

Dr. Swithen Chandler Interview

Interviewer: Okay, it's a real honor, Doctor Chandler, to have you with us. We've got Doctor Swithen Chandler.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Swithen Chandler.

Interviewer: Swithen, is it?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Swithen Chandler. It's so close to "swinging a chandelier," you know--

Interviewer: Alright, Swithen Chandler--

Dr. Swithen Chandler: That was right before the fight started--

Interviewer: (laughter) We have, uh – we've interviewed an awful lot of veterans, but we've never had the opportunity to speak to a physician who served as a physician in the Second World War, and, uh, and so it's a real honor to have you with us. Can you -- let's go back right to December 7th, 1941, and tell us what you were doing and what you were thinking.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I'm from Philly, and I was at the University of Pennsylvania, my last year of Medical School when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. And I went the next day and volunteered because I wanted to go, and I'd flown a little bit, so I wanted to be in the Air Force, but they told me I was too old, and they said, "Besides, we need you more as a doctor, anyway." So they made me a Second Lieutenant (MAC) and sent me back to medical school to finish the training and then come on in the service. So I finished that all, and then there was a big conflict because the day after I finished my service, they told me to report, but my state board exams were that time, so I went and took 'em. And uh, so then all the doctors usually went to Carlisle, Pennsylvania for their training, but they'd sent me down to Texas to Camp Barkeley at Abilene,

Texas. So I went and took my state boards and I got on a plane and went down there, and I'm about three days late. So my first three days there I'm "AWOL" and I'm put in the brig for being late.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Dr. Swithen Chandler: (Laughter). So anyway, the next day they came back and said they changed my active date to the day I got there. So then I went back to training.

Interviewer: Did they actually put you in the brig?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, the officers -- they were restricted, we were restricted to the Officer's Quarters.

Interviewer: Oh, I see.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, and, uh, we stayed there six weeks and had real extensive training, in which we, you know, the 29 mile hikes and the 13 -- everything. But, we were told, we were all going to go to the collecting companies and things way up on the front, so they really gave you some pretty good training. When that was over, they called me up and said I was going to Paris and I said, "No, Hitler's there." And they said, no, you're going to Paris, Texas, which was down by Camp Maxey, and I joined the 125th "E-Vac" Hospital there. This is a 300 bed, absolutely mobile hospital in tents and, uh, it was on trucks, which we could pull up to a place and 45 minutes we'd be up ready to take casualties, and then, we would practice and 30 minutes we'd have it back in the truck and we'd move again.

And so, we practiced there for awhile till we got pretty good at it, and then we were sent over to England to Tenby, Wales and we stayed there waiting for the invasion to go. And they assigned

us to Patton's Army, and Patton's Army wouldn't go in, as you know, they went in late, so we didn't -- we missed D-Day.

Interviewer: Okay, let me ask you real quick just a couple questions here and then Jeffrey's here to take my place. Did I hear you say you had three years med schooling? You had one year left-

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Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, I had about a half a year left.

Interviewer: And you went down and wanted to sign up for the Air Force.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mm hmm.

Interviewer: With thee years of med school.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mm hmm, and they said, "No, you can't come."

Interviewer: Okay, um.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: We were all pretty mad at that time.

Interviewer: And then, uh, tell us a little more detail about the training, uh, to take these tents up and down. Who did the work? Was it the docs and the nurses doing the work?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: No, no. We had 250 GI's, and they, they did all the work. We had 20 doctors and nurses, and we supervised it. Of course, you're not going to work. But the GI's did that, they put them up, they put up, and they were really excellent -- real good guys. But the trouble was, when we were over there, after they set us up, when we're in action, the trucks would leave us so we couldn't leave, we were stuck where we were. But, uh, then when we had to go, the trucks would show up and we'd load up and go.

Interviewer: Okay, look, I'm going to turn this over to my good friend Jeffrey--

Jeffrey (Interviewer): (Inaudible) – It's fascinating because, there were so many advances in the space of those few years.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: When the Japs hit Pearl Harbor, we had (inaudible) which had killed 180 people trying to cure them, and we got into sulphur-thiazole, which is now a little bit better, and then penicillin came out just about the time I hit the service. So before I went in, there was no penicillin in the army. And when we picked up some injured German soldiers, and we wanted to give them penicillin, but they said "No, that's all hype." They thought there was no such thing. They didn't believe it because they didn't have the penicillin, and uh, when we picked up some of their army hospitals as we took over, and we'd have GI's of ours that were there that were hurt and taken care of, but would die because they didn't have penicillin.

Interviewer: I understand that on the penicillin -- what was so hard to get at first, you could only use it on certain kinds of wound, or in certain kind of cases, is that true?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well it might have been back here.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Dr. Swithen Chandler: If it looked that bad, we'd give it to them.

Interviewer: We interviewed a nurse in Italy where that had been the case.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: She wasn't in 3rd Army?

Interviewer: No.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: She was in Patton's army. Patton's Army got the best, really.

Interviewer: Really.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: There were no bars, anything you needed, you got it. If we had to go to Paris and steal it, we'd get the penicillin and use it.

Interviewer: I see.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Because, I don't know what – you know, Italy was a whole different deal.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Patton was not political that way. He wanted -- he was the only good General, next to Rommel, who was the second best general, but who we beat three times in a row (laughter).

Interviewer: Did you ever see Patton?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, sure. I was in his army all the way through.

Interviewer: So you saw him personally.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Personally, yeah.

Interviewer: Were there any experiences you had with him?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: No, he was just, no -- he was tough. He was a good General.

Interviewer: Did he come through your hospital?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, he'd come in. Damn well better treat him right, too.

Interviewer: Would he and so, that's what he'd do?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, remember when he slapped that one soldier? The guy had a self inflicted wound. When you had pill boxes in which the Germans were there, and they had little holes they would shoot at us with, the “BAR” guys would stay back and pop little shots through those little holes, and our flame throwers would sneak up and cook ‘em. But, he shot himself in the foot and left and our flame throwers got wiped out. And that’d why Patton hit him. He should have been court-martialed, but that was an “SIW.”

Interviewer: Was that a common thing to run across?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Not in Patton's Army, I don't think so. We wanted to win. We were mad at people. We wanted to go get ‘em.

Interviewer: So, when did you actually go ashore? You were in England first?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, we were in Tenby, Wales, and on D-Day the Army went in, but we stayed back with Patton. And he was probably having conflicts with Eisenhower (laughter), so when we went in the beach was all secured and it was all set up. So we went in pretty easy.

Interviewer: So did you go in through Utah Beach or Omaha Beach?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Omaha, but we went in there -- and there were three of us, the 132nd “E-Vac,” and we were the 125th and the 99th, and we stayed there and the 99th went first and went on up ahead of us and we stayed there a couple more days and then followed up.

Interviewer: So what was your rank when you got ashore?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mine?

Interviewer: Your rank.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: First Lieutenant.

Interviewer: And you were a full M.D.?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mm hmm.

Interviewer: What was your specialty?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mine was just -- whatever we could do. You know, everybody did everything in the hospital. See, we had chest surgeons and abdominal surgeons, and everything. We just fill in -- I was just young so I just had to help. I wasn't a specialist or anything because I wasn't a doctor that long. So whatever the other guys needed, I would do.

Interviewer: So explain to us. Okay, things change. We have "M.A.S.H.," we have that in our heads and a lot of popular culture. Tell us what it looked like, how would it be set up. What things would be going on, and how long you would be on duty and just--

Dr. Swithen Chandler: You could be on duty for four days in a row and you could be off four days in a row. It all depends. But once we were set up, then the MP's would be out there and they would funnel everything in to us and they would come in mostly by (inaudible) and they would carry them in. And when we got so full we couldn't do any more, then we get the MP's know and they would hit the other hospital and usually come along side of us or go ahead of us, whatever it was, and then, they'd fill up. And then when we got pretty empty, then we sent everything back to the station hospitals and wait to go. But sometimes they wouldn't call us, so we would have three or four days off.

Interviewer: So I imagine you would know when a big battle is going on.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Not always (laughter). Sometimes my sister would write and tell me where we were and I didn't even know where I was (laughter).

Interviewer: My point was, when you start getting a lot of casualties.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Then you know the battle was on, sure.

Interviewer: Yeah. Any particular places stick out in particular when you first got there, or any particular incidences that would explain to people today what it was like?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: No, well, I think when the "Bulge" happened, we were in back in Donot, so we missed that. The 99th E-Vac was up there, with the 28th division, and we never saw them again. After that, there was just (inaudible). The 99th got pretty well creamed.

Interviewer: Did your hospital ever fall under fire?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Oh, yeah. I lost two guys. My partner and my Chief Sergeant Bealy Winetrob.

Interviewer: And how did that happen?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: He got hit in the head. You know, the Germans, the little bums. They had this 88mm thing, and they were good at it. And we'd pull into a field sometimes, with L-4's and the L-5's up at the other end, and, you know, "Bedcheck Charlie" would come by, and at night they'd take those planes off with it -- those 88s -- and occasionally one would come near us. But there were -- they usually didn't try to hit us.

Interviewer: Yeah. Um, so, you're in France, and, again, I keep trying to think of how different it must have been back then compared to what we know of in medical technology today. Um, and what--

Dr. Swithen Chandler: We, we were really a big first aid company, because we sewed them up, we patched them up, we did what we had to and got them back. So a lot of times, they weren't even closed up when they left. We'd be packed up, because there would be so many coming in, and we didn't have time to treat 'em. So we would stop all the bleeding, stop everything we could, get them back in good shape, and then try to get them back to the station hospitals.

Interviewer: So, again, just walk us through one typical day. You get in the morning, you start doing what.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I don't think there was any typical days, because when we were up, we would be up day and night, you know. And if you got tired, you just go somewhere and sleep or lay down if you just couldn't stand it anymore, and then you get going again. So we weren't blowing the horn and getting up at 5: 30 in the morning -- we just, we did what we had to do it as long as we had to do it and then we quit.

Interviewer: Yeah. Could you, I can't imagine what it was like. I was in special forces myself, so, but I always wonder what it was like when you start seeing these guys come in and, you'd have to put aside your feelings while you're doing all of this.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, and the guys would come in with their buddies, too which was bad.

Interviewer: Why was that?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: You know, your best friend gets shot and gets hit pretty well and you bring him in and you him to be treated first. So we had a lot of conflicts, you know, this guy, Lou Tenor, he is my Sergeant and I want him done first, so we had a few of that.

Interviewer: So how would you handle that?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Take them all in as quick as we could. Sometimes we'd put them in the back (inaudible) and get them done at the next hospital, just to stop the conflict.

Interviewer: Really.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah.

Interviewer: What was your next position after France?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: We got all the way up through France and Belgium, Holland and then through Germany and all through Austria, we went all the way up to the Czech border.

Interviewer: So, how many moves did you make?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Probably 30, 40.

Interviewer: Boy, that's a lot of moves.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mm hmm. We never went back, though. We, we would pull up with the other one and just stop there.

Interviewer: Yeah, so again, he was telling you, I was just off camera, you were asking him, you were telling him, Rick, uh, how many people were in your field hospital?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Um, we had 250 GI's and then 40 Doctors and nurses -- 20 and 20 -- that would do everything we had there.

Interviewer: And was there a full Colonel?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, a full Colonel. He was the boss.

Interviewer: And who was that?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Boy, he was from Kansas, too. Manhattan, Kansas. Can't remember his name, though.

Interviewer: And, boy, it must have been rough. I can't imagine.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: He was a chest surgeon. He was a real good surgeon.

Interviewer: Yeah, so when you started getting further and further in, did you have a sense you were going to win?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Never thought we'd lose.

Interviewer: Tell us about that.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I don't know

Interviewer: People don't understand that today.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, I think most of us figured we weren't coming back, either. Because before, before D-Day, when we went in there, we figure everybody take 10 or 15 feet and the next guy would take another few feet and go, so we weren't really sure we'd come back, so we'd just go, well, I don't think everybody thought we weren't coming back that much.

Interviewer: Really, even the medical guys.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Uh huh. It was a different attitude all together then, you know. I would have hated to have gone to 'Nam and then come back and have them spit at me or something. I mean, there would have been mayhem and murder in the streets, and that should never have happened.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: And these guys that went to Vietnam and Korea, they're the greatest guys in the world, I think.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: They called me back to Korea, but I was still limping a little bit, so I didn't go.

Interviewer: So you were wounded?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, I got hit.

Interviewer: Wow, how did that happen?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: When the war was over, we thought we were going to CBI, so they sent me back to Paris to learn, you know, bone up on tropical medicine, so I was there six weeks and then when we came back, they just -- the "V-J" Day came along and said, "Look, we're going home." So we all got on the boat and the boat left at 6, I left at 4, and went back to Germany. Because they sent me to school, I wasn't eligible to come home.

Interviewer: So how'd you hurt your knee?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, they sent me back to the first medical lab in (inaudible), Germany. And this was a lab, what we did there, and being a young boy, again, on the totem pole, they made me the Forensic Pathologist. So anybody that was killed back there, I had to do the autopsy on. And we had to differentiate between whether they died by an accident, you know, being drunk and run with the truck over, or whether somebody killed them -- the Nazis killed them, or whether the (inaudible) were killing each other

Interviewer: I'm sorry, what was it?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: There was some black marketeering going on among the GI's, and some of them killed each other on that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: And, there were four guys killed up in Passau, with a hatchet, I am pretty sure of it, because we all looked at it. And it was in Passau – I don't know, it was in the paper. Somebody told us they had seen them throw a hatchet in the Passau River, so we went up to do it, and it was a set-up and we got waylaid and blown up. So I got my trip home. And I wound up nine months in Valley Forge General Hospital.

Interviewer: I'm sorry, who blew you up?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I think the black marketeers did, I think. They were selling things on the side.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: There was a lot of that going on. When Patton took over, he called all the guys out – all the “Bürgermeisters” – and he said, “Look, you ran it for Hitler, and now you're

running it American style. You're doing it my way and you're doing it right.” And we had no trouble, but then they took Patton out, put him in the Fifth Army, and he got killed on that accident. Then the new politicians came in and everything went to pot. And, you know, they really went to pot -- it went bad. There was a lot of people that went into the black market, stealing things. That whole government went to pot. They went to pot anyway because they were all broken up anyway, and then they all came out. It was a hodgepodge there.

Interview: You said you were the low man on the totem pole, again.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: You know, everywhere I went, sure I came back as a Lieutenant - no, I came back as a Captain. Finally, at that time, we're -- what position you were in, you didn't get a promotion. So you could be there 100 years and still be a Lieutenant. Now you get promoted as you go along, but back then you didn't. So, if you were the last man on the totem pole, you were still a Lieutenant, so you came home and got promoted as you were discharged up to a Captain or something.

Interviewer: So are there -- are there any particular days that stood out for you. It must have seemed like a blur at times.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: A lot of it is, yeah (laughter). We went in to Bohn and, of course, everything was flat. But the cathedral was standing. And “Oh, look at that. How did they ever miss that?” And we got over to the cathedral, you could see through the walls. It just was just absolutely standing, but it was the only building in the whole city that was up. Frankfurt was like that. When we went through Frankfurt, though, we picked up, uh -- we got to a kennel that had Saint Bernards, or Great Dane dogs. So we took two of the Great Danes out and kept them. And they kept them with us, and we finally got them as award dogs. After they had us a week,

any Germans that came, they would go right for them. They decided they were American dogs and they weren't German dogs any more. And any German that we brought in as a prisoner, boy -- they'd go right for them.

Interviewer: What was it like to treat prisoners? That's an interesting question.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, we didn't treat them. If they were bleeding, you'd fixed them up just the same.

Interviewer: What did you -- did you have any feelings about the Germans?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yes, as troopers, yes. You didn't like to see them come in alive.

Interviewer: Tell us about that.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, they were just bad. After the "Bulge", we went up there and we went across that little company of GI's that had been mowed down by a machine gun while they stood at attention.

Interviewer: Malmedy.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: So we were a little bit more vicious. We didn't feel too good about them. And the GI's felt worse. There weren't a lot of prisoners after that.

Interviewer: Yeah, well, again, um -- you know, people have this idea. They see M.A.S.H., and I had enough military experience to know that M.A.S.H. is nothing like I remember the military. What do you think of that television program when you see it?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I used to watch it. I had a lot of fun watching it, yeah.

Interviewer: Did it match what went on?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: No, I don't think so. We lost, well -- our psychiatrist went a little bit nuts one day and he couldn't get his feet on the ground, you know, and so we had to send him back. And he went berserk. And we had another guy that just got real, real quiet, and we were afraid that he might do something and we put him back. But there wasn't, when we were working -- it was a lot of bloodshed, a lot of heart aches.

Interviewer: Yeah, and you were one of the few units that had nurses, I guess. Did you have nurses around there?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah the, um, French couldn't believe that we had like five nurses and five doctors. They had to be hooked up, you know. They didn't believe that they were just working together as a team. They thought they were just women that we brought along with us. They just wouldn't believe it, but they were hard working girls, too.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, when you set up a tent, did you set it up so you'd have sand bags around or anything like that to protect you? Or you are completely defenseless?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: No, we didn't have to worry about getting shot by the Germans. We had to, you know -- the red cross is on them. We didn't have the red crosses on us, but we all them, you know, they just didn't shoot at us. We weren't allowed to carry guns. But, uh, we had some anyway. We set up in (inaudible) one time, and somebody from the steeple started shooting at us and there weren't any GI's around. Somebody from another cabin got them. And the GI's came around and said, "You can't have any guns," but we didn't have any guns. And they said, "We are going to take them all away from you." And they never found any of them. (Laughter). We wanted to have -- you know trophies to take home and stuff.

Interviewer: Did you have any particular friends when you were in that unit?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, Bealy Winetrob was my closest friend, and he -- we wanted to come back to Florida to shoot alligators, you know but he didn't make it. He was one that got hit. And the other Doctor -- Fred -- he got hit too one time.

Interviewer: That must be tough.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, but otherwise, we did pretty good. Any other fatalities -- one of the doctors fell in love with one of the nurses and decided to marry her, so they transferred her out. So they wouldn't let us do that.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I think the unit she went with was the 132nd because they didn't want them married in the same unit.

Interviewer: So liaisons were frowned upon?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mm hmm, yeah.

Interviewer: So, what did you think of the French people? Did you have a chance to encounter them?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I'd rather not talk about that (laughter).

Interviewer: I'm sorry.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: No, we got sniped at more in France than we ever did in Germany, and a lot of the French really resented us coming through there. They weren't that friendly with us.

Interviewer: Really?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Huh uh. Because I went back to school and took a course in practical medicine and they weren't the nicest people in the world.

Interviewer: Fascinating.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I had a pilot come down from Canada. He's a French Canadian. And I said, "How do you get along with the French?" And he said, "They don't like us any more than they like you." (Laughter). They're just not friendly.

Interviewer: Well --

Dr. Swithen Chandler: We got along good with the Germans we (inaudible), really nice. And we were in Bavaria down there and they're real nice people.

Interviewer: So, let me back up, here. How did you get into the military?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I volunteered. I was, well, right, the day, Pearl Harbor was Sunday, and Monday I volunteered. I went right in and I wanted to go, and they said no, you got to go back to school. And they made me a Second Lieutenant (MAC), and just sent me back to school to finish up.

Interviewer: And when did you finally get in to a unit?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, I went from there to Camp Barkeley down in Abilene, Texas for six weeks training. Just showed us how to salute and stuff, and then we went to Camp Maxey, and Paris, Texas, and joined the 125th. So I went right straight through.

Interviewer: And, how did you get over to England? By ship?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, 30 days on the water. We went over on a convoy and they had, the ships and the people -- GI's were on the middle, and they had these big tankers on the outside, and we just zigzagged all the way over. And so it took us 30 days on the water to get there.

Interviewer: What year and what time of the year and month did you arrive, do you remember?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: It was probably around -- it was just getting cold, November or December, somewhere in there.

Interviewer: '43?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah.

Interviewer: And where did you land?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Bermerhaven, I think? Yeah.

Interviewer: And so, um, when you went over to -- okay you were in Wales for awhile, correct?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah.

Interviewer: And what were you doing there?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Nothing. Just sat. Of course, the Colonel had us drive trucks up and down, practicing, but we did nothing. I saw no patients, saw nothing, in all that time.

Interviewer: And so, when did you know you were going to go into--

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, the natives came up and told us about a day ahead of time when we were leaving (laughter) And, uh, and two days later we went over. But we went over a week or so after D-Day.

Interviewer: And how did you go over there, did you

Dr. Swithen Chandler: By boat, but LSD. Big enough to take our trucks and we could run right up on the shore. And there was no shooting on the beach there at that time.

Interviewer: Could you see the devastation?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Oh, yeah.

Interviewer: What did you think of all that?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Didn't look good, because, they left them there as far as I know, and they just rotted away, or brushed it away. Nobody ever moved 'em, they just went away by themselves.

Interviewer: And so, what kind of journey was it to your first station?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: That was weird. We didn't know what we were getting into, because we knew what happened on D-Day. You got to remember that the cream of the German Army was better – better equipment, better tanks, better airplanes got beaten by the Americans who were just mad, and it makes a difference. Because you know, there are Tiger tanks that take 10 of our little Sherman tanks and knock out one Tiger. And their planes were better than ours and we still beat them.

Interviewer: So, would you see a lot of the casualties from this fact, like, tankers and things like this coming in?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Oh, you'd come along and you'd see three German tanks out there all beat up, and no Tigers. They'd be all gone. One time, they, we did have one -- you had to get a

Tiger tank from behind. The guys had to crawl up and blow them up from behind, and a lot of them got hurt doing that. And we had one of them that we had on the side of town, the streets were so little that we had to build a road around the damn thing. We couldn't move it. But they were tough. But one thing, you never forget the motor on the Tiger tank. When you hear that, it's not fun.

Interviewer: So you've actually heard that?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah. In fact, about a year or so ago, I turned on the TV and they had a Tiger tank coming over the hill and I thought I was going under the bed for a minute. But it's just a bad sign. You didn't mind their bombers because -- you know, the Germans are funny. They have a twin-engine bomber, a four-engine bomber, and each engine would be set for set for its ability. But our bombers, all of the motors were synchronized, and the Germans didn't do that, and you -- when they'd come over, and you knew you weren't going to hit anything. But our motors, all our twin engines, we always synchronized the engines so they always sounding. The Germans never did, because they had to have every motor run just exactly the way the book said.

Interviewer: And you'd be hearing this, of course.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: You could hear it.

Interviewer: And would they keep you up at night? You said there was a--

Dr. Swithen Chandler: "Bedcheck Charlie" used to come over at night and see what was going on. And then, later on, the P-38 caliber guns -- I mean, the 88 guns would come over and start picking things off.

Interview: Boy, I can't imagine all that tumult and activity going around all around you. People expecting so much, I guess.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I expect, I don't know -- just part of the thing.

Interview: Yeah. Now how old were you when you started

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I was 24 on Pearl Harbor day.

Interview: And you, I heard you were in three years in the med school at that moment?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, I was three years in the med school.

Interview: And, you grown up in Philadelphia?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, I was still at the University of Pennsylvania.

Interview: Yeah, I guess you run in to people from your home town occasionally? Would you ever see anybody from?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: They were in the 28th division, they were with us because we were in the 3rd Army, and they lasted about a week -- the 28th division, about all. I don't think any of them got settled or got their guns warmed up before they got hit.

Interview: Yeah.

Elizabeth: I'm curious. You are at the bottom of the totem pole, not experienced, not a chest surgeon. What kind of -- and you need to talk to him with you answer -- what kind of wounds did you treat?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I assisted -- I was the number 2 man on the table. So whatever came in and they needed help on: "Hey buddy, come over."

Interview: So, what would you typically do? Stop the bleeding?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: The main thing would be to stop the bleeding, and if there were any holes, block them up, and if the intestines or something were hurt, you would have it all packed away so you wouldn't get an infection on it. And then you'd try to get them back to a big hospital where they could really clean them out and load them up with penicillin and just keep them going. But, we were just really trying to keep them alive.

Interview: Yeah.

Elizabeth: He ended up at a concentration camp?

Interview: Oh, yes, tell us about that.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, we went back, right near, we went right up to the Czech border, and right near there was Enns, Austria. And the Mauthausen Concentration Camp was there. You know this idiot in Iran who says there's no such thing? He should go down there. These had the ovens in them and they had the trenches in them where they had the bodies in them, and then they had the big, uh, shower rooms, when you went in, it's like a shower. You didn't know whether you were taking a shower or getting gassed. And they probably killed a million there, too.

Interview: Did you treat any of the inmates.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, we tried -- not the Germans, there weren't any of them left when we got there -- but, uh, oh yeah. We lost almost 100 a day when we got there, because, you know,

you have been on 911 and the guy comes out and puts the IV fluid in them. If we did that, we'd kill them because the water would go in and they would fill up to their lungs and just bubble up to the ground. So we couldn't give them IV fluids, and we couldn't give them food because they hadn't eaten for so long that they would choke to death on it. So we had nurses there with a teaspoon of ringer solution, or just a little sugar and salt and just give them a teaspoon every 15 or 20 minutes. And then after maybe three or four weeks, we could get them back to life. And many of them just were too far gone. We couldn't--

Interviewer: You said you were losing 100 a day?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: When we first got there, for about a month.

Interviewer: Were you some of the first troops there?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, we were.

Interviewer: What was your reaction to all that?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: You were a little disappointed in some of the people around there.

Because the people around there, they didn't know it was there. And you could smell it. Have you ever been by the pig farm down there, in South Jordan?

Interviewer: I think so.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: (Inaudible). You know -- you'd smell that five miles, six miles away.

And the people in town worked there, I think till we got there.

Interviewer: So how long were you at the concentration camp?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: About a month, about 45 days. And we were back in Camp Philadelphia back in Marseilles, and they decided to send me to school.

Marseilles: What was that school again?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I was -- it was for tropical medicine. Because we thought we were going to CBI. So this was on medicine that you get in that type of area.

Interviewer: It's "China, Burma, India?"

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, "CBI."

Interviewer: So when did you finally get home?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, I don't know. I don't remember coming home. But I got out in '47, I guess, somewhere in there. Valley Forge General Hospital, somewhere in there.

Interviewer: Did you have a sweetheart or a wife?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: I was married, but not when I got home. I had two and a half years there; we drifted apart.

Interviewer: My goodness. Um, I keep wondering what it's like. We had to evacuate some people one time. It was an accident, it was very unpleasant. We tend to panic, the troops.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: We had nurses out in triage that were really, really good. And they would be able to say, which one to get first, second, and third. Get the blood over to them. We had a lot of blood over there, too that we could give them. And some -- I guess it was mostly all blood. And these triages would go in there, and we had five operating rooms going. And they was just bring them in. And we were pretty fast on them. Because when I first came back, I did some

surgery in Trenton for awhile before I came down here, and, uh, I did an Appendectomy in 15 or 20 minutes, a gallbladder in a half an hour. "What's going on," you know? The old guys are taking four or five hours for a gallbladder, but we didn't have time like that. We just got fast. Now, I decided when I got older to quit doing the surgery.

Interviewer: Yeah, so how did you come out to Utah? I am curious.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, there was a riot in town, in Trenton. And half the town got burned down, including my-- and back there, a lot of the doctors all have offices right in their homes. And uh, ours got burned down. So I just took the insurance and came out here and never went back (laughter).

Interviewer: How interesting.

Elizabeth: I'm curious how long it took to set up this whole E-Vac Hospital.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, when we pulled to a spot, 45 minutes -- when we went to a spot, 45 minutes, we were absolutely able to take all the casualties you had. And, I'll tell you one thing that happened -- we went, Jon Sweeny and I, from (inaudible) -- we were supposed to go up and find a spot to put it in a town called "Wright." And we didn't spell it right, so we went to the wrong town. We went screaming in, and Sweeny said, "God, look at that uniform. It's a German uniform." So we made a 180, there was a big German tank right in back of us so we stopped, and they picked us up and about 20 minutes later our troops came screaming through. But the worst part (laughing) was, you know, they didn't know -- what the hell were two doctors doing up there ahead of them? So they said maybe we were a couple Germans that were dressed up in American uniforms. So they pulled us apart and they said, "Where are you from?" And I said, "Philly." And he said, "Let me bring thing little book out and start asking you some questions."

And he says, "What street is between 12th and 14th Street?" And I said, "Oh, 13th Street," and he said, "No, it's not. It's Broad Street, which is the longest street in the world, you know." So the guy says, "Tsk tsk, tell me some more." And I'm like, "OK, jeez." So they asked, "What is the PSFS," which is the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society. And I told them where the book binder store is and all the other stores are, you know. And so they said, "Okay." But it was kind of hairy there for a minute.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: So you're actually a P. O. W. for about 20 minutes?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: (Laughter) Yeah, I know. But, uh, I even lost a couple GIs that day, too.

Interviewer: How's that?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Gunned up.

Interviewer: By the Germans?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, they weren't very pleasant.

Interviewer: That's interesting.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: But that didn't last long -- It wasn't a problem. I don't know what it would be like for these guys in Vietnam and Korea. Those guys were really hurt. That would be difficult, like John McCain got. I don't know how he could come back and be friends with them.

Interviewer: Do you have any feelings about the Germans today?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yes, as troopers. Yeah, I don't, I don't like to see the movies where they have Nazis guys walking around in uniforms -- I still don't like to watch that. Yeah, and I think, what, Tom Cruise just did a movie about Hitler? It was three miles of country? He was very

unpopular over there. In fact, they even made a rule now, for the cult that he's in – it's illegal in Germany now since he left there.

Interviewer: Scientology.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Scientology, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, interesting.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: And I won't go see his movie, either, with all his German Nazi uniforms. That kind of irritates me.

Interviewer: So, thinking back about that time, what would you tell people of this generation about that war?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Well, we went over to win. And we went over so that when we beat them, they didn't want to fight back, and they didn't. And we did the same thing to Japan. We beat them so badly that they said, "Uncle, we don't want any part of you." And we're not doing that today, and we didn't do it in Korea, and we didn't do it in Vietnam, we're not doing it now. If you took our Army and turned them over there and said, "Go get 'em," it would stop the war in a week. There wouldn't be anybody left. You just take them down so they don't want to come back. But we're not doing that.

Interviewer: So, what do you have to say about the quality of the men served with you? How do you feel about your fellow GI's?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Over there? Wonderful. But these guys over here are just as good. I mean, Americans -- the American soldiers, whether Vietnam or World War II, they're all good, they're all great guys. And my grandson -- he just got out of Walter Reed, his third trip over

there. Got in one of those, what is it, formed -- explosive penetrators hit him, and he broke both his legs, got them pinned up, and a piece out of his left arm. The third trip over there. It was so different because, from the time he got hit till the time he was in Walter Reed wasn't very long. It was just -- by the time we were doing in the back hospital, he was already in Walter Reed.

Interviewer: So what's your feelings about America?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Great -- greatest place in the world, you know? But I think we ought to put our thumb on the other people a little bit more. When you go in to a war, you gotta go to win. "Go get 'em."

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: And they're not doing that. It's a lot of politics. One guy told he went over there and they're shooting at them from the second floor of a building and you can't take the building out, you can only take out the top floor. You know -- with Patton, we take the whole building out. And if there was some guys in that little corner of town that was shooting at us, we took the corner of the town out. And they decided it wasn't fun to fight with us anymore because there wasn't anything left.

Interviewer: What, on "V-E" Day, what were you doing with the fighting stopped?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: "V-E" Day, I was back in camp Philadelphia in Marseilles, probably having a beer somewhere.

Interviewer: Was it a big celebration?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah, our, uh -- we had a Church of Christ minister, and he brought out all the wine out all over the place. Yeah, he was a good guy, too.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Elizabeth: Is there anything we should ask you about that we've missed?

Dr. Swithen Chandler: No, except that I think that we ought to be meaner when we fight a war than what we're doing.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well, you won't get any argument from me.

Elizabeth: It's what my father always said--

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Yeah.

Elizabeth: --"Go big or don't go at all."

Interviewer: Hey father was a PT Boat Commander.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Was he? Oh, boy. Yeah. They were tough, too. But they're all tough. I don't care if they're Navy, Army, Marines. They're all good guys.

Interviewer: There's something special about Americans.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mm hmm. Absolutely. Put them up against anybody in the world, any time.

Interviewer: I agree.

Dr. Swithen Chandler: Mm hmm.

Interviewer: Well, thank you very much. It's an honor.