

Interview of Mark Heyrend

Mark Heyrend: I saw the dishes out in front, I thought, "Boy, I'd like to have those on my house."

Interviewer: (Laughter) Are we ready to go?

Unknown Person: We are rolling.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, we're happy to have with us Mark Heyrend. It's H-e-y-r-a-n-d?

Mark Heyrend: E-n-d.

Interviewer: It's pronounced Her-und?

Mark Heyrend: Hay-rand,

Interviewer: Hay-rand.

Mark Heyrend: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: It's so good of you and we're honored to have you come up with us, Mark, and be interviewed today. We'd like to start back right when the war started there on December 7th, 1941, and tell us where you were, what you were thinking.

Mark Heyrend: I was working in Pocatello then for Union Pacific Railroad as a stenographer. I came home for the weekend, which I always wanted to do, because I was up there all the time, and on my way back I was in about Malad, Idaho, and that's when the announcement came over the radio. I thought, "Boy, that's going to change things." But that's about the only comment I

had, I was busy watching the road, you know. I was really impressed and thought, "Boy, something's got to be done and it's going to be up to us to do it."

Interviewer: And then, how long before you entered the service or were you drafted or did you volunteer?

Mark Heyrend: It was six months later in May of '42. First, I went to register. All young men were required to register for the draft, so I went and registered. While I was waiting for my order number to come up I thought, "Boy, I'd like to be in the Navy." So I went up to get the application processed to get in the Navy as a yeoman, but my order came up too soon, so I had to report in Pocatello for the induction. I was examined up there and they had us in the Pocatello High School examining us in '42, about May. One thing I remember, I thought, "Boy, I'm in for something different." They had an examination in the birthday suit, arms up in the air and the examiner spotted my high school ring. He said, "You're going to have to get rid of that because on the battlefield, light will catch it and give away your position." I thought, "Man, what am I going to do?" So I was inducted there and reported in Salt Lake City there to Fort Douglas. We were there for awhile, and then the order came out that all 1-A men would be transferred as a cadre to the desert training center in California. So I was one of those and in the desert training center, which is Coachella in California. General Patton and his 1st Armored Corps. were training for desert warfare, his tanks and so on in the desert, because at that time they knew, we didn't, that Africa was our destination. In the processing down there, the AG noticed that my spec number showed stenographer. So right away, he had me transferred to the headquarters. Then I became a member of the headquarters at that time was called Western Task Force. The operation included two task forces: the Western, which was the U.S., and the Eastern, which

would be England. Then we would rendezvous just off the coast of Spain, at Gibraltar, and then we'd go to our targets together the day before D-Day.

Interviewer: Okay, and so, let's go back here too, you were a young man at that time. How did you happen to know shorthand?

Mark Heyrend: Well, I'd studied it in school, and that's what I was doing on the railroad was taking investigations. When there was a railroad failure, then they'd call them in participating or responsible for the inspection of the equipment and they'd hold an investigation. So I'd take that down in short hand.

Interviewer: And so, at the age of 18 or 19--

Mark Heyrend: I was 24.

Interviewer: You were 24.

Mark Heyrend: When I was inducted, I was 24.

Interviewer: Oh, for heck's sakes.

Mark Heyrend: I worked the railroad from 1937 to '42 -- five years.

Interviewer: Oh my gosh, but that's how come you were qualified in short hand and that changed your whole duties in the war.

Mark Heyrend: It did.

Interviewer: And it happened in basic training?

Mark Heyrend: I didn't get it.

Interviewer: You didn't even go to basic training?

Mark Heyrend: None. No, they wanted a cadre out of Fort Douglas as soon as possible to get down to Desert Training Center, and I was classified 1-A, so there I was, on my way.

Interviewer: For heck's sakes.

Mark Heyrend: When I got down there, that's when I was transferred to

Interviewer: Okay, now, take us from the time that General Patton moved you up to headquarters and give us details of what went on getting over there and all of that stuff.

Mark Heyrend: Getting over to Africa? Quite a bit.

Interviewer: Well, just, you know.

Mark Heyrend: I will brief it as best I can.

Interviewer: Yeah, give us a run down.

Mark Heyrend: Well, when we were there in Desert Training Center, those tanks would go out early in the morning and all day in that hot sun. They'd come back at night and some of the men would be exhausted, you know, they'd be passed out because of the heat in those tanks in the hot sun, just like an oven. They were out all day. Patton had them really going, training for desert warfare. So they sent me over to the supply house, a quarter master, and that's another thing that told me I was in for a new experience, they issued me a combat jacket and a Thompson submachine gun. I thought, "Boy, I'm in for a different experience than a regular office worker." So I got that and we were there for awhile till the training was complete, then they loaded up all the trains to take all the tanks and guns and trucks and equipment back to our staging area which

was AP Hill, Virginia. We went in three different troop trains. I was on the one that went to southern part of the U.S., another one went in the middle, and another went to the north part of the country for diversion. You couldn't put them all in one train going back there because of diversion and security, we made up the three trains. I road flat car all the way from California to AP Hill, Virginia, because we had to guard the equipment right out there and guard the equipment -- tanks, trucks, and guns, whatever. Then we arrived at AP Hill, Virginia, and we set up camp for awhile. Then all of a sudden, some of our men kept getting called away and couldn't understand why. Thought, "Where are those guys going?" You know, it was sort of a secret thing. Then the day came when they called my name, and they put me on a plane and sent me to Washington, D.C. and I was told to report to the munitions building, and that's where the War Department was housed at that time. Now, it's the Pentagon, but the munitions building was where the War Department was housed. So I went in, like your building here, a lot of doors, a lot of halls. I went through the first set of MPs. He checked my papers and he told me to go down the hall to another set and then another set on the way and then I had to turn to go up the stairs and then another set of MPs. When I got to those boys, they said, "Now down there, in that double door, you go in there." So I started down there, and you know, just walking, taking my time, and being alert, of course. And out comes this great big man, a general all dressed up, walked towards me, and I was on my side of the hall, but boy, he brushed past me. I was wondering what was going on. I told the MP, "Who in the world is that joker?" He says, "Watch your tongue soldier, that's ol' blood and guts Patton." So, you know, when I talked in that big room, behind those doors, I was just thrilled because there was the Army, Air Force, and Navy, and Marines, all working on these overlay maps on the wall of the coast of North Africa, the different beaches. I think one of them was Utah Beach. When I saw that, I thought, "Boy

that rivalry between the forces has disappeared.” I was under the impression that there was rivalry between the Army, Navy and Air Force and Marines -- all working together as a team because we all knew that we had a job to do and that was, really impressive.

So, they put me right to work in the planning stage and we did that. Every night, they told us and warned us, "Now, when you go on the streets on Washington, D.C. to the restaurant, to the bar, or whatever, your lips are sealed. There will be people that will ask you what you're doing in this building, but thousands of lives depend on what you say. So, you don't mention a thing about what you're doing in this building.” That went on till they were getting ready to embark, and the night before we left, we couldn't call home. We were restricted to anything like that, communication. So we went to Norfolk Virginia and began to load on the invasion ships. What made me feel good there, I was just a little ol' buck sergeant, and I could hear these officers -- colonels, majors, lieutenants, captains -- all speculating as to where we were going, where we were loading up to go. They were speculating and there I was, I knew the whole thing, and that made me feel pretty important. They had sealed orders that they were not to open till, I think, I forget how long at sea. But then the sealed orders could be opened and that would tell them where we were headed -- as a matter of fact, it's in my bag there. So, on the way over, why, I was on a flagship, General Patton had a flagship, SS Augusta. Me and the other staff members were on that with him. I hated the hold, the hold down there, those bunks, and they were awful close to one another. I just didn't like the idea of a guy above me being that close to me. So I snuck up on the deck and I hid under a life ship, or a life boat, and there I enjoyed the journey that night under that life boat watching the waves and thinking to myself, "Boy, I wonder what's in for us after all this water is gone." You know, when we get to our destination. But I was so impressed by the waves and the water and the stillness. It was just a beautiful experience, and all

of a sudden, I'd hear this fog horn. Then I'd feel the ship move just a little bit, a little bit later, I'd here that fog horn again, then it would move a little more. I couldn't figure out what that was. I didn't pay much attention to it, I found out later, and if I'd found out then I'd have a heart attack, that was the sighting of the submarines. They had seven minutes to sight you in their target before they could torpedo you, so we changed our course every seven minutes. Then we went on our journey and I looked at the -- I didn't look, I realized the (inaudible) and I saw this great armada of ships coming from the north, we were just approaching straits of Gibraltar. I saw this great armada of ships coming to join ours, we had about 100 in ours, and the plans called for the rendezvous the night before D-Day that we would rendezvous and all go in together. The British would go through the straits of Gibraltar, and then land in Oran, and that's in Algiers. We would go to the Casablanca area and we would land at Fedala, French Morocco.

Interviewer: Let me stop you right there. I want to, uh, go back aboard the ship coming over.

Did you ever see General Patton on board during the week or so it took you to get there?

Mark Heyrend: No, I don't think I did. He would be up above where the officers were, you know, up in whatever they called the top part of the ship -- turret?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark Heyrend: He would be up there. We didn't see him down on the deck level at all, as I recall.

Interviewer: Okay, are there any little anecdotes or any other information you want to tell us about that ship going over? That was interesting, what you said.

Mark Heyrend: The, uh--

Interviewer: The, uh, did you stay up on the deck the whole time, or did you have to go down?

Mark Heyrend: At night time. That's when I'd sneak up and sleep

Interviewer: You did that every day, or every night that you could.

Mark Heyrend: Yeah, it was about a two week journey to get over there.

Interviewer: And how would you spend your day?

Mark Heyrend: Just lying around the deck talking to the guys, playing some cards. There was one guy there from Tennessee, I believe, that had a game called "chuck-a-luck." I got involved once, but no more than that. Boy, he took a lot of money from all us guys. It was called chuck-a-luck (laughter). I played it once and that was enough. Then we just spent time leisurely, laying around, talking, or up and down the holds.

Interviewer: Did everybody then know where you were headed?

Mark Heyrend: They did.

Interviewer: They knew you were headed for North Africa?

Mark Heyrend: Yep.

Interviewer: Okay, now take us back to that rendezvous stuff.

Mark Heyrend: Well, the rendezvous with the British ships came and we rendezvoused with them, and that was the night before D-Day. H-hour was 4:00 in the morning, and D-Day was November 8th. So we rendezvoused, and the arrangement was for us to go on in, they in their spot and we in ours, and we went on in. I guess it must have been about 2:00 in the morning --

maybe not, I can't remember when it was -- but we had to meet at H-hour at 4:00 am. They, and us, too, hit all at once. They hit up around Oran, now Fedala or Casablanca.

Interviewer: Okay, and that was in 1944?

Mark Heyrend: No, in '42.

Interviewer: Oh, because D-Day was, your D-Day is what you are talking about, not the D-Day of what we think of D-Day. Oh, I am glad we clarified that up, because I was thinking the D-Day that we all know, but your D-Day was invading North Africa.

Mark Heyrend: North Africa. You know, that's what I kind of upset about that because whenever you hear D-Day, everybody's mind goes to June 6th of '44.

Interviewer: That's right.

Mark Heyrend: On Normandy. But what about the D-Day we were on November 8th at '42, the D-Day in Sicily on July 10th, '43, and then August 15th, '44, Southern France. So we had to clear all that area down south in order to bring pressure from the south on the north.

Interviewer: I'm glad we got that cleared up because I was--

Mark Heyrend: Everybody thinks of June 6th.

Interviewer: --I was thinking, jeez, I know they got into North Africa before '44. All right, uh, go ahead.

Mark Heyrend: That, and, uh, well I guess, uh, that was your question.

Interviewer: Yeah, and so, take us from where you were rendezvousing with the British convoy.

Mark Heyrend: Okay, and then we went on the charted, appointed areas for invasion. As soon as these started at H-hour, 4:00 in the morning, November th, boy, the battery lights on the shore really lit up. You know, to see what was going on. It was a show on us, so it would be a good target. There's nothing like General Patton. He was very calm. He said, "Well, boys. We had our newspapers here. They're giving us light to read them." Our Navy -- I just love the Navy, the way they operated. All of a sudden, they start shooting those tracers shells over into those lights, and I love to watch a tracer shell go right over and the light go right out. So that made the beaches dark, you know, and also made it so they could not observe us. While we're in that landing area, they called it transport area, where the transports all come up to the area where we are going on in. They called it transport area. General Patton got word that the men were digging in, they were not advancing from the shore on in because they were all new, you know, new GI's. They had fear, too. So, he ordered a landing craft and he went in and he walked up and down the beach as these planes were strafing the beach, just to set an example for the men that were dug in. Boy, when that happened, they just got right up and went right in. He set a good example.

Interviewer: Now tell me what kind of landing barge is. They didn't have the Higgins boat like they did--

Mark Heyrend: Yeah.

Interviewer: The Higgins boat?

Mark Heyrend: The one with the drop front?

Interviewer: Yeah, so you had those.

Mark Heyrend: Uh huh.

Interviewer: And did you have to climb down rope ladders?

Mark Heyrend: Yeah.

Interviewer: From the ships to get on them?

Mark Heyrend: Mm hmm. There I was with a type writer and Thompson submachine gun trying to do that, and that was quite a thing.

Elizabeth: Can you describe getting into a Higgins boat?

Interviewer: Yeah, give us the details of climbing in to those boats from your ship.

Mark Heyrend: Well, in my case, it was just the idea of going ashore. It wasn't a combat entrance, but I was to get up to shore so we could set up our headquarters, our command post. It was -- they were rough riding, especially how the tide went. While we were in that transport area, the ship right next to us -- about a block, maybe about a block away -- an enemy submarine got in that transport area, and they torpedoed that ship. It was a tanker. Boy, I saw that ship separate right in the middle, the bow went down and the stern went down. It just separated right in the middle. All the guys on that tanker were in the water. Oil all over them and they had to swim into shore.

Interviewer: Did you receive fire from the shore on your landing barge--

Mark Heyrend: Yes.

Interviewer: --as you were--

Mark Heyrend: Yeah, there's naturally that. There's naturally that, that's the reason for the search lights. They wanted to get a good target. But the navy put the search lights out in a hurry.

Interviewer: And you had to carry a type writer in a case, I guess?

Mark Heyrend: Yeah, a little portable. A Remington portable.

Interviewer: As well as a rifle?

Mark Heyrend: No, it was a submachine gun, they were heavy. It was the old Thompson submachine gun.

Interviewer: And they carried that along. And how many pounds was that?

Mark Heyrend: I don't know, seemed like a lot.

Interviewer: And how far away from shore did they let you out?

Mark Heyrend: I can't even estimate that. I would say maybe 1,500 yards, or it was close enough for a transport for the keel to get in then we went from there on in.

Interviewer: How deep was the water when you first walked in?

Mark Heyrend: I have no idea, I have no idea how deep.

Interviewer: Could you walk in though?

Mark Heyrend: After the landing craft let us out.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark Heyrend: Then we would walk in and we set up our headquarters in the Hotel Miramar. And that was a French sea site resort right there at Fedala, a beautiful place. That's where we set up head quarters. The enemy had been using it for a headquarters too for the anti-aircraft "ack-ack" guns. I have a uniform there I picked up there, one of the guys, a German uniform, and it has the insignia, the AA-gun which stands for anti-aircraft. They were set up in the Hotel Miramar, so our boys cleaned that out in a hurry and that's where we set up, and we were there quite a while.

Interviewer: Well, you know, of all the movies of Patton and all we've heard about him, I don't think I ever heard this story of him coming in after these guys weren't moving off the beaches and walking up and down.

Mark Heyrend: He did.

Interviewer: Wonder how that got, how that doesn't get in the movies or whatever, but that's the first I've heard of that.

Mark Heyrend: Yeah, I was right on the ship and he ordered a landing craft to take him in. He went in there and set an example for those new GIs and fear, of course, to set an example while all that strafing was going on.

Interviewer: Then the first or second wave took the Hotel Miramar and got the enemy out there and you set your head quarters up in the Hotel Miramar.

Mark Heyrend: Yes, just temporary. We wanted to set it up on the docks of Casablanca, just a few miles away, so we did that -- set up in a warehouse, I guess it was. I was sleeping on a table there one night and the bomb came over, bombers came over, and I got a piece of shrapnel there

where they dropped what they called anti-personnel bomb. Boy, I got a big piece of sheet steel -- not sheet, but shavings. It knocked me off the table, and so after they cleared, I went out and looked around and I find this piece of shrapnel. Apparently they were after our headquarters there in the docks besides dock damage. When you see that shrapnel you can see flying through the air and the momentum it would be from a bomb, that could do damage to physical things -- property, warehouses, barges, anything. That didn't last, just for one time, and then from then on it was pretty peaceful.

Interviewer: So Patton was there at headquarters and you got some close looks and views of what he was doing then.

Mark Heyrend: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Tell us some details about that.

Mark Heyrend: Well, mostly it was to rearrange the forces and the units, you know, to revamp, revamp, of course, to prepare to go further into North Africa. It was all into that different planning that was necessary for that. Bout, uh, I forget when it was, but they called General Patton away, and we found out later it was over to Tunisia to fight Rommel and the panzer divisions, the tanks over there. They knew he could do it, General Patton was an expert, and they knew he could do it. Of course, at that time, Rommel took ill and they had to send him back to Germany. There was still some more corps there that had to be annihilated because of the panzer divisions. So, they called General Patton over there, and he was away from us for awhile.

Interviewer: And so, your invasion occurred before that defeat at the Kasserine Pass?

Mark Heyrend: Right.

Interviewer: And after that defeat, that's when they brought Rommell, or, uh, brought Patton.

Mark Heyrend: --back to us.

Interviewer: Uh, well, over there to, uh, look at that, and then he came back to Tunisia after that.

Mark Heyrend: Mm hmm. Then we went on planning the -- well, there was certain amount of details to take care of. He had to deal with the Sultan of Morocco and you wrote him a letter, you know, to establish a meeting so they'd get an understanding that we were there not as an enemy, but to work with them in annihilating the Nazi force. The Nazis had control of that whole area. The rest of the days were spent arranging for that, making good relationships with the people over there, those in charge -- the French and the Sultan of Morocco and so on. Then at the same time, we began planning the invasion of Sicily.

Interviewer: Let me ask you, uh, did you sleep then in the hotel?

Mark Heyrend: No, never.

Interviewer: Where'd you sleep?

Mark Heyrend: In the old warehouse where we set up our command post. That's why I was sleeping on the table and the bomb came in.

Interviewer: Tell us about the people. Did they welcome you?

Mark Heyrend: They did, they did welcome us. Of course, they had no alternative really because we came in there with force, but they were very congenial. They understood what our purpose was and they were great that way with us. No problems at all.

Interviewer: And was there any interaction, tell us any anecdotes you may have with the population that went on.

Mark Heyrend: None that was derogatory. It was all good. Except, some of our men wanted to get into Casbah. You know, that's where the Casbah -- I'll just call it that. They didn't put sheets all over their head and their body just to be able to sneak into Casbah. They got in there and some of them got stabbed because they didn't want any part of the GI's coming in there.

Interviewer: The local people didn't want the GI's.

Mark Heyrend: --No, the people in Casbah.

Interviewer: The people in Casbah.

Mark Heyrend: Kasbah, yeah. It was a certain--

Interviewer: --it was like a red light district that we think of.

Mark Heyrend: Right, yeah.

Interviewer: Well, that's interesting. What were the living conditions like of the native Moroccans?

Elizabeth: We're having too much conversation.

Interviewer: So interesting I didn't want him to miss it.

Elizabeth: Let's get on a roll here.

Interviewer: Okay, go ahead.

Mark Heyrend: From then on we go to Algiers to plan the invasion of the Sicily. And then, again, it was a two-fold operation with the British and Americans. Our destination was on that -- Sicily is shaped like a triangle and then down here -- our destination was the west side and the British, the east side of that projection in order to cause a pincher movement, and we finally got to Palermo. The first thing General Patton did was set up our command post in the King of Italy's palace. The King of Italy had a palace there in Palermo, and he filled up the courtyard full of his tanks. Then we set up the CP right there. We were there, I can't remember how long it was, after annihilation. Another thing I remember about General Patton, I admired him for it. Our forces were having a hard time progressing on the north end of Sicily, north side, going east towards Messina. We were ran across a really strong resistance, like a cement wall. So, during the night, General Patton ordered a few landing boats and he went around the enemy and to the back of them and attacked from the rear, so that blocked out that problem they were having. So we could get on over to Messina. And so, he conquered Sicily and from then, it was a planning of Southern France. D-Day for Southern France was August 15th of '44, which would have been two months after the D-Day June 6th in order to apply pressure on the south. But I was sure impressed by the way President Roosevelt, Churchill, and I forget who else it was, met together on the island of Malta, which was just a little bit off the shore of Sicily. They met to make further plans and decide which was the best way to go, to formulate the strategy. It was decided, those August 15th of '44 would be the invasion of Southern France at Marsailles, and that's where we landed there. Another thing about the planning that I surely, I just admired the other forces very much for their tenacity in going by the plans. As we were there approaching the coast of Southern France, I looked at my watch and in the distance, I could hear this drone of airplane engines coming. It was the bombers right on time to soften the beaches with the bombs

so we could move in there. Then we went on up into Southern France. Well, I've got to tell you, too about an outstanding thing that bothered me. That is when we were in the process of invading Sicily. For some reason or another, I guess who ever sets the code on the airplanes, the color code on the bottom, so they could be recognized from the ground, had the wrong color code combination on these transport that was carrying some GI's. So the Navy shot it down. It was the wrong color code for ID, and that was bad to think of those men being lost for that reason. Then another thing, too, that happened just before Sicily, it was the night again before D-Day, July 10th of '43, and it was dark and the water was rough. It was really rough. Just a short place from ours, we could view the GI's full pack and everything, just struggling in the water. He apparently fell off of one of the transports up ahead on its way up to the target area. We thought, ah, we could just pick him up, but boy, you couldn't use the flasher system to notify the ship behind you to pick him up because that would violate your security. You couldn't use your radio for the same reason. We just couldn't do a thing because of that. We were approaching the target area and boy, if we gave our position away, that would be bad. So we just hoped that the ship coming along would pick up that struggling GI that had fallen in. It was really bad.

Then we got up into France and we went to Grenoble. I remember Grenoble, getting there, and I thought, "Gee, it would be nice to walk around." Things were kind of quiet then, and to see if we couldn't see what kind of a city it was. I met a young lady on the street that was selling trinkets. As soon as the liberation, I checked out some of the shops on the street because they were trying

to get a little money together because they sold trinkets. I got acquainted with this little girl and she was telling me about the plight of her family and how sad it was. She was telling me about how they only had was potatoes for food and her mother tried every way she could to fix potatoes to make them palatable. I really felt sorry because they told me, she took me to her apartment with her parents and told me about a couple of nights before, the storm troopers came in, not a word, busted right in, and took their 18 year daughter out of bed and hauled her off. They don't know where she went. Never heard from her since. They figured, of course, she ended up in a concentration camp. I felt so sorry for them, only having potatoes, and that was very meager. So I thought, "Well, it wouldn't hurt for me to take some of my C-rations that I had not used." I didn't take it from the other guys. It was my own ration, and I thought, "Maybe it wouldn't hurt to take a couple of cans to them." That was like vegetable soup, you know, those C-rations in, in those little cans. We just put them on the motor block of the jeeps to heat them. That made a good heating for those cans of vegetable soup. So I through a couple, three of them in my backpack and started into town and on my way out, General Patton's driver was there, and he said, "Hey, where are you going?" I said, "I was just going into town." And he said, "Hop in, I'll give you a ride." It was a staff car, General Patton's staff car with a big star on it, you know. I thought, "Well, that will be nice. He'll give me a ride." We didn't go, we didn't go, and I was wondering what we were waiting for. Then out storms General Patton. Boy, I didn't know whether to get a glass of milk or build a bonfire. There I was with those rations in my backpack and General Patton coming. I was in the back seat, and he stormed in there and sat in the front seat and didn't even say a word to me or anything. Didn't ask me what was in the bag. The driver, his name was Nims, John Nims was the driver, and he took us on into town, dropped Patton off, and then dropped me off later. I saw no harm in using my own rations to help those

poor, destitute people that had just lost their daughter. They had nothing else to eat. Then after Grenoble, we got up a little further north and we got into a concentration camp at St, Frasbourg, France. I was able to get in there, and I have never seen anything like that my whole life. I couldn't believe it. It was all set up for mass murder. As I went in there, there was this big room -- big as any gymnasium we have around here -- and the biggest pile of civilian clothes that I'd ever seen. We found out the prisoners were brought there, told to take all their clothes off, throw them in a pile, then they were issued these brown craft paper bags that they would put on before they got their striped uniform, or the striped prisoner outfit. They were issued that. Another reason for that is because, in each one of the holds there, there were 40 prisoners, only one commode. They also wanted to protect, if any of them had disease, they didn't want that transferred to another prisoner, so these bags that tied up to their neck, and then they were eventually issued a uniform, which was the striped uniform.

Interviewer: Both male and female were?

Mark Heyrend: I guess so, I don't know about that, but there were female clothes there, yeah. They weren't, it wouldn't make a difference to them, all those clothes. Then, we went in to the mess part of the concentration camp. Well, before we did, I noticed is this helmet hanging up above one of the cots, so I took it off the wall, and thought I would sure like to have that helmet. So I have it there. I confiscated, I shouldn't say confiscated, I just took it. Then we went in the mess, and there were still fresh turnip greens that hadn't been served yet with wooden spoons, so they got out of there in a hurry. We could see what they had for a diet, turnip greens was ground up and that's what they were fed. Then we went on through the concentration camp there, and we could see a chain link path that went up into the forest. We found out that that's where they had the prisoners go to work in airplane mounting or manufacturing plants they had hidden in the

forest. Then, right there by the entrance of where that chain link path went up, there was this furnace. I saw the metal plate where the bodies of those who became too ill to work or died, they were put on there and this was elevated on some iron poles that were there, this metal plank went up into the furnace and they were cremated. Then in another room were these little earthen jars about that big where the family of the prisoner could buy their remains for a price, the remains, and how would you know you got the right one? Then we went into the shower room, and we thought, "Gee, that's neat. The prisoners would have a chance to shower, you know, after a hard day's work." So we went into the shower room, beautiful, nice shower heads, all around the ceiling. Then we later found out that after the prisoners were in there, gas came out of those shower heads, and that, of course, annihilated a lot of them. So it was a mass murder set up that was just really amazing, hard to understand.

Interviewer: Where there living inmates there when you--

Mark Heyrend: No, everything was gone.

Interviewer: They were gone.

Mark Heyrend: It was a few days after, but the turnip greens were still there, they were fresh.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark Heyrend: And, it was heart rending to see that.

Interviewer: And that was Strabourg?

Mark Heyrend: Strasbourg, France.

Interviewer: Strasbourg, yeah.

Mark Heyrend: I think, right on the border of France and Germany, if I remember right, we were there.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark Heyrend: One thing I should tell you too about Sicily that really had us puzzled, we moved up into a new position that was about dusk in Sicily to set up our tents, you know, the camp for the command post, and we started receiving artillery fire. We just couldn't figure out where it was coming from. We could see the flash coming, you know, the firing, but the boys had a hard time detecting where that came from. So the next morning, they made more of an investigation to find out where they were up there anyhow, investigating that, and they found out that what happened, they had a cave with railroad rails coming out, and mounted on a flat car back in that cave was one of the heavy pieces of artillery. They'd bring that out and fire it, then they'd recess back into that cave and camouflage it, the tracks and everything, so it would be hard to detect it. That's another thing I liked about Patton, too. He called me in the next morning, his regular secretary, Joel Rosevich from New York, wasn't available. He called me in and dictated a letter to a friend back in the states who was disabled. He said, "We had some artillery fire last night, and I'm sending you an olive branch that I think will make a good cane." So he took time out to do that, send it back to his friend in the states.

Interviewer: Well, having such close contact with Patton -- the public has been given a certain image--

Mark Heyrend: Right.

Interviewer: --of him. Would you comment on whether you think that's an accurate image, or whether it isn't accurate?

Mark Heyrend: I guess I will have to agree with it because we didn't like him. We didn't like him for his discipline and his strictness. I was afraid of him, so were the other guys, because he was unpredictable, you never knew what he was going to do one minute to the next. But you knew back in your mind that you would not want to be with anybody else under combat because he was a military man. He was strategy. He knew, and he was very military. As a matter of fact, to help teach his discipline, after we'd got to Casablanca, we'd been there about two weeks, maybe, he put out an order that all GI's would wear their wool. Now, this is "sun tan," we called it, the wool is that khaki covered heavy stuff. He said we'd wear it for 30 days, and anybody caught without that would be de-ranked, if they had a rank, or they would be otherwise penalized. That was to show us discipline and to teach us who was boss. But there in Africa, 30 days, you wore those wool uniforms, and boy, the guys sure tried everything to take a shower, fill a helmet full of water. It was quite an experience, but we wouldn't want to be with anybody else under combat. He was hard to get along with, we didn't like him, he was a disciplinarian, but he was a *general*.

Interviewer: That's interesting. So even the close contact that you guys had with him, you were all kind of scared of him and, uh--

Mark Heyrend: In our command post, yeah, because we just didn't know how to take him. He was very congenial, what I mean, he was very emotional man. He would go to church over there, to some of the cathedrals, and he prayed. He would pray, and he was very emotional man. There were times when tears welled up in his eyes over losses. So he was very emotional, but very unpredictable. I guess that's what made it so you felt uneasy around him. But what a great general. I sure admire him. I just admire him. His motto, you know, was, "Attack, attack, and attack again." Just keep going, going, going. Then up in France and Germany, the "Red Ball

Convoy,” I don't know if you ever heard of that, that came into being. A red ball convoy on the trucks carrying equipment and gas and so on up to Patton, they had a big red ball painted on it. When you saw that convoy come, you got out of the way. I was on the street there, an intersection in France in some little town, and boy, they came through and almost got hit because they had to go up over the curb to make the turn with those big trucks. There was that red ball convoy to keep up with Patton, he would move so fast. He was a general from the word “go.” I sure admire him. He was very emotional, and he was religious. It was a great experience for a young man pulled out of an office, an old railroad office, to have all those experiences.

Interviewer: The word was that Patton believed in previous lives. Did you ever notice anything like that in his speeches or anything like that?

Mark Heyrend: No.

Interviewer: That he had lived before and--

Mark Heyrend: No, I didn't, but I know that I'd heard one time that he felt he was really reincarnated from Napoleon.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark Heyrend: He had that stance, you know. He was a military man, World War I, he was very effective. He was strictly a military man, and a good one.

Interviewer: Were you around him when he was accused of hitting that soldier?

Mark Heyrend: No, that was a little ways away. It was in an evacuation hospital, I believe, where the wounded GI's would go and they would be evacuated to better circumstances. I think

it was in that evac-hospital that he ran across this young man that incident occurred. So we weren't there. We were back in the command post. But he made a public apology for that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mark Heyrend: It was, I think, it was 3rd Division, one of the men of the 3rd Division, and he made public apology for that, that he'd just lost his temper, I guess. After seeing all those wounded men being injured in battle and this one GI that was fearless, or fearful, and scared and weeping and didn't want to go further, and lying around him were all these wounded men, so, I guess he lost his cool.

Interviewer: Take us back again to Strasbourg and give us as much detail about General Patton as you can give us in your narration here because that is so unique to us to have some one that was in so close touch with him. So, go ahead and continue after you were telling us about Strasbourg.

Mark Heyrend: Well, when we went through Strasbourg, he was elsewhere, I don't know where. We weren't with him, you know, every hour of the day because he had other things to attend to. When he came to the command post, why, we would have close contact with him then. He would have what we called the "war room." No matter where we were, every night, where we set up headquarters, the first thing we did was prepare the war room. That was where the generals from his different divisions could come in and all meet and they would go over strategy together with these big maps and overlays on the walls of the territory where we were operating at the time. Every day, when we had a chance, he would call them in to go over the strategy. That was always good, too, so we'd know right where we were and how many troops we got and if there were hard spots and what action to take. So, the war room was very important, and we

saw him then, of course, because we were right near him in the war room where that was going on. But ordinarily, we didn't, we weren't with him every hour or every day or so on, I might say. But when he was in the command post, we were there, and we knew it. We knew he was there (laughter). But you can't help but like him for what he did and as effective as he was and as emotional as he was, really. One thing about the movie "Patton," I didn't take to it too well for one thing -- he was portrayed to be much more profane than he really was. He was profane. He had his vocabulary, but he wasn't as bad as the movie indicated as far as we were concerned, we were right with him.

Elizabeth: How often would you move?

Interviewer: When she asks you questions, just talk to me like I asked it.

Mark Heyrend: I didn't get the question.

Interviewer: How often would you move? Did you move every 30 days, 60 days?

Mark Heyrend: There's no set limit, whenever the time permitted and the conditions. We would move whenever we needed to get up closer and the way the troops were advancing, then, we'd move. So there was no time limit or schedule.

Interviewer: Okay, now, take us after you met that family in France and brought the food out, go from there.

Mark Heyrend: Well, that's when we got in little further, we moved up further north and set up and had opportunity to go through Strasbourg concentration camp, yeah.

Interviewer: And then where after that.

Mark Heyrend: You've kind of lost me. I think we went, it was getting close to May 7th of '45, which is V-E Day. I think, I know on V-E Day we were in Augsburg, Germany, on May 7th of '45. So I think there wasn't a lot going on because the troops up north had made advancing going east into Germany. So where we were at the time, it kind of led up, but we were still there to prevent anything further from coming south.

Interviewer: Yeah. Now, we get the impression that these headquarters were always housed in either big mansions or castles or whatever. Tell us about

Mark Heyrend: (Laughter) Well, they weren't mansions or anything like that. The one time I remember was in Palermo when the King of Italy had a palace that he would use in the summer time, and General Patton set up headquarters there. Otherwise, we'd be out in the field in our command tents, and they were the real dark tents that were not pointed like you see pyramid tents, they were a low-type of profile so that we'd have room in there to move around and do our office work, whatever we had to do. I always remember the double door they had on them. As you go in the first door, and they'd close it before you opened the door where the light is, so we were all blacked out. Those command tents, they were really nice, and mostly out in the field were in tents. In Casablanca was the warehouse on the docks, and Nonville, France, too, we were in a school building, I think, where we had set up command posts. That's where we had to retreat because it was during the "bulge." The bulge, you know, started in about December, around December '44, around Christmas time, and we were around Nunville, and we had to retreat because it was so severe. We were in kind of a school building then, I think, where we'd set up command posts. Talking about the bulge, I've got to give credit to the 442nd Combat Team. They were Japanese American, the whole 442 Combat Group or Team were Japanese American. Some of our GI's got trapped, the Nazis had trapped them where there would be no

possibility of getting released, and so this 442nd broke right through. They were a crack outfit, and they were all Japanese American. Then another one was the 45th Division, and that was all Native American, Indian, and they were a good combat division. But the 442nd was the one that broke through and freed the trapped men.

Interviewer: Now, when they were making these decisions to invade Sicily and do all this, were you present when they were making some real important decisions?

Mark Heyrend: No, no, we would be doing the paperwork or whatever was necessary after they had made the decisions. We were involved in it that much. The decisions are all high level.

Interviewer: And did you know General Omar Bradley?

Mark Heyrend: Yes. He was at the headquarters several times. I didn't see Eisenhower though. Of course, he was up in London getting ready for Normandy, but during it invasion of North Africa, General Eisenhower set up a SHAEF -- S-H-A-E-F, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces -- in the rock of Gibraltar. Underneath there were passages and places they were set up as a command post to direct all the operations. In all the correspondence we handled, we could always detect what was important and confidential because there was the code word bigot -- B-I-G-O-T. If you saw that in a message, you knew that was high security material. Then, as you got into it and working with it and making different preparations or whatever you needed to do, correspondence, communication, they would have another code word that would tell you the *actual* operation -- Invasion of north Africa was torch "TORCH," T-O-R-C-H. I imagine, have heard that, I don't know. Sicily was called "HUSKEY." Whenever we saw those words in communication, you know exactly what you were dealing with.

Interviewer: How did the men feel about Oman Bradley, and what was your impression.

Mark Heyrend: I don't know, I don't know. I didn't really ever express an opinion because we weren't really fully in to what went on between him and Patton, but I think there was competition. Mostly with Montgomery -- Patton and Montgomery both wanted to be first, first with the mostest. There was contention there. I think Bradley was a real good general. At first, I think he and Patton didn't hit up too well, but then they did when they got into the operations. He was a great general. General Patton really respected Omar Bradley.

Interviewer: Now, there's a story during the Battle of the Bulge when Patton rescued this beleaguered group at Bastogne. Where your present or part of that?

Mark Heyrend: No, because at that time, we were in the command of Alexander M. Patch. In other words, when they called General Patten up to London to prepare for Normandy, it was about March of '44 when he went there, and then General Alexander M. Patch took over for command of our 7th Army. So those operations up north, I was not familiar with other than the "Red Ball Convoy."

Interviewer: Okay, and you retreated during the bulge, and then, take us from there.

Mark Heyrend: Well, I forget where we went to, but we had to get out of Nunville, France, and move back a ways. Then, I don't know where we went after that. I can't remember the town where we set up or if there was a town -- might have been out in the field. Then when that let up, we began heading north again.

Interviewer: How were your treated by the German civilians?

Mark Heyrend: The general population?

Interviewer: The general population, yeah.

Mark Heyrend: Coldly. Coldly. You can see the reason, but not all cases. Just a few isolated cases where you'd wanted to be friendly and issued a greeting or salutation, why, you got a cold answer. I remember one time when they were having a -- I forget what it was in Germany -- they were holding a celebration of liberation. They were having a folk dance, and several of us GI's attended, but it was indicated we weren't welcome, so we didn't do much dancing at all.

General Arthur A. White was General Patch's Chief of Staff. General Patton's Chief Of Staff was Holbert R. Gay, and General Patch had Arthur A. White. I happened to be there when they brought Hermann Goering in. They captured him. It was near the end of the war and they brought him into the headquarters there and, of course, the Chief of Staff was the first one to be there on spot to greet him as he came in. Goering put out his hand like that to shake hands -- General White just stood there and looked at him. Coldness. General White just had coldness in his eyes. He wasn't about to shake hands with him, which is natural. Who would? That was an expression that was impressive.

Interviewer: Was he quite, quite over weight at the time?

Mark Heyrend: Yeah, come storming in there like, you know, like he would (laughter). Come storming in there and put his hand out for a hand shake, and General White just stood there looking at him with a stern look. He was a big man. He sure was, and like I say, came storming in there.

Interviewer: And what were your thoughts at that time? Were you aware that Germany was close to surrender?

Mark Heyrend: Yeah, yeah. I think -- I wish I could put the time date, but I can't. It must have been after that captured them after right soon before the end of the war or after, I'm not sure. But I remember him storming in there to greet our officers.

Interviewer: Where were you when Hitler committed suicide?

Mark Heyrend: Back home.

Interviewer: You were?

Mark Heyrend: Yeah, I was -- May 7th of '45 was V-E Day, and I was home by July of '45, discharged and back home.

Interviewer: So you got discharged before the war was over, huh?

Mark Heyrend: Well, I was, no, after. See, May 7th was V-E Day, which means "Victory In Europe."

Interviewer: Right.

Mark Heyrend: That was May 7th, and I was sent back to Marseille with some other guys I'd say about June in order to be deployed back home. I had enough points because I had been overseas for two and a half years. I was in the Army for three years, from '42 to '45, and every bit of that time except five months wash over seas. I had earned enough point to be one of the first to be discharged.

Interviewer: Tell us about that, going home and getting home.

Mark Heyrend: It was great, it was great. We knew we would be going home on a liberty ships. Liberty ships are made over transports, you know, to carry troops. We knew we'd go home on a

liberty ship, but we didn't mind. We didn't mind the crowd, you know, the compact of it. We didn't mind being all close together and compacted because we were going home. It was just the greatest experience. When we got back to the states people in Norfolk, Virginia were all out there in strength, waving and so on as our ship come into dock. Then we got off ship and loaded trains and as our trains were going through the country side, they would run up to the train, and if it was slow or stopped, they would reach through the window and give you a hug. They were so receptive, so grateful. That was a great experience. Like I said, the one great thing that I was impressed by was when we walked in that room in Washington, D.C. where all that planning was going on to see all four of the branches working in camaraderie for the single purpose of doing away with the Nazi party -- they wanted to become the world power.

Interviewer: Well, those are interesting memories. Tell us about your uniform a little bit. What are those little gold bars?

Mark Heyrend: That represents six months overseas. Every bar represents six months overseas. This is a Good Conduct Medal -- I was a good boy. This is a Bronze Star. I was awarded the Bronze Star. This is the European Theatre of Operation, and each little star on there indicates a D-Day in the European theatre.

Interviewer: Tell us about the Bronze Star. What did you do to--

Mark Heyrend: Well, the citation is in the papers there. I guess it was recognition of being in the plans and the tenacity of the work and staying with it. I don't like to brag for myself. I would have you read that, but that is what it was for. It was for exemplary duty and paying attention to your duty without complaint, you know, just doing your job and getting it done.

Interviewer: And what's this above the Sergeant patch?

Mark Heyrend: That's our 7th Army patch. That's an "A," and those are seven steps, which would indicate the 7th Army.

Interviewer: I see.

Mark Heyrend: I guess that's all.

Interviewer: Well, Mark, uh--

Elizabeth: Have him talk to the whole war effort.

Interviewer: If you were to speak to future generations and have anything to say to them, what would you say?

Mark Heyrend: I would tell them to quit their alcohol. When we left Sicily, the Nazis were retreating. We were really pushing them out. They knew that there would be no better to cripple an outfit than to hit their motor pool. The motor pool is where you supplied all transportation -- our command cars and halftracks, all the equipment like that was motorized. Our motor pool is where we draw for that equipment. But it happened that the guys in the motor pool, I guess they liked their alcohol, so they were heavy drinkers, and the Nazi knew that. So when they retreated, they left bottles of poison wine in strategic places. As soon as those guys saw it, they'd drink it down, and before you know it, they were dead. I would, just admonish the younger generation to do away with alcohol. Forget it. You just get in to trouble.

Interviewer: What about the war and, what would you say to future generations about going to war and fighting wars and that kind of thing?

Mark Heyrend: I hate to be derogatory, but at that time, we had respect for our U.S. leadership. Naturally, we would put forth all our effort because we were all in the one concerted effort. So

we were to put forth our response to good leadership. As far as advice to the younger generation, Army service would be good for them, but I would recommend a year of mandatory military service training for these young boys that are coming out of high school. I think it would do a lot to get them something to do instead of joining up with a gang or something. It would be good training and discipline -- one year of mandatory military service. I think it would be good for them. They're fighting a different enemy now than we were. See, we knew at our time, we knew who the enemy was and we recognized them. But now, you can't recognize a suicide. You don't know which ones are your enemy because you don't know if they are good or bad. You have no idea if they have explosives strapped around them. So, I really admired the fighting men, especially the Marines, they're the prominent one over there now, for the battle that they have to fight at this current time.

Interviewer: Any other questions, Liz?

Elizabeth: How about the atomic bomb?

Interviewer: What are your views, or where were you -- you're back home, I guess, when the Japanese surrendered as well. What were your thoughts and what did you do after V-J Day occurred?

Mark Heyrend: Well, it was an elated feeling to know that it was over and victory had been acquired and the master race had been stopped. It was always gratifying, and so you enjoyed it. I was glad to get home and get in to my "civies" again, civil clothes. I just enjoyed the victory, the same way, it was in August, V-J Day, I was much more elated to know that that was also closed, and that we were victorious for freedom.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts about the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Mark Heyrend: The results have brought forth what was, I am trying to say “good,” but I don't like to because of all the lives were lost, but it did change the Japanese as far as pursuing their efforts. Of course, I don't try to out-guess the leaders and strategists that planned that. I'm sure they knew what they were doing. I guess I have no feeling either for or against it, but it did culminate the Japanese effort and bring about V-J Day, which saved a lot of lives in the future.

Interviewer: Well, Mark, we want to thank you for coming up here today and thank you for your service to our country. We sincerely appreciate you and the cohorts that were left over there. But thanks again, Natalie, do you have any questions or anything?

Natalie: No, I'm good.

End of recording.