

Interview of Paul Huber

Interviewer: Mr. Huber, we're grateful for the time and trouble it took for you to get to our studio today. We appreciate it very much, and your lovely daughters for bringing you in and all that. We'd like to take you back and talk about some of your World War II experiences. Can you tell us, uh, where you were on December 7th, 1941, what you thought about it, and some of that experience.

Paul Huber: I'd like to take you back a little before that and tell you how I got drafted in to the Army. I was married in 1938, and I received a commission -- ROTC commission -- at the university in horse cavalry in 1936 as a second lieutenant. In 1939, we built a little home on 17th South and Blaine Avenue. We'd been in it approximately six months when, on January the 11th, about 9:00 at night, we were sitting in the living room, my wife and I, Jean Midgely, and a knock came on the door. I went to the door, and there was a telegram boy with a telegram. He said, "Is this Mr. Huber?" "Yes." "I have a telegram for you." I shook my head -- "Who is sending me telegrams at this time of night?" I opened it up and went in and talked to Jean and said, "There's a telegram here for me." And she says, "Who is it?" And I said, "I'm opening it." It said, "Paul Huber, you are called into Army service for a year, and to report to the Adjutant General in Washington, D.C. immediately." That was it. I had no uniform since the university -- I really worried what it all meant because I had no previous knowledge of doing it. The next morning I came to Fort Douglas and talked to the commandant up here and said, "What do I do?" And he said, "Well, you do what it says (laughter). You get to Washington, D.C." And I said, "Well, I haven't any money." This is the end of the depression, and I was making 75 dollars a month and a new home. He said, "Well, we can pay you to get to Washington, D.C." And I said, "Well, my uniform won't fit me. I don't have one." He said, "Well, go down to the

Army/Navy and get you something.” Well, I went down and got a minimum uniform and he gave me -- Monday morning, I went back -- and they gave me a ticket on the railroad to go to Washington, D.C. I went to Washington, D.C. and checked in and was there about three days and they had me enlisted to go to Waco, Texas in a replacement center. They talked to the artillery people and they said, “No, we need artillery people. He goes to Fort Bragg or Fort Bliss in Oklahoma.” I said, “Well, I’m this far east, I’ll go in to Fort Bragg.” Fort Bragg was just being organized. There was a contingent of units at the time. It was just outside of Fayetteville, North Carolina. I reported in there and went to the replacement center, and I was an officer in the replacement center for about two months. They sent me over to the 9th Infantry Division, which was being organized at that time, in the 26th Field Artillery Battalion. This is an approximately the first part of February. I was with the division and finally got my wife out. We rented a bedroom in a home and shared the kitchen and bathroom with the other occupants of the time.

Interviewer: This was in 1941?

Paul Huber: This is in ‘41.

Interviewer: ‘41, okay.

Paul Huber: January the 11th happened to be my birthday, so it was not a happy birth day. I said “Well, it’s only going to be a year and we can return home.” I was with Jean at home one of the nights -- December the 7th I think, Pearl Harbor -- and we turned the radio on in the morning and both sat up in bed when they said Pearl Harbor had been attacked. I had an order that I was relieved on December the 11th to get out of the Army. The news came over and said all Army personnel were to report immediately to their stations. So I went back out to the fort and was

told that all of our orders were cancelled. I was in the Army from there on. So that's what happened Pearl Harbor happened.

Interviewer: Let me ask you, when you were serving that year and all the trouble was going on in Europe, do you remember what your thoughts were about Germany and did you think that we were ever going to get into the war?

Interviewer: No, I didn't think much about that. We thought Chamberlain was silly for going along with what Hitler proposed, and why they didn't make a stand previously. As time went on, we could see that if war broke out, we would be some of the first to be involved. There were the 1st Infantry Division, the 3rd Armor Division, and maybe the 4th Infantry Division and the 9th Infantry Division. The 9th and the 4th were really just being put together at that time, so we weren't really up to strength when Pearl Harbor happened. But we knew once that happened that shortly thereafter that we would be involved in the war, whether it was Japan or over Europe. They never told us, but we certainly knew that we were in it. We went on maneuvers in North Carolina. Our equipment initially was old World War I equipment -- the old French 75 gun, horse-drawn wheels still on them. They tried to motorize them a bit and had a little trouble with it, but that was what we were trained on and so forth. About a month before we went overseas, they did give us the new 105 howitzers, new trucks, and new equipment all the way through. Everybody felt a lot better about it than going to war with World War I equipment. We had 35 mm anti-tank guns that wouldn't even stop a personnel carrier, let alone a tank. You want to know the good things or some of the bad things?

Interviewer: Just anything you think that is pertinent. Take us through a chronology, if you can. Tell us about being shipped over and what happened directly after Pearl Harbor.

Paul Huber: Well, a little bit about the organization -- the 9th infantry division consisted of the 39th Infantry Combat Team, the 47th Infantry Combat Team, and the 60th Infantry Combat Team. We operated as combat teams, and we operated as a division. When we were combat team, we were usually attached to another unit, either a core unit or a higher echelon unit for a particular battle or engagement. So a lot of our action was with other units, but it was the 39th Infantry Combat Team, which included the 39th Infantry Regiment, and the 26th Field Artillery Battalion. We were given a table of organization, and the battery commander is responsible for all that organization, from every truck -- every wrench on that truck -- all the way through to kitchen equipment, to men's bedding, and so forth. Prior to going overseas, we were required to inspect this and the AG from Washington, D.C. came in to inspect that we had what was required on the table of organization. For instance, in the kitchen, all the units -- each battalion and each battery -- had its own kitchen for cooking and supplying the meals and so forth for the men. It isn't like today where you go in to a combination where everyone goes into one big restaurant, you might call it. We had our own cooks and so forth in the unit. On the division, when we went out on the maneuvers, to heat water for washing our canteens and utensils, they had 50-gallon drums and they built bomb fires underneath them to heat water. Well, somebody came out with an immersion heater where you could use good gasoline, like your gas lanterns and so forth, use that gas and heating of propane for cooking stoves and they made it for these immersion heaters. But we had to buy those inversion heaters out of our battery funds. So when we came to check out to go overseas, the inspector said, "You can't take those with you. They're not on the table of organization." It meant if you had to build fires to heat these -- but where were you are going to get wood and so on and so forth out? Anyway, they weren't allowed. This kind of upset the people. Type writer, if we had bought an IBM typewriter, because they are

much better than the issue typewriter, you can't take them. Well, we did; we smuggled them aboard ship when we left. We finally loaded up on a train. All the men had their equipment checked. You had six pairs of socks, six pairs of underwear, shirts, and so forth -- both khaki and woolen uniforms. It was packed up, the guns were put on the train, and we pulled out. We went to Camp Dix in New Jersey for debarkation overseas. When we got in the camp at New Jersey, I went with the battalion commander out to inspect the trains to see where the equipment was and we couldn't find it in the yards. So we went back in and he talked to the general division. They said, "They're giving you other equipment. Our equipment is going to be used to train new troops, and you'll have other equipment." We had no idea what it would be. We went back out a couple days later and it would break your heart. We had World War I equipment that hadn't been maintained, the trucks were old war trucks. It was terrible.

Interviewer: And this is what they wanted you to take overseas?

Paul Huber: --take over seas in to combat. It was terrible. We went to New York aboard a ship. Prior to this -- two months prior to the going overseas -- we sent officers to New Jersey to check ships that we were going to go on and how the ship was being loaded and where to put the guns and equipment and so forth. Well, when we loaded up, none of this happened. We were on different boats than what we were told we'd be on. It was raining, a terrible night in New York. It was dark, late. We were on a boat that had been converted from ships that were sending the tourists down to South America, about 300 tourists on the boat. It wasn't a real large ship. Anyway, in loading out, they found out that after everybody was on board, there were still 300-odd troops that couldn't get aboard ship that they had no space for. When I say space, the officers were in state rooms in hammocks six high, stacked like sardines. The men were out in the holds, and they had in the holds where they slept on top of boxes of hand grenades and small

arms ammunition. Another hold had gasoline tanks and Jerry cans, 5 gallon can. Terrible, but that's what they slept on. There were 300 people that didn't have this type of space.

Interviewer: You said 300 tourists. How many enlisted men and officers did they carry on that boat?

Paul Huber: Pardon.

Interviewer: It was set for 300 tourists, but when they loaded it up with enlisted men, how many were on there?

Paul Huber: There was one infantry regiment, the 39th Infantry Regiment and the artillery battalion. We had probably three -- there was one, two, three, four, possibly 500 people in our regiment, and the Army had close to 2,000 people. I don't know exactly.

Interviewer: So the boat that was geared for 300 had over 2,000?

Paul Huber: Yeah, it was crowded. They finally sent to Washington, D.C. and had wood folding canvas cots, and they set them up on the deck of the ship for these extra people that were going on. We sailed out of New York in October. We were some of the first combat troops to go overseas.

Interviewer: This is October of '42?

Paul Huber: '42, yes.

Interviewer: And you were a lieutenant?

Paul Huber: I was made a captain just before we went aboard ship--

Interviewer: I see.

Paul Huber: --I got a captaincy. I was captain of the headquarters battery of the 26th Field Artillery. When they got out on the ocean, the spray coming in on the poor guys on the deck made it impossible for them. We had to crowd them in someplace else. It was terrible. The mess lines were almost continuous to feed them. They'd eat and try to get some sleep and then get back in the mess line. But they went up to Newfoundland and discharged the people that were sleeping on deck -- put them ashore -- and we went on to Ireland.

Interviewer: What was the sanitation like on board?

Paul Huber: It was terrible. It had a swimming pool, and they made that in to a latrine, and it was constantly being clogged. It was just -- it wasn't good. They got short on meals, started to. There wasn't really enough food for the people on deck. There was an officers' mess for Navy, there was a captain's mess, there was a mess for the sailors, there was a mess for the Army, there was a mess for -- what did the other -- other naval units. So, there were four or five different messes going on to try to feed the various organizations. We went to Ireland, we were taken off the boat, and shipped on a train to Northern Ireland for a week --10 days -- where we did marching and that was about all. They reloaded us back on the ship and we went over to Scotland and they had a mock maneuver over there when the other ships that were going into the engagement caught up with us. After that, we sailed out south, and about a day out, they told us we were going on to Africa on invasion. We were scheduled to go in to Algiers. There was a group going into Oran and Morocco, but we were going the farthest in to Algiers. The morning before the invasion, there were two ships and we were the lead ship. When a German plane came over, I was on the deck when they came by and you could see the pilot, he was that low on

the plane. He dropped a torpedo just as he passed us, and it hit the second ship on the rear end and caused it to stay -- it didn't sink the ship, but it couldn't move, so we were the only ship going in to Algiers.

We went in to where we were to do a D-Day invasion, and the troops were disembarked and the landing ships were Chris-Craft 12-cylinder sports boats. They weren't regular landing craft at all. You had to crawl over the hull and sort to get in and out. How they expected to get guns or vehicles in off of those -- no way whatsoever they could have done it. They held about 10 people at a time. I went in on the second wave and shortly after I went in, a German bomb hit our ship in the rear hold and the captain was able to beach the ship. Got enough power to get in and beach it. We went ashore and the boat shore line was loaded with these Chris-Craft boats that got beached and couldn't get off. Luckily, there was very little resistance. It was primarily French soldiers, and our mission was to take the airport in Algiers. At about 2:00 in the morning, the French capitulated and we occupied the airport.

Interviewer: You were fighting the Vichy French forces?

Paul Huber: Yes. When the infantry started to run into some resistance taking the airport, they asked for some artillery to support it. Well, the artillery hadn't got in yet, and they brought the guns on the beach, and low and behold, they weren't French-75s, they were Pack-75s. So, they did finally get them together -- they were in separate pieces, old World War I Pack-75s. They called for some ammunition, they brought the ammunition in, and it was French-75 ammunition, so we didn't have any artillery ammunition. It was terrible. It had some good things about it. They captured the airport, and the reason for the airport was the British Spitfires were coming from Gibraltar, and that's the only airport available anywhere near. They did not have any gas, so that had to be taken so they could land, otherwise they would have to ditch their planes. We

were in Algiers until about the first part of March kind of watching the cities and so forth. They then brought equipment from Oran -- the 4th Infantry Division's equipment -- and gave to us and we went across Africa to fight there and relieve the British.

So we made a midnight march across Africa, and took the town of Gafsa, which is outside of Tunis. Then we got into a battle with the Germans, Rommel and his troops and what they called the -- anyway, it was a valley. The 1st Infantry Division and the 9th Infantry Division were in the valley and pushed forward, and pushed the Germans back. We pushed the Germans back. That's where our units got its first casualties was in that battle. We came back from that and made another overnight march up to Kasserine Valley to remove the Germans there. It was a real battle -- rough. It was mountainous territory and it means taking mountain by mountain, but the units finally took it and started for the city of Beirut. They pulled us back from that and let the French go in and take Beirut. While in Algiers waiting for our equipment to come in, we lost everything when the boat went down. All our uniforms were in the hold where they dropped the bomb and it was all destroyed. So, for several weeks, all we had was the uniforms we had on our back when we landed. We landed with, 45 pistols and 45 Tommy guns. All the officers had the Tommy gun and the enlisted men had rifles.

Interviewer: How many rounds would those Tommy guns hold?

Paul Huber: Fifty rounds.

Interviewer: Was it automatic?

Paul Huber: You could set it automatic or single. But we carried 500 rounds extra of ammunition, and that's a lot of extra ammunition to carry. It's heavy, it's heavy. Plus your nap sack and tent and so forth that you carried. Then they took the 75 Pack Howitzers over to the

French for their people to use. I and one other officers was given the job of training the French on how to use the gun, set it up, and fire it and so on. As the result of that, I did get the French Legion, the merit decoration which very few people got. I was awarded that by General de Gaulle and we had several other meetings with de Gaulle because of that, which was interesting.

Interviewer: Let me ask you a couple things. You heard of Rommel. What were the rumors about Rommel and what he was doing, and did they have better equipment than you guys had?

Paul Huber: The German tanks, as a tank against a tank, was superior. They had heavier guns than we had, higher velocity guns. Their initial ammunition was apparently better than our guns. The thing that out-maneuvered them was, if we lost the one tank, we got two more back to replace it. We had quicker firepower and more tanks and the artillery was much better artillery than theirs. With the two of them, they overcame the German tanks. The 47th Infantry -- one of the units there -- got the Army Merit for standing up and firing against a tank gun, at point blank ranges almost. The artillery won out on it.

Interviewer: When you first went in, you said you were fighting the Vichy French, and apparently there were friendly French forces there, too. So you ended up training the friendly French forces, did they ever fight against the Vichy French forces?

Paul Huber: Not that I know of, no. I didn't see any of the unorganized French units, let's put it that way, in my service. They were there somewhere, the Senegalese. There was a lot of talk about that -- the Senegalese. They didn't carry guns. All they carried were sabers, and they always attacked at night and on horses, and this type of talk. We crossed initially from Rommel and they sent us all the way back to a station out in the Sahara Desert just outside of a town called Sidi-Bel-Abbes, which is right on the edge of the Sahara Desert. We were camped in a

cedar type tree forest in tents. The temperature in the day time sometimes would reach up to 120, 130 degrees. We did not have anything happen between 11:00 and 2:00 in the afternoons. Everybody was confined to their tents, which were better than being out in the sun, but that's about all you can say about it. We were limited to a helmet of water a day per person for bathing and taking care of yourself. When we were there in that camp, they give us an R&R in Oran for one day. We came back about a week later. They shipped us all the way across the continent again. I shouldn't say shipped us, we went in our trucks on the travel back. We then got in boats out of Beirut and went on D-Day into Sicily.

Interviewer: The drinking water, did they just fill up your helmet and that had to be drinking water as well?

Paul Huber: Well, you had a canteen, and each of the units had a 500 gallon water tank as part of their kitchen equipment and you'd go there and get the water. We used the, uh -- two little white pills you used to put in to your canteen whenever you filled it.

Interviewer: For sanitation or whatever it was.

Paul Huber: Right.

Interviewer: What were the rumors and thoughts about General Montgomery? Did you have any thoughts or attitudes about him?

Paul Huber: I shouldn't say my attitudes about him. They're not good, they're not good.

Interviewer: Well, we're not going to tell anybody.

Paul Huber: Well, I thought he was a showman and I have to say that about also--

Interviewer: Patton?

Paul Huber: --Patton, yeah. I just I had some personal contacts with Patton, and it was not good. We were, uh -- within a half hour after he slapped the kid in Sicily, we knew about it. We were right across the street in a grove right across the street in a bivouac where the Army medical unit was just on the other side of the road in the other part of the olive orchard when it happened. Also, his conduct with the troops that I saw -- I couldn't take it. None of the other generals were like that that at all. He was a showman, period.

Interviewer: How did the other enlisted men react to that slapping incident?

Paul Huber: Well I wasn't with -- and he never had any personal, direct contact with any enlisted men in our unit. If he came in, he came into the headquarters camp where we were, and contacted the battery commander, or the battalion commander usually. The enlisted men had no contact, other than the fact that if he would see an enlisted man and he didn't have his leggings on, or didn't have his gas mask on, he would tell one of his sergeants, "Get the name of that man and report him." Things like that. His helmet was shellacked and shiny. You could tell he was coming because you could hear his siren blowing a mile away and he would have two Jeeps in front of him, and then his Jeep. Oh man, it was just all showmanship.

Interviewer: So the officers probably resented that kind of thing, I guess.

Paul Huber: He slapped that kid and he was arrested. "You can't arrest me," as the story was told. But the officer did arrest him and took him. Anyway, they called all the troops in just outside the town of, uh -- I'll think of it.

Interviewer: It wasn't Palermo, was it?

Paul Huber: Palermo, I am sorry. We were about five miles outside of Palermo right on the Mediterranean Coast where we were bivouacked, and they called us in and told us they were going to have an assembly of all the troops to receive an apology from Patton. It would be such-and-such a time, such-and-such a date. It was out on a big air field, and of course the time was something like 8:00 in the morning. You will have the troops in line by 7:30. So, it backs up, you are getting the troops up at 5:00 in the morning to go out and have him apologize to the troops. There were quite a number of troops out on this field, lined up and so forth. It was started about 5:00 in the morning, getting people lined up and so forth for it. He was late coming out. He wasn't there at 8:00. Finally he came out, and I can't say over the air what he said, "But if I did this, I apologize," and got off the stand, and that was it.

Interviewer: So you were present at that--

Paul Huber: Yes, I was there. I was responsible for my unit getting out there and lining up our unit. So, I was there. I saw it. That is the truth.

Interviewer: How did the movie Patton -- was it accurate, or was it inaccurate?

Paul Huber: What I saw, it was put on. It was nothing but for Patton. It was the same as when, the general walked in to Japan--

Interviewer: MacArthur.

Paul Huber: --MacArthur going in. I had a personal friend that was there when MacArthur went in.

(Cell phone ringing)

Crew: We have to start over.

Interviewer: If you have your cell phones, turn them off. Sorry, we should have told you that to start with. Go back to where MacArthur, you were talking about

Paul Huber: MacArthur went in -- the picture shows him walking in the ocean. Prior to that, he was personally--

(Cell phone ringing)

Crew: Turn it off.

Interviewer: Just a second.

Crew: Let me just go tell her.

Interviewer: Give us the details and thoughts, you know.

Paul Huber: When he first went in, he was carried through the--

Interviewer: Water.

Paul Huber: --the water over to dry land when they took the picture of him. Later on, he got in the boat and walked in on it. He and Patton -- they were two of a kind. I take you back before we went overseas. They called all the officers of the unit into a big tent they set up. Patton was there, and General Collins was there, and two or three others were there. I can remember Patton's words. It was just so -- again, I can't say the words he said on the air, I just can't do it. To me as an individual, it was repulsive. I didn't like war, I didn't want to go to war, but I was part of it, but it didn't have to be what he was talking about. "The finest thing a man can do is to fight for his country." Well, yes and no. You know, why is he fighting for it? What is the outcome after you get there? His ideas in life were entirely opposite to what mine were on it. I

didn't believe in killing people and so forth with to show something worthy and so forth. I got into the spirit that I could kill Germans -- which I did -- and it didn't affect me and hasn't affected me in any way. It was either them or yourself, so what do you do.

He was also responsible for the landing in Sicily. We went in on D-Day in Sicily. Actually, it was in an almond orchard that we went in. Again we went without very much resistance -- very little. They didn't expect it and weren't expecting the people then.

Interviewer: Did they have better equipment, or was it still those Chris-Craft boats and stuff?

Paul Huber: No, I actually went in on a private yacht. Some British nobility had donated his boat. It was large enough to take our headquarters battery in on. We went right in and landed on a dock and got off on a dock. Most of the troops -- they destroyed the dock, and that's where they got off. They didn't go in. At that time, they did have some of these mobile tanks -- what they called them "mobile tanks" -- that could run on the ground and they had water-proofed bodies and they had a propeller motor that propelled them onto the shore. The sad thing was the paratroopers and the gliders. I don't think there was 10 percent of the glider personnel that survived on that invasion. I don't know whether there's any statistics on that at all, but they had put up -- just as they had on Utah beach -- telephone poles or tree poles at 8-foot intervals on any open space for two or three miles back. The only thing you could land on was a road way, and there were very few roads. There were some major roads along the coast, and that was it. I saw dozens of glider pilots planes with the whole 30 people inside -- or 20, whatever they carried -- still in the planes killed, you know, dead in the plane. They never got out. They hit these posts and just shattered. It was terrible, terrible. He was responsible for that invasion and that thing, and he should have been held accountable for it. The planes were let loose prior to what they

supposed to and -- I don't know. There are some good things and there are some bad things that go on. I think today, when they mention two or three people killed, I can remember days when 300 in our unit were killed. It's so different than what we experienced.

Interviewer: You know, the early days of the war are almost a forgotten part of the war because of what happened later. Yet, with those glider pilots and all that stuff, it must have been a heart wrenching thing, especially with your equipment--

Paul Huber: It is. It was -- you just felt so upset about it when you saw it. I got my Silver Star in Sicily. We landed in this orchard on the southeast coast of Sicily and we went west to go in and capture Palermo. We went west on the south bank of the island on the main road. After we got about half way down the road on the island, got word -- I was in the battery commander's office -- they said, "We think there's a unit that wants to surrender." I went up and got the fellow that said he knew where it was, and I said, "Come on, we'll go up and check them out." We went out, and it was a shore battery. A Sicilian shore battery held a white flag -- as we approached, put up a white flag, so we went in. It was a compound and they had large guns in the compound. There were about 30 people in the compound. They said that they hadn't had food for three days and were hungry and they didn't have any ammunition and so forth, and they wanted to surrender. We always carried C-rations in our vehicles -- a case of C-rations -- so I just gave them the C-rations and said, "I don't know whether we have a prisoner compound set up for prisoners or whether we should just let you loose and stay here." I said, "I'll go back and find out." So I went back and told the battalion commander what was on and he said, "Well, go back and talk to them. Turn them loose, let them go." I went back and the commander was still there. I said, "Just let your troops go and get in civilian clothes. They were all Sicilian, they were local people. Anyway, we continued on up near Troina--

Interviewer: Let me ask you a question about that. Just you and enlisted men walked up to this gun emplacement that had white flags out?

Paul Huber: When they saw that we put up our white flag, they put up a white flag also.

Interviewer: How did you communicate with them?

Paul Huber: English. We had a lot of people out of New York who were Italian, and I would say 20 percent of the people in my unit could speak Italian. While we were in Sicily, we actually gave three-day passes for people to go visit their relatives there. They usually returned in one day (laughing). The living was -- Sicily, where we were, was not very good living. Palermo was a modern city, but outside of Palermo, it was mud huts, it looked like. All the homes were made of mud bricks. The streets were very narrow. You could hardly run a tank down between the streets on it.

Interviewer: And these 30 prisoners, most of them were Italian, Sicilian citizens that the Germans--

Paul Huber: --had recruited, yeah. Anyway, Palermo had fallen and been taken over. I think it was a division out of Arizona that had taken Palermo. They told our division to go back east to the center of Sicily to go to the coast of Mount Etna, so we started turning through the center of Italy on the main road going down the center of Italy. The infantry had been stopped and ran into some heavy resistance. Another officer and myself -- we didn't have any observers out capable of seeing anything, and battalion commander said, "We'll get somebody out forward to do some observation." I was selected to go forward, so we went forward with a Jeep on top of a hill gradually. We didn't see any American soldiers, didn't see any German soldiers. I got up on

the peak and could see the whole valley. It was a beautiful observation point. So we had radio contact back to the unit and I radioed back

Crew: Could you stop for one second please. I'm sorry, I have coughing fits occasionally.

Interviewer: Sorry about that, are you all right?

Crew: Yeah, if I start again, I'll just leave. Sorry. You can have him start again with walking down the road and seeing the valley.

Paul Huber: I reached the peak, and got up and I could see the whole valley ahead, for miles across the valley. I radioed back to the CP that I would stay there and observe. It was shortly after that that I happened to be looking to the south and saw a flash -- a gun flash -- and right shortly thereafter, a shell aimed for apparently the observation where I was landed down below. I picked up the flash and so I called for some artillery fire. I had a smoke shot so I could orient myself with the gun and the target and I gave some corrections. They shot the next round and I said, "It was right on the target." So I gave them an order to fire for effect, which meant all four guns would fire on that target. At that time, they started to use white phosphorus as one of the ammunitions, and shrapnel. We used white phosphors, and as soon as that hit, the whole area started to burn. So we saturated that with artillery fire, the area generally. I think it was two days later when we started to move out. After that, there was no more artillery fire on me, but I fired many artillery rounds on different targets. I was the only observer out of the division that was observing any fire and so forth. Up until dark, I was firing the whole unit. Then in the morning, that night, there was a hay stack just off the back side of the hill, and my driver and we buried ourselves in the hay stack for the night for sleeping. In the morning, we got up just after sun-up, and low and behold, here come the troops up from behind us. They were all so surprised

to see that we were up there. They thought it was German territory being held by the Germans. I went back to the unit and the next day following that, we went back to where I saw the fire and the trucks. There were several trucks that had been burned, there was a little house there and that was demolished. The guns were out in a grape orchard and they were all turned over and had been destroyed. If there were any bodies, they moved the bodies out. We didn't see any bodies.

Interviewer: You mentioned that you had a smoke gun. Is that for you to determine the windage or something to--

Paul Huber: To tell where the line of fire of the gun was. You knew then whether to move is right or left or how far--

Interviewer: For the coordinates for the artillery in the background?

Paul Huber: Yeah, we usually did it once like that. You'd say, "Move 300 left, increase 400," and they would increase it. At that time, they didn't have the proximity shell, and you had to adjust the fuse on the tip of the shell so that the shell would break above the ground. It was a timed fuse with a powder train in it that burned for so long. So you not only had to adjust the gun, but you adjusted the shell. You wanted that shell to explode about 30 feet above the ground so you have the effect of the shrapnel. If it went off in the ground, it was like a buried explosion. You didn't get the effect from it. When we went in to Europe, they came out with what they called the "proximity fuse," and it automatically, as it approached the ground, would go off automatically. You didn't have to set it.

Interviewer: Probably saved a lot of American lives by knocking out that gun emplacement.

Paul Huber: Oh, there's no question about it. The point where I was at had been used by the Germans. I picked up a case of German binoculars on that I have at home that they had left with ice lenses in it. In Sicily, we were stationed, like I said, just out of Palermo. They told us in Africa that once the invasion Africa was over, at least 10 percent of the troops would be located back to the United States. That was cancelled by our good man, General Patton. When we got into Sicily, the same story or same rumor that the troops would be rotated. No troops were rotated. The commanders say, "We've got trained troops, we want trained troops. We don't want somebody that hasn't been before in action, and know, and so on." It was kind of disheartening. The only way you got a promotion in an artillery unit is to have somebody killed. The only ones that were getting killed were the observers.

Interviewer: Yeah, like you were.

Paul Huber: Yeah. Anyway, it was quite disappointing. Then they said they were going to invade Italy and we would be part of the invasion force in Italy. In fact, one of our units was on the boat ready to go, but they were disembarked and they said, "No, you're going to Europe in England." It was about the 15th of November. We loaded out again on some ships to go to England. Our unit was on what they called the Hawaiian Skipper. It was a boat that sailed between Hawaii and the United States with pineapples. It was their main cargo. We sailed around and there were several submarine alerts and dropping of depth bombs and so forth. Again, the ship was not equipped it had for troops on board. We started out with two meals a day. We went to one meal a day. We went into England, in the port of England, on Thanksgiving Day. The only food the men had on that day -- the Queen Elizabeth was in harbor, so they sent a boat over to the Queen of England ship and they brought back a load of bread in

big baskets. We gave half a loaf of bread to the men till we got disembarked into England on Thanksgiving Day.

Interviewer: Was that in 1942?

Paul Huber: '42 or '43

Interviewer: Or was it '43?

Paul Huber: '43, yeah, because we had Christmas in Africa -- '41, '42, so it was '43.

Interviewer: '43, yeah.

Paul Huber: We were based in a small school outside of London, and we were there until June. We had very little training to get out, there wasn't any space to. It was physical training, mostly, for the troops. We went over to Wales to check out the proximity fuse and show how it worked for about a week, but that was the only maneuvers we had. We were moved in to our disembarkment camp. I was given an order while we were there that I was to go up to the division staff as anti-tank officer for the 9th Infantry Division. So I moved up out of the 26th Field Artillery to the division headquarters. I was assigned while I was there to be the liaison officer for the division to contact the airborne troops on the landings so that I could give the information when the division landed back to them on what the situation was. I went in on D-Day on what they called the second wave. It was about 4:00 -- 3 to 4:00 in the afternoon -- when we hit the beach.

Interviewer: You land on Higgins boat?

Paul Huber: I went on a regular landing craft boat--

Interviewer: Regular boat at that time.

Paul Huber: --with a Jeep. I had a French officer with me who was to contact the French underground when we landed. There was still a lot of firing going on on the beach. We went off of the --I happened to be the first vehicle off of the boat in the Jeep, and it was waterproof, so-called waterproof underneath. Luckily, we got ashore. I don't know who else got ashore afterwards. Immediately, you got off the beach as fast as you could. We did get off the beach, and I went to Sainte-Mère-Église. That was my first German contact and they shot at us. We went in to a burrow pit -- they missed us -- and then went down the road. There were still men hanging up in the trees from their parachutes that had been caught hanging there. There was one on the steeple, in front of the steeple on the church. It was rough.

Interviewer: Did you land on Omaha Beach?

Paul Huber: No, I landed on Utah Beach.

Interviewer: When you got to Sainte-Mère-Église. That famous picture of the guy hanging from the steeple -- you saw that?

Paul Huber: I saw that, definitely.

Interviewer: The guy was still there.

Paul Huber: There was a dead guy down on the ground right in front of it, and the tank was in back of the church when it show at us when we came out. We made contact with the headquarters of, I guess it was the 82nd Airborne or 121 Airborne Division. It was confusion. They were gradually getting people together in small groups. Again, there were all these telephone poles that these people had to come down between and so forth. There were small

groups that got together, and the country side was hedgerows -- what they call hedgerows -- which was about three feet wide, 3 or 4 feet wide, and 10 feet tall. You couldn't get through it, no way you could work yourself through it. You had to get to some type of an entry where somebody had cut an opening to get out of it. It was rough territory, it was rough. We made contact -- the 60th Combat Team was assigned, and they came in on D-Day in the morning on the initial invasion. They were given assignment of cutting off the peninsula, going directly west and cutting off over to the ocean. So we captured the Cherbourg Peninsula. By about the third day that had been accomplished. Then we started up the road right along the Atlantic Ocean around to Cherbourg. The road was littered. Luckily we had some clear days and the Air Force had superiority over there. They had caught the Germans trying to retreat on that road and it was a massacre. It was loaded with vehicles and guns and horses. They had some horse-drawn equipment that the Germans were using. They just bulldozed the stuff off the side of the road. I went forward on that and got some local people to build a bridge, or fill in a bridge so our vehicles could cross. Then we went around through that and more towards Cherbourg. There was a big underground German facility in Cherbourg. It was called the German Mediterranean Fleet Control. There was about, just under 4,000 German troops in that cavity. The entrance was in a gravel pit and they'd gone in horizontally and built this underground facility. Our general, General Eddy, had landed and was in and came up by the facility. It was surrounded by Americans. Somebody said, "Go down and see if they won't surrender." I again had the opportunity of going down holding a white flag, and walked in towards the unit. They stuck out a white flag through a machine gun opening and opened the door and two people walked out. It was a general and his assistant, they came out and I walked down and met them. I guess I wasn't a very good looking -- uniform was rough, hadn't been changed for four or five days, nothing

since the landing, not shaved, and so on. He was a big officer, six-foot-something, and he came up and he could speak English. So we communicated in English and he said he wanted to surrender, so I said, "Fine, come up with me and I will take you up to my general. He is up above here." So they came up, took them up to General Eddy and they were like old buddies.

Interviewer: How many men did this guy have underneath?

Paul Huber: Pardon?

Interviewer: How many men did the German officer have?

Paul Huber: He was in charge of the underground facility, which was roughly 4,000 troops.

Interviewer: So, 4,000 troops and wanted to surrender the whole thing?

Paul Huber: He surrendered the whole thing. So, we went up there and I said, "What do we do? Is there a prisoner of war camp set up yet to send them to or what?" And they said there was one being set up. So I went back down into bunker and led the first group out of. There were close to 4,000 troops that came out of it. I got several hand guns and so forth they brought out I had them give them to me and so on that I brought home. A Luger P-38, a Luger -- several different makes of guns. That was the first general I think that was captured.

Interviewer: You still a captain at the time?

Paul Huber: Pardon?

Interviewer: Were you a captain at the time?

Paul Huber: No, I had received my major.

Interviewer: You were a major then.

Paul Huber: Yes, after I landed, then they gave me a major. The anti-tank officer was a major position, but I didn't get it till after the landing. I had picked up malaria, either in Africa or in Sicily, and when we were in England -- shortly after, about 2 weeks after we were in England -- I broke down with malaria. They said it couldn't be malaria, you couldn't have malaria in England. But it was malaria.

Interviewer: It was malaria.

Paul Huber: It was malaria. Before the month was out, there were 30 percent of the troops that were in the hospitals with malaria. Luckily, I came out of it okay. I went back to the unit and we made the break out for Patton to go through to make his Falaise Gap, I think is what they called it. The 9th Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Division, and the 1st Infantry Division were the ones that opened up the German ranks and Patton got through it. Once you got through the frontlines, unless there happened to be somebody in reserve, you're in free country, and that's what happened with Patton. He got through that frontline that was broken by the 9th Division and the 1st Division -- the three divisions -- and he went through and he could go 40 miles without any problem, you know.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Paul Huber: And that was nice, he did, and they captured a lot of Germans in that gap. It upset the Germans and their operation. We were headed out for Paris, which was us as an assignment, to enter Paris. We were on the outskirts of Paris and, uh, they said you can't go in. We had actually had officers who had gone into Paris and came back and said that the Germans had left. We were sent south of Paris to Mortagne and we captured that.

Interviewer: So they let the French forces to come in--

Paul Huber: And Patton.

Interviewer: --and did that bug you guys a little bit?

Paul Huber: Yeah, and Patton. Anyway, we went through around there and we crossed the Maginot Line and we had troops in Konz, Germany, the first ones at Konz. We crossed the Roer River, which was a rather interesting story because they thought that they had built some big dams on the Roer River, which they hadn't. We were in the Hurtgen Forest before the Battle of the Bulge.

Interviewer: You were there before the Bulge?

Paul Huber: Yeah, we were there before the bulge. I have an interesting story to tell you though. I was probably, one of the few people from Utah in the 9th Infantry Division. When we went overseas, I was told I was the only one from Utah. But with replacements coming in, I'm sure others had come in from Utah. I was LDS. In Fayetteville, there were no LDS chapels, never ran in to an LDS missionary. So whenever we did run into one – a couple that my wife knew in high school, he was there -- but other than that, I never ran into anybody that I'd ever known in my life that had anything to do with the church. I went overseas and Africa, the same thing -- nobody, never heard about anybody. Went into Sicily, and while I was in Sicily, the Stars and Stripes -- I saw a copy of that came in to the headquarters -- and it listed that there would be LDS services in a little town just outside of Palermo on Sunday. I said, "Gosh Paul, why don't you go over there and maybe you'll know somebody." So I went over there to go to have a service and nobody else was there. I sat around, sat around, and finally a vehicle came and stopped and the officer came up -- a captain, and I was a captain -- came up and said, "Are you LDS?" I said

“Yes,” and he said, “Wasn't there supposed to be a meeting here?” And I said, “I don't know, I saw a notice that said it was.” And he said, “You're LDS?” And I said “Yes,” and we started talking -- where are you from, and back and forth. I told him I was from Utah and so on, and he said “What's your name?” “It's Huber,” and he said, “My name's Huber.” He said, “My name's Huber.” I said, “What? Where are you from?” He said, “I'm from Arizona,” and I said, “Who's your father?” He gave me his father's name, and I said, “You're my cousin!” (laughter).

Interviewer: His father was your dad's brother?

Paul Huber: Yeah, my father's family settled in Mexico, went into Mexico to settle up there. My didn't stay, he came back and went to Salt Lake and his mother and father settled in Payson, but all the other brothers were over in Mexico on that church property over there. When they were driven out, they stopped in Mesa, Arizona, and settled mesa. There were two uncles in Mesa, the family. Well, we talked and went and had dinner at a little restaurant and said goodbye to one another and so forth. On my way home -- I'm getting ahead of myself a bit -- on the way home, I was standing in a mess line waiting to have breakfast, and a sergeant came down the line and said, “Major Huber, Major Huber!” I raised my hand, “I'm Major Huber!” And the guy right in front of me raised his hand, “I'm Major Huber.” He turned around, looked at me. It was my cousin. He had been rotated also, and it was for him. It wasn't for me. That was an interesting--

Interviewer: This was in Italy.

Paul Huber: No, this was in France, now.

Interviewer: In France, okay.

Paul Huber: Yeah, and we were on our way. He was being rotated home and I was being rotated home. No, we cross the Roer River and we had a large front along the Hurtgen Forest and Malmedy and that area. The 1st Infantry Division was up north and -- uh, what's the big German city up there, starts with "a"? I can't think of it. Anyway, they were fighting it and there was a little town south of it and they called the 9th Infantry Division, the corps, and put us in and moved us north out of the Hurtgen Forest into this place to take this other city, which we did, we moved north. A brand new unit moved in and took over where we were. Took over our wiring, everything. They just took the positions. We moved out and went north and we captured the town north. One of the prisoners -- we had a lot of German artillery firing, and then all of a sudden it stopped and they captured some German prisoners and they brought them back. They questioned them what was going on, what had happened. They had moved all the German artillery south, the Germans were preparing a big breakthrough. Our word was, when it was reported to higher headquarters, the Germans are incapable of a major push. So nobody thought much about it. Then about two days later is when the Germans made their push through right where we were originally.

Interviewer: Hmm.

Paul Huber: So that division really got murdered. I mean, they were really a lot of casualties on it. Immediately, they called and gave us assignments to reinforce and recapture that area again. So we were right up in the nose of the breakthrough.

Interviewer: You went back to the Hurtgen Forest?

Paul Huber: Yeah, and you've got to realize this is winter. I learned what icicles were and where they came from on Christmas trees in that Hurtgen Forest. It was 30 degrees below temperature

some nights. We didn't have really winter uniforms. We had winter wool, but the men in the 18 inches of snow on the ground, and never getting above freezing in the day time, it was rough. It was really rough. So getting to the icicles, Hurtgen Forest is a man-made forest. The trees were in line. You could drive down through rows of trees in either direction, about 15 feet apart. These were pine trees, big needles, and the icicles would form on them and would be three feet, two feet long. They were beautiful when the sun hit it, but that's where icicles -- you don't remember putting aluminum icicles on your trees as a kid?

Interviewer: No, I remember.

Paul Huber: Well, that's where it came from. We were up there, right in the nose of that. When they got clear weather for the planes could come over, that was the end of the Battle of Bulge. The planes wiped the tanks out that were stopped on the road. They didn't have gas -- the German tanks and so on -- and that was the beginning of the end.

Interviewer: Where were you when the end came?

Paul Huber: Well, let me tell you a bit about it. We went from there to Remagen Bridge. I think it was the 3rd Armored, we had one of their units attached to our division. That unit captured the Remagen Bridge. I personally worked in the S-3 of the division. My job was at night time, as anti-tank officer, was to go out after dark and check every road which had been in our division sector to see that there was anti-tank units set up and manned so if anything came through they could report to the division of any tank attacks and so forth. So I would go out at dark and check all the front lines. I'd get back anywhere from 12:00 to 2:00 in the morning, and wake up the general and go over with him where all the tanks or roads were and what was at each of those road blocks. I hated waking him up every night, just, but he insisted on it and that was my job.

Then in the day time, I worked in the S-3 office to keep up the maps and answer the telephone and do calls. We got a call in that the bridge had been taken. We reported it, I personally called to tell corps headquarters that the unit was across the bridge and had secured it on the other side. The report was, "Don't send any troops across the bridge." Unbelievable, but that was the orders. General Craig was our general then of the division, and he said, "Something's wrong. We've got to get troops across that bridge while we got it." About an hour later, he came back and said, "We can send the regiment of troops across the bridge and the forward observer, the forward head quarters." The division was made of a forward headquarters and a rear headquarters and when we made a move, the forward headquarters go up and set up the headquarters and when we got set up and the communications, then the rear one would come up forward and go together. I was part of the forward unit and so I crossed the Remagen Bridge about 3:00 in the afternoon the day it was captured, along with the rest of the headquarters unit and the 47th Infantry Regiment. No tanks were allowed on it, no artillery was allowed to cross it. It was just nothing but the infantry on it.

Interviewer: Are we running late?

Crew: Yeah, we just need to wrap it up.

Interviewer: Okay, we will wrap it up here because of time. Go ahead.

Paul Huber: Luckily, the next morning, the bridge was collapsed because an engineer – an American -- had cut the wrong beam or something. I actually was out on the river bank and watched the bridge tumble in o the river and helped pull men out of the river that were on the bridge at the time. Remagen Bridge was captured. We went forward. It was about six weeks I

think before they got another bridge across, a floating bridge to give us. That was rough. The only rations we had was what we had in our vehicles, C-rations, terrible.

Interviewer: What was the first infantry group that crossed that bridge? Do you remember that? The first group of infantry that crossed that bridge.

Paul Huber: That was the 47th Infantry Regiment.

Crew: We have, what was his name that went across.

Interviewer: He was in the 99th.

Crew: The 99th? That was the first one.

Interviewer: Yeah, I thought that was the first one, too. That's why I'm curious.

Paul Huber: The unit was attached to the 3rd -- the tank battalion was attached to our unit at the time. Remagen was part of our project.

Interviewer: He was part of the armored division that captured it, I think.

Paul Huber: It could have been the 9th Armored.

Interviewer: There was a sign there, welcome to Germany courtesy of the 9th Armored Division.

Paul Huber: Yeah, Recon Division, but they were attached and they reported to us as well on it.

Interviewer: Well, you've really had some interesting war experiences.

Paul Huber: Well, we went through and then we went to the Elb River. We met the Russians on the same day the other unit met the Russians. That's where we were told we would not go to Berlin. That was the darkest message we ever received, was to tell the men that they have to pull

out and turn the territory over to the Russians. It was sickening, really. Nobody had ever told us that that was to be the outcome of the war.

Interviewer: Were the Russian soldiers, when you met them near the Elb River, were they real friendly to you?

Paul Huber: No. We had as many road blocks set up between the Russians and the Americans as we did between the Germans and Americans. That's a fact.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Paul Huber: You never left a vehicle unattended. You'd never get it back. It was--

Crew: Rick, can you ask him some of the questions?

Interviewer: Let me ask you, Paul, where were you when the war was over? Tell us about that, just a little bit.

Paul Huber: Golly, the war, May the 8th I think was the date. We got word that they had signed a peace treaty and so forth that was going on. Once we had been pulled back by the Russians, we knew we were pretty much -- the war was over, as far as we were concerned on it. We were given points for different things. You got so many points for an invasion; you got so many points for certain combat; certain years of service, you got so many points on and so forth. Anybody with 150 points or more automatically were to be rotated as the first group to go home. If you got a purple heart, you had so many points for a purple heart. Got two of them, you doubled the points. I had three D-Day landings. I had seven combat missions, major combat engagements like the Rommel Africa, and the landing in--

Interviewer: Sicily?

Paul Huber: --Utah Beach, the Falaise Gap, the Battle of the Bulge, the Battle of the Rhine. Different combats, there were seven European combats and I was in all of them. I had a silver star that had so many points. I had a bronze star that had so many points. I had almost 165 points, so I was right at the top of the list. Anybody who had been in a while was well up there. So they said there was going to be rotation and be prepared to be rotated. Then they had cut orders, they had been cut for people to be rotated. It wasn't within hours that that order was rescinded and said, "No, we can't. We want to keep our experienced officers in service." So, as a result, I had made a contact with the second person that I had met, that I knew, and then went to school with in elementary school. He was in a unit attached down the road. Somehow, he came into the office and I happened to be there and we recognized each other. He said, "Let's go hunting one day. Deer hunting." And I said, "Fine." He came over to the unit and we were out deer hunting because they come back and said you're not going to be rotated. The orders are changed. So we were out deer hunting and late in the afternoon, he got a call on his radio, "You've got Major Huber with you. Get him back to his office. He's needed there immediately." We came back to the unit, and they said, "You're being rotated. The orders are changed. You're back on the list, on number one on the list to get out of here. You have a half hour to get out of here. Catch the train." I reached in, you have to have your health permit up to date, your identification card, this and that and the other, and I reached in my pocket and I had lost my wallet. They said, "Oh, you can't go unless you have that." I said, "Okay." It wasn't 15 minutes that a telephone call came in, "You have Major Huber in your unit?" "Yes." "We have his wallet." So they brought it over, it was complete except for what little money that was in it, which was very little. All my registration, all that was intact, so I had my driver throw my stuff

together as best he could. I caught the train and I was sent home. I didn't even have time to say goodbye to any of the people I was working with, it was that fast in getting out.

Interviewer: So did you go back to England and then--

Paul Huber: No, we went, got on a train, took us down in to Southern France overnight, and that's whether the next morning, I met my cousin. He'd come in on the same type of deal and was there on his way home. We flew there over to Oran. In Oran the next morning, we were given fresh milk and it turned out it was, the guy came through and said, "Well, how did you like that?" That was the first fresh milk we'd had since we left the United States and everybody said, "It was good." "It was camel milk." (Laughter) So, they had modified the bombers, the B-17s, and put 2x12 planks down the bomb racks, taking those out. We were lined up facing each other in those planes and one flight would go to South America, and the next flight would go to the English Islands just off of Saint Francis, I think is what they called it. I was on one of the planes that went to Saint Francis, and then we went to Fort Meade in Florida from there and landed there. Then I took a train from there to come home to Salt Lake. While going through one town in Florida to pick up lunches, they give us sack lunches, a newsman came down the line questioning people and happened to grab me and questioned where I was from. I told him I was from Salt Lake, Utah, gave him my name, and so forth. He said, "Well, we'll notify your newspaper there that you're coming home." I had no time to call and had no means of notifying my wife or anybody that was on my way home. We did get -- I was assigned to take care of five other enlisted men that were going to the (inaudible) on the coast. We got into Salt Lake, I got off of the train. I was the only person off of the train -- the only soldier off of the train. The only person outside surprised me because I had no means that she was going to be there, but my wife was there waiting for me. Sorry.

Interviewer: I bet that was a big thrill.

Paul Huber: What had happened was, this kid that I went hunting with was out hunting when I got the notice I was coming home. Being a radio commander, he had means of contacting and he contacted his dad, who lived about a block away from my brother. His dad worked for the Union Pacific Railroad and my brother worked in the shops at the Union Pacific Railroad. He told his dad to tell Ernie that Paul's on his way home. So he called my wife and told her that he'd just got word that I was on my way home. He called her and she didn't know when the train was coming in. Luckily the Tribune had called her the previous day, there was a train coming in, and notified her that I was on that train and would be in. So she was there to meet me. I went up to Fort Douglas to report in. For the whole time I had been in the service, I never had any leave. So the maximum amount of leave you could have was 90 days. So I said, "I want my 90 days leave," which they gave me, and also I received a promotion to a Lieutenant Colonel at that time. Then Jane's father had bought some land in Bountiful during the war and we'd gone up there to look at that property. We were there when we had a telephone call that the bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. So I knew the war was then completely over and I wouldn't have to -- I could have stayed in the Army as an officer if I'd wanted to, but I didn't. I stayed in there as a Reserve Officer, but I never went in as a final officer. Then we set up our business afterwards -- that was Mister Midgley.

Crew: Paul, can you interrupt you for a second, I'm sorry. We are here for a limited time and have to let the crew go. I wanted to ask you some -- we want, Elizabeth (inaudible) and I are producing and editing this program and we want to talk about, we want some of the men to be willing to talk about comrades and how important trusting the friendships that you were sleeping

beside with in tanks and etc., that relationship. Do you have stories that you could -- and you need to look at Rick because the camera is set up to--

Interviewer: Answer as if I asked the question.

Crew: Maybe you can ask it in a better way, Rick.

Interviewer: Well just tell us your experiences with comrades that you had during the war and what it meant to you.

Paul Huber: Well, you got real close to some of the troops and others. I was closer probably to the troops while we were in Fort Bragg, some of them, than actually in combat. You got other things on your mind more than comrade-ship and so forth. You knew somebody was there to help you if you needed it. There was no question in your mind about that. If you needed something done and so forth, you knew who you could go to and get it done and that type of thing. I don't think there -- the clock didn't have any meaning if you were supposed to generally be there at 8:00 in the morning to take your shift, you could be there at 7:00 or 9:00 depending on somebody would be there to take over and so forth. The hard thing was is to -- crossing the Roer River. Usually the division would get excess officers of different rank and different qualification just to cover in case somebody did get injured or killed. A major from Cheyenne, Wyoming came in as one of these extra officers crossing the Roer River. The company commander got killed, and this officer, the general called him in and said, "I would like you would go out and take over that company that's crossing the river." He was killed that night. That's hard, but you go on. You don't -- it's sad and so on, but what can you do. It's going to happen. Our division had over 12,000 people killed out of the division.

Interviewer: Hmm, yeah.

Paul Huber: The division has roughly 10,000 people as its normal cadre on it. It had close to 20 to 30,000 casualties, what they called wounded people in it. I didn't get a scratch.

Interviewer: Yeah. If you were say to future generations, is there a message that you would like to leave to future generations?

Paul Huber: Oh, I'd hope -- war is hell. It's a lot different now. I see things that go on now that would have been heaven for us as far as war and carrying on the war and so on. Uh, accommodations and so forth, there's no comparison between what we had, or, I guess, what we had against World War I. The difference is so great that, uh, I don't know. After the war, since the war, I haven't had much contact, in fact, very little contact, with any of the people I was with. None of them I was very close with were from the west. They were all off of the other coast. Most of them were in New York or Boston area. I just lost contact with them over the years.

Interviewer: How important has your World War II experience been to the rest of your life?

Paul Huber: Well, let's say, I am glad I had it, but I wish I didn't have to have it. It is something I was willing to do. I had committed myself to it when I -- it was my means of getting an education, initially. I have no, no real regrets about it. Somebody had to do that job. I just hope it never happens again in the world -- that somebody thinks that they're going to rule the world, or that there's going to be another war like what we were in.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Paul Huber: This idea of people conquering lands and so forth, I think it's wrong.

Interviewer: Paul, we want to thank you for coming in today. You did a great job. The detail that you had was just traffic. We've gone a little bit over here, do we have any other --

Crew: I wish we had another hour with you. You just remember things like--

Paul Huber: Things like rape and murder and this and that and then the other--

Crew: That those were--

Paul Huber: --that that is honorable to do these things and so forth. It just hit me wrong.

Interviewer: Yeah, I can understand that.

Paul Huber: I might mention that -- I mentioned the Chris-Craft boats. After we got into combat, this thing was heating tubs of water for mess kits. This can be off the air, but just for information. I said, there must be some way that we can--

End of recording.