said that that's where I'm from. So all the 1st Army had to do was look at my serial number.

He knew more about me on my serial number than you needed to know. Now, if you were drafted, your number was 3. 3-4.

You were drafted from Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, because that's where you were. If it was 3-2, that was the New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey area. So your serial number told it all.

So when the 1st Army got a really good soldier, he just looked at your serial number and he knew who he could get. You know, it was very simple, right? It was right there.

And, of course, I had an incident in Africa that we were up in Meji, Alabama, which is up in the mountains. Meji means mountain in Arabic, I guess. And we're up so high that it's snowing, you know, up in the mountains.

Of course, the company was way down back here. We had no way of getting water up the mountain or ammunition. And so the 1st Sergeant called me back.

The 2nd Sergeant sent me back to the 1st Sergeant. And the 1st Sergeant said, Go back to the battalion headquarters, battalion S-4, and get three donkeys. And I said, I don't know anything about donkeys.

He said, What the hell do you mean you don't know anything? I said, You're from Tennessee, aren't you? And I said, Yeah.

He said, God damn it. You must know something about them. Claude Hopper from Tennessee.

You've messed with the mules on that one. So I had to go back, and the son of a bitch bit me. The first donkey I got a hold of, I didn't know what to do with him.

He wouldn't come, and he bit me. And I hauled up and hit him in the side of the head and broke my hand. But I made coffee.

I finally got these damn donkeys and tied them together with a rope. And if you twist their tail, they'll go. And I missed that.

I had an arrow there that owned the donkeys. And Ottawa means left. Ottawa means right.

And he means go. And I twisted their tail.

[Speaker 2]
Ottawa, Ottawa.

[Speaker 1]
And they'd go. And for about a week, more than a week, every night I'd go back to the battalion S-4 and get rations and a couple of cans of water and ammunition in the saddles over there. Take them up to the platoon and top them out.

And I'd come back and sleep all day. I'd say, oh, this son of a bitch is up on the mountain, freezing to death. Come back here, come home, sleep and all that.

And the captain thought I did a good job. So they'd make coffee. You mentioned the arrow.

Was he ramming the donkeys out? I really don't know. The most amazing thing you've ever seen.

There are two things that are unbelievable in Africa. You can go in the desert and nothing is alive. You open a can of sea rations, there'll be a million flies on it in just two minutes.

It'll be covered black with flies, number one. Number two, if you stay there a half a day, there'll be a thousand Arabs there, picking up your trash. Whatever can you throw away, they pick it up and clean out the inside of the sea ration can.

They just come from nowhere. And, of course, when we got people killed, they brought the dead. You know, they'll take the clothing and that stuff.

And we really had very little to do with the Arabs. We had no occasion to associate with the Arabs. Although we did have one in the company that worked here with the mess hall.

And they called him Friday. And sometimes about four, you can't say how often, sometimes two times a week, sometimes once every two or three weeks, we'd get a hot meal brought up to us. We'd come up there with the cooks, feed us our hot food.

But then when we went to Sicily, they wouldn't let him go with us. They wouldn't let him go. Did he want to go?

He wanted to go. I know that a lot of times, as far as getting fed on the front lines, how often were you able to? Did the kitchen trucks up?

Or did you have to usually eat the sea rations? When you're in a stationary position, like we were at Shoma, you know, we made the invasion of Omaha and went directly through. And about June the 12th or 13th, I don't remember, we took Shoma, which was up on the ridge line.

The rest of the regiment caught up with us and came up at the bottom. Shoma is up on the ridge line. There's a main road running from Cannes to Saint-Lo and we cut that road in two.

And the American troops on our right was way behind us and the British on our left were behind us. We were out like that. I don't know, sailing them out, sticking out like that.

But our S-4 came up and the kitchens were in the back. And it wasn't on your hot meal, say, every third or fourth day. They'd come up at night.

You'd go back. Of course, this is dangerous, too. You know, activity and movement invertedly will draw attention.

You don't, in the infantry, you never want to draw attention to yourself. You want to get down in your goddamn hole. Be quiet.

Stay there. Don't bother anybody. Don't let anybody bother you.

Just sleep in, bringing up the mess truck. You know, hear the motors run. And you'd be surprised how quiet the war is.

You'd be absolutely amazed at how quiet it is at night. And then suddenly you have the people shooting here and the noise and artillery and this forest quietness. There'd be a thousand men facing you and you won't hear anything.

No noise at all. And you smell it. Americans smell like cannabis.

Wool and cannabis. You'd smell wet wool and cannabis. The Germans smell of leather.

They just have a leathery smell. And you can be on the patrol and get down real quiet and the column of them will go by you as they go by you. You just smell that leather.

And it has a distinct odor to it. Very different from anything. We took Bonn, the city of Bonn, in a night attack.

What saved us is we had an MTM tank store leading the column. And it looked like a German tank. We're going down the main street into Bonn at nighttime about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning.

MTM leading us. I-Company behind it. Machine gun platoon bringing up the rear of I-Company.

The German column is coming up this way. We're within this close to each other. And they saw this MTM and they thought it was a German tank.

Well, we knew better than the rest of them. And we just kept walking. And they kept walking.

But you could smell them. You could smell them as they went by you. First, they never used deodorant.

Then all men stink about the same. But that leather and that... just a leathery stink about them.

And Americans, when they go by you and you feel real quiet, you can smell that canvas and a wet old dick because you're always wet. But we just passed each other. So even in the desert as well?

In the desert, yeah. Particularly in the desert. Because you sweat so much.

Daytime, and this is what's so bad about the desert. Daytime, you sweat. Nighttime, you freeze.

Because the temperature fluctuates between 110 or maybe even 120 down to 60. Well, that's a hell of a drop on the human body. Particularly in daytime if you're raining wet with sweat and you're sitting in a hole at night to freeze in bed at 60 degrees.

It's cold in the desert, huh? I think it's hot in the desert daytime. But I would say if we brought it down to a nutshell, to me, mentally, the toughest part of World War II was Africa because of the cessation of my own inadequacy, our own inabilities, our own shortcomings and equipment, the superiority of the German soldier, the superiority of their knowledge of

equipment and the superiority of warfare, their knowledge of time was so much better than ours.

Unless they had our superiority. In Africa, the whole campaign, they had our superiority. Many, many weeks at a time we could not move in daytime.

If you did, one jeep would attract two or three fighter planes on it. We could not live a day without it. So from that point of view, Africa was difficult, the most difficult.

But from a killing, that's where more people get killed, on the German side than on our side, from Aachen through the Hürtgen Forest to the Rhine River was the most difficult. And it rained and it snowed and it was so damn miserable cold and we were so hungry. The 1st Division never hollers.

When they go into attack, you never hear one man say a word. Everybody knows what they're doing. A whole company can move right by you and you never wake up.

That's how good we were. But in Wunderhammock, we had been out in the cold so long that we started to take a village and we knew that this village would get us in out of the cold. And you should have heard the Americans holler.

We were screamed. And the poor Germans that were in those buildings must have thought we was goddamn maniacs. But we screamed and we ran to them buildings and we got in those buildings and we wouldn't leave.

It was unbelievable. But we'd been out in the weather for five or six weeks, you know, freezing to death. And I mean freezing.

And no improper equipment again. Well, which climate was then, would you say, if you had to compare North Africa, Sicily, Normandy? I'd say the climate was the toughest.

From the climatic point of view, the most difficult part of World War II was from the beginning of the Bulge, which was middle of December 1944 until March 1945. We got to the brink. It never stopped raining or snowing.

Either, I was never dry. I was never wet. That was the real thing.

And to think, and our companies were so low in manpower. Our platoons were so low in manpower. And later I found out that we had 265,000 diluted in Paris.

Living in rooms in Paris, the American army. 265,000. Now, roughly there's 18,000 in the military division.

And we were cut down to maybe, I'd say our whole division probably had 6-8,000 people. And there's 265,000 living in Paris, and we're not getting anybody to come up. And of course we knew it.

The Americans had run the price up so high, and we wondered, why the hell won't those people come up here? And it was a trying time. Really a trying time.

But we survived. We managed to get through it. Do you, Mr. Payton, do you keep in touch with any of your buddies from the war?

Oh yeah, amazing. If I hadn't, my life would have been miserable. My company commander and I would have later become a major general.

And he's a G1 of the Pentagon, of the Army. I was sent to a 10th Infantry Regiment in Camp Roberts, California. I don't know if you know anything about California.

But Camp Roberts is halfway between San Francisco and L.A. in the basin. And it's an infantry regiment. I had 600 men in my company.

And some of them were on jump belt training, meeting with a quartermaster. And, you know, I'm a first sergeant of a rifle company. I've been a first sergeant now for 13 years, or 11, 12 years.

And I go to a damn company that has 600 men in it, and the most I ever sold was 40 or 50 men. They were all out. Under the University of Michigan was running scientific, what they did was they was working on CDAP.

It's called Combat Development Experimentation Center. They had an infantry regiment. And the scientists from the University of Michigan come in and say, Sergeant Franklin, I need 50 men here Monday morning with certain equipment.

And I had to get him 50 men. So I said, I'm not about to stand this down down there. And they said, well, you can't get on this up there.

No one's ever got up there. I said, watch. And I sat down and I wrote General Corley a little note.

I said, General Corley, I'm stuck in the 10th Infantry Regiment. I'd like to get back into the American Army. Can you do anything about two weeks later I was in Fort Rowley, Kansas, back in the 1st Division.

He said, you've got to stay in contact with the 1st Division people. They even now stay in contact with them. And they take care of you too.

I guarantee you they'll take care of you. I had a sergeant. He's from Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

His name is Albert. The first day he was in my platoon, he won the Silver Star on the front line. He sold the machine gun search unit.

That was General Machine Gun. And Albert said, what the hell is that son of a bitch shooting at us for? He's one of them funny black Popeye, that Joe.

And he said, anybody go with him, or we're going to march it out. And everybody said, you're crazy, General. He took a rifle and he went around machine gunning out.

Of course, we had to give him the Silver Star. It was crazy stuff. In Korea, he would become an officer in Korea.

And after Korea, they had a reduction in force and take you back to sergeant. Well, he's over in the recon platoon in the 16th Infantry. And I had a big company.

And he got in some young lieutenant who probably knew everything on the property. And Jones did something to this young lieutenant company and changed it. And Jones took it into the woods and whipped his ass.

And so he comes in and he said, I'm in deep trouble. And I said, what is it you're in trouble? And he said, wait a minute.

So one of our other buddies, the sergeant major of the division, Walt Cannon, I called Walt and I said, Walt, Al's in trouble. Walt said, what's he got? I said, you don't want to know what he's done.

I want you to get him transferred to the recon platoon and pay for what he says to become the B company, right? Take care of him. He said, I'll let you know.

So about two hours later, he called me back and said, we're cutting orders right now. So Al came over. And I just tapped up Article 15 for an officer and restricted 14 days to the company area.

And he said, we've got a new man in the company. I don't want to punish you. But the man we had paid the order back at Texas A&M.

I don't want to tell his name. I'm a young company commander, a good company commander. And he says, how can we assist him?

I said, well, we've got an old combat soldier here who's got to assist him. I don't want to be mad. If you don't help me, he said, here, I may sign the company punishment.

So a few days later, word come down that they're going to court-martial him. Well, you can't court-martial him. He's already been punished.

So the colonel calls me and tapped me up. I said, what is his name? Jones?

Is that his name? No, Al Jones is the sergeant. Whatever his name is.

He called us down. The colonel called us down. And he said, what the hell are you all doing?

Have you gone crazy? I said, it's Top's business. So I told the colonel about it.

He said, we've got a soldier that's my friend, World War II. First day on the front line, he won the silver star. And we're going to court-martial him.

In Korea, he's a second lieutenant, a late first lieutenant leading a company in Korea, a rifle company. And we're going to court-martial him. I said, I took care of him.

And I would expect him to do the same. I would expect you to do the same. The colonel said, get the hell out of here and forget about it.

We took care of Al Jones. Well, of course, Al Jones would have killed somebody for Major Jones. When I left the company, he'd become first sergeant.

Sorry, Major, he'd become first sergeant. Then he retired and come to North Korea. And he was supposed to have gone to work in the security.

Now, they don't create security guards. I don't know what happened to him. I didn't hurt him, because I didn't want to be around him.

Because when I retired, we had a job over here at the service station. Anybody know you? Well, here, I didn't even know you one moment.

And a black guy came in. A young black guy came in and said, it's a holdup. And I said, what the hell do you mean it's a holdup?

It was a night job. I said, what the hell do you mean it's a holdup? The guy said, it's a holdup.

Al pulled out a pistol and shot him five times. It was a spot. He's crazy.

I said, Al, don't mess around. He killed this digger. And he didn't shoot him once.

He shot him five times. And there was a big stink about that. He shot him five times.

So I stayed away from that. So I haven't heard from him in years. But the rest of us, I've got pictures all over that.

All of them. We have reunions. And we meet.

And people that we thought were dead come to the meetings. When I went to Belgium, I met a boy, a Belgian boy, that was in the Belgian underground that was with my company during the war. During the war.

Yep. He took us. He was riding his bicycle by a German outfit that was hid in some woods.

They were trying to escape back to Germany. And we were cutting them off. And they were Mons.

So they stopped him, made him dig two graves for two dead Germans. And so he come up to our company. And I was with our company.

And he told Captain Richmond where these Germans were. So we loaded up three live tanks, sectioned machine guns, and a platoon of riflemen. And we went over to sleep up these Germans.

One of them, they were in a little square patch of woods. And I told Captain Richmond, I said, Sir, this German, this Belgian boy that was with us in the Jeep, with permanent infantry, would never get in that patch of woods. There's no way.

Now, these big woods down here, they're a little prairie. And this guy said, No, sir, they're in those woods. And Captain Richmond said, Well, take your two guns and go down to that house down there.

And the road goes past. And he showed me on the map. He said, Set it up.

And when we get here, they will try to run that way. Don't let them get over the road. So I went down and set up the machine guns on two Jeeps.

The tanks lined up and went toward the woods. The riflemen were behind them. And then the tanks went around the woods.

And the riflemen went through the woods. And out of the back of the woods come a sea of food, 1,400 young boys, no weapons to surround them. So I started firing down the street.

Out of the 1,400, 200 of them could walk. And when we finished, the tanks kept firing. And they were firing a canister, canister shells.

It was 37-millimeter canister shells that exploded and sent out a little bomb. And, of course, while I was firing, the tanks couldn't see me. And when I stopped firing, they kept firing.

And the Germans started running at them. And I tried to keep them from crossing the road. They had to go over a fence, over this road.

And, boy, we just ate them up. I always felt bad about it because they were ACAC kids, German boys, 14, 15 years old that was drafted. And they were supposed to be on ACAC, anti-aircraft duty.

And they were just children. And we just saw them. So I told my son, I said, we'll go there.

We'll find that place. And you and I will sit down and have a drink. We'll forget about it.

So when I got to Mons, cold-shaped headquarters, they had a military map, 125. And I identified myself and said, I need an area northeast of Mons. And they said, well, we don't have any maps.

And I said, what? Are you in the damned army or not? They said, yeah.

I said, you don't have a map? Well, we've got some street maps of Mons. I said, I'm not interested.

They gave me a captain. And he said, no, we can't help you. We don't have all of our maps or Russia and all that stuff.

So the woman who owned the hotel or run the hotel, she heard me talking. And she said, well, I know a man in Mons that has a tank museum. And he knows all about the First Division.

And I said, well, I'm not interested in tanks. I just want to find this man. And she said, well, if I call him, will you meet him?

And I said, sure. And they have an organization, the First Infantry Division organization in Mons, the people of Mons. So he came, and we had dinner, and we were talking.

And, of course, I told Mark and my wife about this fellow, what he looked like, because I thought he was German. When he came walking up and down the road to us, I thought he was a German. He had kind of a khaki uniform.

He looked German, and I was a little suspicious of him. But anyway, this man who owned the tank museum, he said, I have a friend that was in the underground, and he may be able to help you. And I said, well, good.

He said, he can't come until 9 o'clock. So it would be all right for us to eat and drink. I said, sure, no problem.

So we're eating, and then walks this fellow. And he has a picture. And he hands me the picture, and it's this young boy that had joined us and led us over to the gym.

And I said, Mark, well, I've told you, pick out the man that I've been talking to you about on this picture. There's about 10 men in the picture. Mark said, that's him right there, Daddy.

And the boy said, that's me. And that was him. So we went to the First Infantry Division.

We went out with the other and got drunk, and we had a hell of a time. We really did. And it's been bothering him, too.

Well, I hope I hadn't screwed you up. Oh, thank you very much. You're sure welcome.

[Speaker 2]
You need more?

[Speaker 1]
You're taking your time, too. Think with me. I think we've hit all the major points, and even more.

You've got enough to work with. I want to thank you very much, Mark, for taking the time to talk with me. Well, I'm pleased to find someone interested in America's history.

I know it's vast. You know, I have shook hands with Eisenhower and Churchill. Not bad.

Not bad. And Ambassador Gavin, General Gavin, the 82nd. Can I show my pictures?

Okay.

[Speaker 2]
Thank you for watching!