

**The National Museum of the Pacific War
(Admiral Nimitz Museum)**

**Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas**

**Interview with
Glenn Cleland
Aug 28, 2001**

This is Richard Misenhimer today is August 28, 2001. I am interviewing Mr. Glenn Cleland, at his home at 22107 N CR 400 W, Rochester, Indiana. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War Center for Pacific War Studies for the preservation of historic information of World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Mr. Cleland I would like to thank you for taking time today to do this interview.

Mr. Cleland:

Glad to do it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Let me start with where were you born?

Mr. Cleland:

I was born two miles west of Rochester. I was born in the little house right across from Fulton Co. REMC on State Road 14.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What day were you born? What was your birthday?

Mr. Cleland:

Dec. 3, 1920

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, I have three brothers and three sisters.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Younger than you or older?

Mr. Cleland:

Two sisters younger and all the rest of them are older.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were any of your brothers in World War II?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, I had a brother that was in the South Pacific.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did he survive the war?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, he survived the war. The only really problem that he had was jaundice and malaria.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is he still living now?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Around here?

Mr. Cleland:

He is living in South Bend.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were you parent's names?

Mr. Cleland:

My mothers name was Redah, was the way they spelled it. She was a Baldwin, Redta Baldwin, and she married my dad Herman Cleland. He was from Miami County and lived around Macy nearly all his younger life, but when he was raising his family he lived west of Rochester about all his life.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go to school?

Mr. Cleland:

I went to Reiter, which was the first eight grades in Rochester Township, and then I went to Rochester Joint

High School.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What year did you graduate there?

Mr. Cleland:

1939

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you graduated in 1939. When did you go into the service?

Mr. Cleland:

October of 1942

Mr. Misenhimer:

So what did you do from the time you graduated until you went into the service?

Mr. Cleland:

Well my dad was a farmer, so I helped him farm and then about a year or so before I went into the service I drove a livestock truck. I hauled livestock, primarily horses because the war was getting started and we hauled lots of horses out of Kansas to Ohio to a sale and we might even haul then even further east to Pennsylvania or New York.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were the horses being used for?

Mr. Cleland:

To pull small buggies and wagons to carry ice and milk and groceries and some of them if they were small horses were used to haul coal from the coal mines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What branch did you go into?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I went into the Army and was sent to the 12th Armored Division which was activated and started my

career at Camp Campbell, Kentucky, which was right on the Kentucky and Tennessee line at Hopkinsville. So I was there almost a year.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you drafted or did you volunteer?

Mr. Cleland:

No, I was drafted.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay. So you didn't have any choice of the branch?

Mr. Cleland:

No I tried to get into the Navy but then I guess I am a little color blind and I didn't know enough of the different colors to suit them so I had to wait to be drafted then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you went in October of '42?

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you take your basic training?

Mr. Cleland:

At Camp Campbell, it is Fort Campbell now, but then it was Camp Campbell.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went straight there for your basic training?

Mr. Cleland:

Well yes, the first week or so I was at Indianapolis and then they sent a trainload of us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

At Fort Benjamin Harrison?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, at Fort Benjamin Harrison and then we went to Camp Campbell then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did your basic training consist of?

Mr. Cleland:

Basic training was learning to march, obey orders, shoot rifle and machine gun. That is what it consists of.

Maybe part of it would be reading a compass and things like this.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Map reading?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, Map reading.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long was that training?

Mr. Cleland:

That lasted almost a year. We had Tennessee maneuvers in that time too. In the first year, which was around Nashville, Tennessee and we had to cross the Tennessee River. That was the main part of it for the first year.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you join the 12th Armored Division?

Mr. Cleland:

What did I do?

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you join it?

Mr. Cleland:

Well, early October of 1942.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you went straight to the 12th Armored?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, that was the only outfit that I was every in.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were the conditions like there?

Mr. Cleland:

Well it was a new camp and they were still building barracks, streets and sidewalks. It was nothing but red clay and every time it rained, why whenever you walked you was 6 inches taller by the time you got the barracks from the time you left. It wasn't very classy living I can tell you that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you lived in barracks? What was that like?

Mr. Cleland:

We did live in barracks, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the food like?

Mr. Cleland:

Well as far as the food I was always satisfied and happy with the food. We had good meat, the only thing was every once in a while you would get some goat meat of something like that. But generally speaking we couldn't complain.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any kind of special training? Any kind of specialty?

Mr. Cleland:

No other than I ended up in a machine gun platoon. We used to go out in the field and practice shooting at different points. We also spent a lot of time on the infiltration course shooting over people from other parts of the division. Of course then we had the guns locked up so they couldn't drop of anything. In order to kill time I

would crawl thru with others because we had a five-man squad and everybody needed to be right at the gun all the time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you went thru the infiltration course?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh yes, I went thru the infiltration course hundreds of times just to have something to do.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Most people try to avoid that?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I know, but I can see that there wasn't much of a problem but other people didn't understand that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of machine gun was it that you had?

Mr. Cleland:

I had a M1917A1 .30 caliber water-cooled. It weighed, with the tripod and everything, about 75 pounds. When you break it down the tripod would weigh about 39 pounds and the rest of it was the machine gun. We had to carry water, that would get hot just like that. Just like old engines used to, you know years ago you would see them steam and everything. But you could keep firing in the gun a lot longer than with the air-cooled one.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have a water reservoir that circulated water?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh yes. It really didn't circulate as in the fact, when the machine gun would move it would move the water around it was a jacket over the barrel. So we had to carry water and every now and then put more water in it. In the wintertime when we were overseas would have to carry antifreeze, because it was cold and the water would freeze if you weren't firing your gun. We had insulated gloves so if you had to move the fella that would pick the gun up he had to have some protection or otherwise he would have scaled his hands.

Mr. Misenhimer:

These were heavy, asbestos type gloves that you used?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, they were asbestos they were insulated asbestos, so we could grab the gun if we had to move in a hurry.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On the training there you practiced this? You went down to Tennessee for maneuvers?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, we were right on the Kentucky and Tennessee line. We only had about 45 to 50 miles to go. We scattered, I suppose over 50 miles radius on maneuvers. We were supposed to be north and east of Nashville.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long did these maneuvers last?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh as I remember close to a month.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of tanks did the 12th Armored Division have?

Mr. Cleland:

They had M4 Sherman tanks, they also had the M5A1 light tanks, the M7 "Priest" self propelled guns and the heavy tanks too because different outfits used different tanks. We had three battalions that had Sherman tanks. We had four tanks in our company and they had what was called assault guns (M7), they were speedy and could get in small places and could get out in a hurry.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What size gun did they have on those?

Mr. Cleland:

105 millimeter I think is what it was on the Priest.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was on the Sherman's? Do you know?

Mr. Cleland:

75 millimeter, but it was a different setup. The Sherman's had long ..

Mr. Misenhimer:

Barrels?

Mr. Cleland:

Long barrels, the other just had 3 feet or something like that – short ones.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of company were you with?

Mr. Cleland:

I was with the headquarters company of the 17th Armored Infantry and we were the heavy equipment company for the battalion. We had A, B, & C companies which were more or less considered the rifle companies. They had rifles and M19 60millimeter mortars and they had air-cooled machine guns. We had water-cooled machine guns and then we had M29 81 millimeter mortars and then we had the assault gun platoon, which was tank.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were in the Armored Infantry Battalion?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes that is right, 17th Armored Infantry Battalion and I was in Headquarters Company. We had three battalions of infantry, three battalions of tanks, three battalions of artillery and then we had a battalion of what do you call them when they look after your equipment and everything when it breaks down?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Ordnance.

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, Ordnance and we had a telephone company and radio..

Mr. Misenhimer:

Communications?

Mr. Cleland:

Communications just companies, we didn't have a battalion of those.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Approximately how many total people were in the 12th Armored? Do you know?

Mr. Cleland:

Right at 12,000.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you were in the machine gun squad in Headquarters Company?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, we had 4 squads in a platoon and I was sergeant in that machine gun platoon. I was in charge of one of the squads. The other machine squad sergeants were: Claude Curry from Jackson, Michigan; Carl Johnston from Rockford, Illinois; Clarence "Red" Smith from Chillicothe, Ohio; and myself.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What rank were you? Now you started out as a Private...

Mr. Cleland:

Yes I started out as a Private and ended up becoming a sergeant.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you end up becoming a Pfc?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh I made Pfc right after basic training was over.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about corporal?

Mr. Cleland:

I don't remember, about the time we went overseas I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay. So you got your sergeant when you were overseas?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now after you finished these maneuvers what did you do?

Mr. Cleland:

Well they shipped us to Camp Barkley, Texas at Abilene. That was a laugh! We had barracks but they were not like the ones we had at Camp Campbell. The barracks at Barkley were set up for to handle somewhere between 8 to 16 men. Nothing but framework and covered with plywood. It was hot in the summer and cold and windy in the winter.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Approximately when did you go there?

Mr. Cleland:

It was before Christmas of (19) 43.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, fall of '43.

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do there?

Mr. Cleland:

Well it was just more practice. We had different roads that we had to learn to travel and it was just more practice. They changed when we went into the service they had regiments and then did away with the regiments and then we operated as battalions then in the change over. I had been home on leave and they were

regiments and I went back and I had a hard time finding my company, they changed on me while I was gone and I had a hard time finding where I was suppose to go.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you get this leave?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I had several of them. My mother passed away in '44 before I went overseas and I guess it was probably early of '44.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So when you finished your basic training for example, you had a leave then to come home?

Mr. Cleland:

I think we probably did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you had several opportunities to come home?

Mr. Cleland:

I was home several times.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So Camp Barkley then in Texas more basic training?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The infantry then worked closely with the tanks? Is that correct?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, that's right. Although we did work a lot on our own. But then yes we did learn to operate with the tanks too, so that you know so you could learn how to keep from getting run over.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you leave Camp Barkley?

Mr. Cleland:

We left Camp Barkley in about August of '44. August or September.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go then?

Mr. Cleland:

Then we went to Camp Shanks, New York.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay.

Mr. Cleland:

And shipped out for Liverpool.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long were you in New York?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh just a matter of a week or so.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get a chance to go in town?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, I got into New York City once.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay what was it like there?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh, it was different because I had never been there before, but it was just fun, we didn't do anything special, just looked around.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were the people there friendly?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, as far as I was concerned they were friendly. I got along with them all right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any special friends that you had during this time before you went overseas that you recall?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I got to be friends with a boy from Chillicothe, Ohio, (Clarence "Red" Smith) who also was made sergeant and he had a machine gun squad and I worked with him all the time. But then I got to be good friends with him. After the war why he visited us over here and we visited him several times. But he had been dead now for 25 years I suppose. He was a heavy smoker and ended up with lung cancer. We were good friends.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you recall anything humorous that might have happened to you before you got overseas? In training somewhere or whenever?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I suppose there is something's. We had our halftrack, we was out on field work one day and we lost the pin from our clutch in our halftrack driver he was lost – he couldn't shift. So I had driven enough trucks and farm tractors to have that thing happen to me before. So I told him to let me drive it and I got the thing started idling down good, got it in gear and we took off and I shifted without the clutch. But then some of the boys couldn't believe that it could be done but we got back to camp anyway. That's about the only thing I know that was in particular funny that I can remember of.

Mr. Misenhimer:

In your machine gun squad what was your duty there?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I was in charge of it. Whenever we set it up of course I had to look and see that everything we needed was available and in order we had a five man squad. Whenever we moved I carried the tripod and the number one

gunner carried the machine gun itself. The other boys would carry the water and the shells or ammunition.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This was what caliber machine gun?

Mr. Cleland:

.30 caliber, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So when you left New York you said you went to Liverpool, England?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, on October 3rd we left New York.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long did that trip over take?

Mr. Cleland:

I think we must have been about 10 days.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, Did you zig zag? Were you in a convoy?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes we were in a convoy. Zig zaged. We went over on the Empress of Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This was a passenger liner then?

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How were the accommodations on it?

Mr. Cleland:

Well they were crowded. Lots of hammocks and things.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you slept in hammocks then?

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About how many were on the ship? Do you know?

Mr. Cleland:

The whole division wasn't on it, but I suppose we probably had 7,000 people I suppose. The advanced party had already gone to England with the equipment.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On your ship?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now did your equipment go with you or did it go separate?

Mr. Cleland:

No our equipment was all suppose to be over there. Originally our intent was suppose to be to go right to France. But they had lost so much equipment that other armored outfits that was there ahead of us had to utilize a lot of our equipment so we ended up going to England and we had to wait a couple of weeks so we could get new equipment.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay. So you went over there after D-Day?

Mr. Cleland:

Right. Yes it was I guess probably October when we went across the channel.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you land in France then?

Mr. Cleland:

At Le Havre.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And then what?

Mr. Cleland:

Of course we didn't have a hard time of it like everybody else. We got over there and found our equipment and made up a convoy and we headed up going on across France. When we first got into battle we probably wasn't 10 miles from the German border. We just had a few light scimmages and things really before this battle of Herrlisheim.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How do you spell that?

Mr. Cleland:

How do you spell it? Herrlisheim

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you at during the Battle of the Bulge?

Mr. Cleland:

We were south of the Battle of the Bulge. We was in the Alsace Range section of France. Fact is we relived the 4th Armored Division so they could go to the Battle of the Bugle. From our new position we were headed toward Strasbourg, Germany.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were in which army then?

Mr. Cleland:

I think we were in the 3rd Army then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Under Patton?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, and then later on we were in the 7th and then we ended up in a Corp. for a while and I don't remember what Corp. it was. And we were even under the French control for a while. I was in the 3rd & 7th Army and under the French. I have a thing in there that I can show you when we were under the French (this is the Alsace Patch he is referring to).

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you relieved the 4th Armored so they could so they could go aid the men at Bastogne.

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do at this point? Were you involved in combat?

Mr. Cleland:

Well yes we were in combat but nothing that was real hot – I guess you would have to say. At times we would dig fox holes and maybe sit 3 or 4 or 5 days and then they would move us out and move us on. But we really didn't get into anything until we got into Herrlisheim.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Along the way did you loose any tanks or any people?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh yes, we had lost tanks before and we had quite a few people killed from snipers. The Germans they had things spotted. Say if you was in the mortar platoon they would have something say 500 yards away or 600 yards. A spot that would be open like they would know that maybe – the Allies would say “well there is an opening we will go right over there”. Well they had that all staked out and they would drop a mortar shell in their barrel and they could almost put it in the barrel about a half a mile away. And this happened to us one time on January 17th, '45, the day before I was captured. We had crossed the canal, and I seem to remember that

there was a fence or something that caused us to have to help each other to get across. I can't remember what it was anymore, we had all got passed our obstruction and we was just kind of assembling and we were fortunate that we was all in a circle, probably no bigger than around this room right here and a shell landed in the center of us and didn't go off. Otherwise I probably won't have been here today. But they can drop a shell in a 10 foot area, but we were just fortunate because they had a lot of shells that didn't go off.

Mr. Misenhimer:

A mortar shell?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, mortar shell I don't know what size it was but it was bigger then a 60 millimeter, I do know that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Had your machine gun crew been involved in battles with the others and things?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh yes, we had fired our guns before, right before this.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When was this battle that you were in here?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I was captured on January 18 of '45. Actually I got into it (Herrlisheim) about January the 16th is when we were first committed. But there were several other elements of our division that had been fighting for several weeks. But we didn't really realize that until it was all over with.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I notice in the newspaper article that you have here that this was considered to be another Battle of the Bulge?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. Well this was what they called it because it wasn't called the Battle of the Bulge then, it was called the Battle of Herrlisheim. I was captured; I think you would have to say that almost all of our battalion was captured. Many were killed while others were captured. Because there was so many outfits that was committed

to the Battle of the Bulge that it thinned us out and our line wasn't thick enough; we were spread out to thin and the Germans took advantage of it. The 23rd and 43rd Tank Battalions were destroyed. Among those captured included our CO, col. Gene Novisol.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They attacked you there?

Mr. Cleland:

Right. We had them pushed back to the Rhine River, a mile or so from the Rhine River they had to do something because they weren't going to let them back across the river. To me it was just like when you been around farms enough when a farmer used to pen up his hogs and all and then try to sort them or maybe their cattle they would try to do the same. They would get them in too tight an area and maybe they would break loose. That is what this reminded me of. Because we had them pushed back to the river and they had to do something. They infiltrated at night was when I was captured. We had lost so many tanks that all we had left was our rifles and machine guns.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the Germans, were they attacking with the Armored Division? Or what were they attacking with?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, they had tanks they had 105's on their tanks and they of course they had... They surprised us I guess according to our information there wasn't very many soldiers out there and they didn't have very much equipment but they had more then we were told.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you know what German unit that it was?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, I got it down someplace I can't tell you where they were SS, they were top of the line soldiers, SS troops.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you know what tank they had?

Mr. Cleland:

No. Mark ...

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tiger or Panther?

Mr. Cleland:

Tiger tank I believe is what they were, possible 88 or 105 millimeter or something.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How effective were ours compared to them?

Mr. Cleland:

Well they were far superior to ours, because we had to hit them just right to knock them out. There shot further and harder. Maybe our tank might have maneuvered better but as far as weight and steel we didn't have it compared to what they had.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any anti-tank guns?

Mr. Cleland:

Well we didn't as far as we were concerned. We had a battalion of colored soldiers that was attached to us that had those kinds of guns.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you know what caliber they were?

Mr. Cleland:

No I don't.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So then the Germans infiltrated then you say?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, we had captured about half of this town of Herrlisheim on the 17th of January. That night they had

infiltrated back into town and we knew they were there, but they really didn't show up with the tanks and stuff until early morning. They had been firing all night and one of the shells hit a chicken coop across the street from where we were. We were in a barn and chickens scattered everywhere. During the night a German soldier crawled up in front of our barn and crawled up on top of this chicken clucked. So that alerted us that something was going on and one of the fellows stuck his head out the barn door and saw this soldier and got him shot, but didn't kill him. The next morning after we were captured some of the Pfc's of course they sorted us right after we were captured. Some of the boys had to pick this German soldier up and carry him to the medic. Like I said they sorted us between Pfc's and Privates. I didn't see my squad anymore after the morning.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were a sergeant at that point?

Mr. Cleland:

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did they capture you? Were you in the barn when they captured you?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, they were in the barn. They moved this big tank up about a half a block away so we didn't have anything that would really knock a tank out. So they had soldiers that came out and hollered at us, and all hid within the barn while down the street the battalion and company commanders were within a house. They gave up and we gave up. Because if they would have turned that gun and that tank on us we probably would not have been here today.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So there was quite a number captured then? Was that correct?

Mr. Cleland:

There were about 20 of us in the barn. The company commander and the battalion commander was in a house but the house was on fire so they had to get out or be burned alive. So they got captured.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What time of the day was this?

Mr. Cleland:

This was about 4 o'clock in the morning. But then they got others captured thru the day. This other sergeant that I was telling about he got captured about 10 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you also take a number of casualties? Were quite a few of your people wounded or killed?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, we had a lot of wounded and a lot killed. We had something like 800 killed during the war. From Herrlisheim thru the rest of the war like 820 or something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So this German Infantry came in and captured you or what?

Mr. Cleland:

They had yes mostly German Infantry but they had tanks with them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Sure.

Mr. Cleland:

We didn't have anything like I said that would knock out the tanks. They fired the gun at night, but this barn that we was in the percussion would make the roof go way up in the air and it wasn't a good situation to be in.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what gun was this?

Mr. Cleland:

105 is what they had.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The German's, it was there gun that caused this?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was your machine gun then set up to fire?

Mr. Cleland:

No we didn't have it set up, we was in the barn, all we were trying to do was to protect ourselves.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So then when they captured you what did they do with you then?

Mr. Cleland:

They marched us, we was several miles from the Rhine River. They marched us to the Rhine and they we went across on a barge bridge. It had rubber rafts and then planks on top of that. They marched us to Baden Baden's Stalag VI G where I was interviewed. I was interviewed by a German that had gone home to Germany and prior to that had worked at Willie's Overland Motor Vehicle Corp. and later know for the manufactured Willie's Jeep at Toledo, Ohio. He could speak English as well as you and I and he wasn't afraid to tell us that he had worked at Willie's. They tried to scare you as much as they could and they are real rough; loud and they can scare you as much as anything else.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did they threaten you in any way?

Mr. Cleland:

No they didn't threatened you, but they make you feel like they are threatening you, but then I was never too concerned about being killed.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you was marched back once you were captured back to the Rhine how did they treat you along there?

Mr. Cleland:

Some places they would spit on you if you would happen to be walking thru a town or sometimes they line up and watch you got thru town. Some places why they would offer you something to eat like carrots, potatoes, or sugar beets. The worse thing was the weather as it was cold. Supposedly it was the coldest winter in 50 years, lots of snow. They didn't bend over backwards to take care of you at all.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have pretty good winter clothes?

Mr. Cleland:

Well yes I still had – I had been issued of course a heavy winter coat and I still had all those available to me.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any overshoes or anything like that?

Mr. Cleland:

No. no overshoes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Just combat boots.

Mr. Cleland:

I ended up with frost bitten hands and frost bitten feet. I get compensated for that, which started a couple of years ago.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So they marched you back some of the Camps?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I was in 5 different prison camps.

Mr. Misenhimer:

No I mean the first day they.. here. The first day you were captured some of the civilians were friendly and some of them were not?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, actually I don't remember seeing to many civilians out the first day it was once we got away from the front that we saw more of them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So who was spitting on you then? That was ...

Mr. Cleland:

You would find that some of the civilians would.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did German soldier treat you?

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Mr. Cleland:

Most of the time we were handled by what they call 4F or people over aged but the real soldiers you didn't see much of them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

After the first day?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, after the first day right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you got back and this person that had worked for Jeep company interrogated you?

Mr. Cleland:

Right, we was in a schoolhouse which is where he interviewed us. They talked more about, well they said you better tell us this or you had better tell us that. Or we won't feed you or we won't do this if you don't tell us.

We didn't get very good food anyway so I guess they didn't withhold anything.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were the kind of things they were trying to get you to tell them?

Mr. Cleland:

Well they wanted to know the name of our outfit and what battalion and what company it was. All we told

them was name, rank and serial number. That was all we had to tell them. They would get a little loud sometimes. When ever they would ask you something all you would say was your name, rank & serial number, they would get a little loud and a little rough. I never got beat up or anything like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now this guy that had worked at Jeep, was he glad to be in the German Army? Or did he say anything?

Mr. Cleland:

No I don't think that he was. I don't really think he was, like I said, he talked pretty freely and he had told us that he had worked at Willie's and that he had gone home to visit and that he had got caught. But he didn't say that he wasn't satisfied, but I think he was all in all would have rather been back in Toledo.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So that was the first day that would was captured that he interviewed you?

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So how long did you stay there?

Mr. Cleland:

We was just there a few days and then they put us on a train.... Now if you want to hold on here a little bit I will get out some information and I can tell you a little bit more about where we went.

Mr. Misenhimer:

All right. Read this again for me here.

Mr. Cleland:

Arrived at Russian Prison camp in the Black Forest between Steinbeck and Gurnsboch late the 19th and stayed there two days. Left the Russian prison camp the night of January 20th and walked 12 kilometers to Gurnsboch boarded a train at 9 o'clock that night and rode the train for 28 hours in cattle cars. Got off the train at 11 o'clock the night of the 21st at Ludwigsburg and walked to Stalag V prison camp. There was nothing but

horse stables with high barbed wire fence around it. (following is taken from a follow up interview: the cattle cars were called 40 x 8 meaning they could carry 40 men or 8 horses. What they put into the cars ranged from 60 to 120 men per car. With that many people confined inside there was no room for the men to lay down and rest, no toilet facilities, nor any food supply for most of the trip. The cars, in middle of winter were nothing less than pure ice boxes and it was in these I froze my hands and feet. Because of being transported in the 40 x 8 cars I am now an official member of the 40 and 8 club of which only those men who went thru this hell can belong. Pv,jt)

Mr. Misenhimer:

You say a Russian prison camp this was ...

Mr. Cleland:

Well yes, some of these prison scattered in Germany; there was 100s of POW prison camps. Some would have Russians and some would have Americans and some would have all nationalities. You never knew. Like I said I was in 5 different camps.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What about food? Did they feed you along the way?

Mr. Cleland:

No, not when you was in the cattle cars you didn't get anything to eat or drink. When you was walking a couple of different times, either the American Red Cross or the International Red Cross would meet us and they would give us maybe a box of maybe a foot square filled with chocolate bars and maybe some cigarettes, soap, liver patties and some cookies. Sometimes you would divide it up between two people and sometimes maybe 5 people. Just whatever they had available. So anyway once in a while you would find the civilians, when you were walking they would meet you out at the road and offer you maybe a potato or maybe a slice of bread or something once in while. Generally speaking that didn't happen, but we did have it happen. The day that we found out that President Roosevelt had died we was walking or marching then, we went thru a little town the Germans were celebrating; you would have thought that they had just won the war. Because they were so happy

the Roosevelt was dead. Of course they despised Roosevelt as much as we did Hitler. But we got spit on that day. That was really the worst.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was in April.

Mr. Cleland:

That was in April no March. When did Roosevelt die was it March? (someone answered "I don't have a clue") was it April, well okay.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anyways a couple months after you were captured.

Mr. Cleland:

Oh yes. Right I was captured January the 18th and the I was released on April the 29th.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay. What was the first prison camp that you went to that you stayed in any length of time?

Mr. Cleland:

We stayed at Stalag V for 17 days and this was at Ludwigsburg.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This was you first one?

Mr. Cleland:

This is the first one yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This was the horse stable?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did they feed you there?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes we got fed maybe twice a day but sometimes it would be nothing but maybe a third of a loaf of bread.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was it a dark bread?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, Jack talked about the bread in there. But yes, it was dark bread but you was glad to get it.(following interview we discussed the contents of the bread was around 60-80 percentage actual wood sawdust. pv,jt) Then you would get a thin soup sometimes cabbage and maybe once in a while it would have a little meat in it. We always figured that it was probably horsemeat. But we never really knew. You was asking too about the camps. I was interviewed at Baden Baden, then the second one was we rode the train to Ludwigsburg that was Stalag V-A. Then we went from Ludwigsburg to Hammelburg and I ended up in Stalag XIII-C. I had a strange thing that happened there, I don't know how General Patton found it out, but he had a son-in-law that was also in prison camp in Hammelburg, not in the same compound that we was in because the think he was a captain and they were down the road maybe a quarter of a mile or further from where we were at. At Hammelburg we were only about 40 miles from the front and the General found out that his son-in-law was there he got a bunch from the 4th Armored, he got a battalion commander, quite a few tanks together and some jeeps and trucks, I think it amounted to something like 200 men. He sent them to Hammelburg to try and get his son-in-law. Well we heard the firing and all and knew that something was going on and the Germans were all ready to evacuate us. Then most of that bunch that came in to get his son-in-law got captured or killed or wounded. They just run out of equipment too, so the Germans decided that we could stay there a little longer. We knew that there was something going on but we didn't know what, but I read about it since I got home and that was something that most people don't know anything about.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What happened to his son-in-law?

Mr. Cleland:

Well he got shot, but then he did get released later on. He got shot in the stomach as I remember it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So this entire group that went none of them ever got back? Is that right?

Mr. Cleland:

Well, a few of them did, but very, very few. I can't tell you the exact number but then there is some books printed on it. It was Hammelburg as I remember.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You said that you saw ...

Mr. Cleland:

One boy from Rochester. Morris Sadowsky, but he passed away about a year or so ago.(as interviewed August 2001)

Mr. Misenhimer:

But you knew him before you went in then?

Mr. Cleland:

Right, Yes. But somehow or another, he had something about Rochester, Indiana, he was a pilot and he had something about Rochester, Indiana, on the back of it. A zebra I guess that was what it was. Rochester is known as the Zebras. I run him down and talked to him. That was the only time I saw him, he escaped in a day to two or three after that. I didn't try to escape because I felt that the war was getting down toward the end and I wasn't going to give them any chance to shot me if I didn't have to. Well I told you about Hammelburg that was XIII-C and then the next one I think to rode the train again and went to XIII-D in Nurnberg. Then we walked from Nurnberg to Moosburg, which was, I think as I remember about 180 kilometers.

Mr. Misenhimer:

100 miles roughly

Mr. Cleland:

That is where I was released then. That is where, if you talked to POW's is where a good share of them were

when they were released.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now who released you? The Russians or Americans or who?

Mr. Cleland:

No, the 14th Armored Division, the Americans.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The 14th Armored. Okay.

Mr. Cleland:

I don't know just what battalion or anything that it was, but it was that came thru.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What day was it?

Mr. Cleland:

April 29th of 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The prisoners there did many of them pass away or killed or died?

Mr. Cleland:

Well yes some but not a lot of them. Most of the prisoners that had been captured in Africa or something like that, that would be up there and be prisoners for a long time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did they have medical care if you needed medical care?

Mr. Cleland:

Very little. They really didn't have any medicine so to speak of. Very little. (in a follow up interview he told of how "Red" Smith had been burned by phosphorous on his hand on the day he was captured. This had been festering during his capture and he had sought medical help from the German medic who had applied some salve on the wound. pv,jt)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the German soldiers that were guarding you, you said were older people 4F and whatever?

Mr. Cleland:

Right. We called them 4F or too old to fight.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were they very much in favor of Germany winning the War? Or what did they seem to feel?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I think, well yes, they still had faith in their own country. They wanted to win, I'm sure. But then some of them toward the end of the war, they would walk away from you sometimes to keep from talking to you. They would walk away so they didn't have to guard you, to let you try to get away if you wanted to. I didn't take that chance because there was too many of them that tried to escape and they ended up getting shot.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did they make any threats that if anybody escaped that they would execute others?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. You would hear that about everyday when they had you in formation to see how many people. Everyday they counted you. Yes they gave you some warnings everyday. Like I said they were loud and made it sound like they were really tough.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you interrogated by others after that first day?

Mr. Cleland:

No. I never was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever encounter any of the Hitler Youth?

Mr. Cleland:

No. I never got involved with that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Of the 5 prison camps that you were in which was the worst?

Mr. Cleland:

I never spent that much time in any of them, probably Ludwigsburg was, that was the second one I was in, we was close to the front and so the Germans were scared, so we didn't stay there to long. But then they didn't treat you very well, but they were in fear for there own lives.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the longest time you were in any one prison camp?

Mr. Cleland:

Probably a month.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there any prison camp that you thought was better then the others?

Mr. Cleland:

No. I couldn't say the any one was any better then the others. They were all miserable, you could get lice awful easy and all you got was cold water, you couldn't wash with warm water cause you didn't have any. None of them was anything to write home about.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Most of the time were you in some kind of building or a tent?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, most of the time we were in old horse stables. At one time; everything was horse drawn over there as far as there cavalry and that's the way that the army's traveled, so they had a lot of horse barns. Some of them still had nothing in them but straw or hay, but a few of them had some wooden bunks. (in follow up interview we talked about everything was pulled by horses including the civilian wagons thus the homes had stables for their animals as well as the military stables. pv,jt)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Most of the time you just slept on the hay? I that it?

Mr. Cleland:

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

No latrine facilities or anything like that?

Mr. Cleland:

No, the latrines and all were outside. Nothing inside.

Mr. Misenhimer:

No showers or anything like that?

Mr. Cleland:

No showers. No I didn't have a shower from the time I was captured until I got back to Camp Lucky Strike on May the 8th.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get any kind of mail while you were in prison camp?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, I got a card (don't I have one upstairs) I think my sister wrote it. But then they got one from me to, saying that I had been captured.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did the Germans give you cards that you could write home on?

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How soon after you were captured was this?

Mr. Cleland:

Two weeks I suppose.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about Red Cross packages or anything?

Mr. Cleland:

Like I said I have to say that I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the Red Cross. Both the American Red Cross and the International Red Cross because we got I imagine Smitty and I got as many as maybe 5 boxes that we could divide between the two of us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

A box would last you how long then?

Mr. Cleland:

Some of the stuff would last a couple of weeks and some of the stuff we would use right away.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you could stretch it out over as much as two weeks?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But the Germans didn't really feed you a lot?

Mr. Cleland:

Oh no. Nothing very good.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then the 14th Armored what kind of indication did you have that you were going to be released?

Mr. Cleland:

Well we could see, we was close enough, we were kind of on a hill and we could see off in the distance a bunch of tanks coming toward us, but we didn't know who they were. Well when they got up close to us and we could see that they were the 14th Armored. We didn't really get involved with them, before the tanks got there all the guards and everybody took off and left. So I don't remember who was the commanding officer was, but

whoever was the highest (allied POW) officer in the camp was, but he was the one that took over. The 14th armored more or less kept on going, they didn't stop to visit or talk or anything like that. They just moved right on. We was passed information from maybe hour-to-hour what was going on and what was going to be done.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you were still locked in the compound? Or ..

Mr. Cleland:

No, Oh no we were left unguarded.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I mean when the guards left.

Mr. Cleland:

Oh yes, we were still locked in the compound but then we could have got out. Some people did. I was ready to live some more, I didn't want to that the chance on getting shot that close to the end of the war.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So then someone came along, some group to talk with you?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, I don't remember who it was any more but somebody came along with the information that they would have us back to Camp Lucky Strike in a week. Then the Americans kept trying to get us lined up, they took us by truck to air drone, I can't think what the name of it was. It was not far out of Munich, so then we ended up there. We was suppose to fly out one day and something happened and we had to spend the night there. I was released on the 29th of April and we got back to France on the 8th.

Mr. Misenhimer:

May the 8th.

Mr. Cleland:

May 8th that was the day that peace was signed. May the 8th.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay. So from the 29th to the 8th you were in transit right?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes we spent a few more days in camp and then we spent a couple days in the air drone, so yes we were in transit, more or less.

Mr. Misenhimer:

As soon as you were released did you get food from the Americans at that point?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. Somehow or another they brought white bread. Boy it tasted like angel food cake. In a matter of hours we had, I don't remember any other food. I think maybe we got some C rations or some K rations at that point.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But no hot food at that time?

Mr. Cleland:

No, no hot food at that time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you remember when you did get hot food then?

Mr. Cleland:

I don't think we got any hot food until we got back to Camp Lucky Strike. (in a follow up interview hw talked about how they received at Camp Lucky Strike the well prepared food in a ration while they had containers of egg nog and told to drink lots of it. This was to build our systems back up to be able to eat regular food. pv,jt)

Mr. Misenhimer:

You call it Camp Lucky Strike, was that the real name of it?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, that the place that the Americans had already arranged for all POW's to be bought too. When they got released.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was that in Germany?

Mr. Cleland:

No that was in France, right at the coast. I don't remember, near Normandy someplace.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So quite a was from where you go on the plane.

Mr. Cleland:

Oh yes, hundreds of miles. We flew DC3's (c 47's), rickety old planes that the wings would go up and down;

I don't remember what we had in them, maybe 25 people to the plane I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About how many people were in your prison camp? The last prison camp there?

Mr. Cleland:

Something like over 20,000- 23,000 I think was a Moosburg.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was last prison camp that you were in?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. Right. That was the biggest camp that I was in.

Mr. Misenhimer:

All Americans?

Mr. Cleland:

No, there was everything, British; I don't know that there was any Russians, there could have been. But there was British, Austrians, and some other country but I don't know what it was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

These were all soldiers not airmen right?

Mr. Cleland:

No there was airmen there too. See what happened was as the allies kept squeezing in and closing they kept

moving all prison camps more or less to Moosburg. There was every nationality in there then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So when you got to Camp Lucky Strike what did you do there then?

Mr. Cleland:

We were deloused and given hot showers and clean clothes. They had 10 gallon milk cans scattered all thru the camp there were tents of course they had streets laid out; they had 10 gallon milk cans filled with milk – what do you call it, not just plain milk, eggnog. They wanted everybody to drink plenty of that, but not eat too much. It would make you sick. Anyway I didn't get any physical there of anything just gave me clean clothes. I wasn't there very long just a matter of a few days and they loaded me on a boat and (we) went over to England and loaded up a bunch of injured soldiers and I guess maybe some nurses we came back to New York.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How much weight did you loose while you were in prison camp?

Mr. Cleland:

I guess I think maybe about 20 pounds. It might have been more then that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So it was quite a bit of weight then. Do you recall what you weighed when you were captured and then when you got out roughly.

Mr. Cleland:

Well I probably weighed about 135-40 pounds when I was captured and probably weight about 120 when released from prison.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So it was a rather large percentage of your weight then?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So then you got on a boat and came back to the states? (in follow up interview he stated he went over to Europe on a ship and to come home wanted to get home as quickly as possible so he elected to take a plane home. pv,jt)

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you land in the states?

Mr. Cleland:

We flew from Landshut Air Drome and arrived New York, I guess, May the 29th, arrived in New York.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do there?

Mr. Cleland:

Went on to Camp Shanks, New York it says; and then on to Camp Atterbury, Indiana and was home June the 2nd.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When was you discharged?

Mr. Cleland:

I was discharged from Camp Atterbury, Indiana on Sept. 5th, I believe.

Mr. Misenhimer:

From Atterbury you came home for a while then, right?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. I had a job at Camp Atterbury. I drove a bus around camp and to the bus station and to the train station to pick up soldiers that was coming in. I was on duty 24 hours and off 48 hours. On your 24 hour on duty you might work 5 hours or 10 hours and if you saw that you were going to get off early I would hitchhike home. Then I was off 48 hours.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So they had you doing things like that until you finally got out then?

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get any ribbons or metals or anything?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. Here let my wife (Donna) show you.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Here you got the .. you can tell me what these they are?

Mr. Cleland:

Well, my wife knows them better than what I do. This one here is a POW – see the barbed wire around here.

This one is the Good Conduct, and this is American Defense, this is World War II, this is American campaign, this one here is Europe...

Mr. Misenhimer:

European, African & Middle East

Mr. Cleland:

This one here is Colmar patch that is when we was assigned to the French Army for a while. Colmar Patch and Alsace is somewhat the same area? The French Army gave us that. This one is the Bronze star.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You got the Bronze star for what?

Mr. Cleland:

Meritorious service, I guess. This is my POW dog tags.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Of course then there is the combat infantry badge.

Mr. Cleland:

Right, not just anybody can get that. Even a fellah like the pilots and all even if they took up a rifle and try to fight there way back they still couldn't one of those.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That is very prestigious right. Now you mentioned that you were with the French Army, tell us about being with the French Army.

Mr. Cleland:

Well I didn't really see that much of them. We were assigned to the French Army for a short period of time. This was when Colmar (pocket) was taken back from the Germans. This would have been in January of '45. We didn't have any association with them, the higher officers did. But we didn't, just like when we was under Patton or anybody else.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you engaged in combat when you were with them?

Mr. Cleland:

With the French?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes.

Mr. Cleland:

I wasn't really with them at the time because I had already been captured with my outfit. The remainder of my outfit when on to complete the capture (of Herrlisheim, pv, jt).

Mr. Misenhimer:

So that was after you had been captured when the French, but you still got the patch for being with them?

Mr. Cleland:

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got home did you notice anything difference in the country here? Did anything change?

Mr. Cleland:

No, just glad to be home was the thing. I was fortunate, as I had told you I had lost my Mother when I was in service and people had said why don't you go thru the Red Cross, you can get out. So this is what I did I went thru the Red Cross and they helped me get out. Because I didn't have enough points. Then I had been overseas and I didn't sign up again.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So they would have kept you longer then?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, they would have kept me longer. If I hadn't of – they called it a hardship case.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you say the day that German surrendered you had just go into Camp Lucky Strike that day?

Mr. Cleland:

That day ..

Mr. Misenhimer:

May the 8th?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, that's right May the 8th.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there any celebration there or anything?

Mr. Cleland:

No. Just glad to get out of Germany and get back there, no celebrations or anything.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Even though German had surrendered that day, there was no celebrations or anything at the camp?

Mr. Cleland:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you when Japan surrender in August?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I couldn't celebrate then either because we was boarding the train in Miami to come back – see I had 60 day leave after I got home, well I was home a couple weeks and then I had 60-day leave. Then they sent me to Miami Beach for a week or two, I don't remember how long we were there. Anyway we were just boarding the train in Miami when they announced that Japan had surrendered. I was kind of funny though, we would go thru some of these towns and people were out with their flags and waving and everything. We could see that they were celebrating, but we just didn't have any place to celebrate I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there any talk about you going to the South Pacific?

Mr. Cleland:

Well yes you heard that all the time. Nobody ever told me that I was going to have to go. Everybody was always concerned about going to the South Pacific because they .. nobody every knew what they were going to do because the fight was still going on over there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else that you recall from you time?

Mr. Cleland:

No, not that I really want to mention. It was quite an experience and I wouldn't want to go thru it again.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I can imagine.

Mr. Cleland:

I didn't realize, you don't realize what all is going on over there, about all you know about is what you read and hear. Of course you get involved with different things I guess. One funny experience that I have told, and my wife laughs about it. It was just right at Christmas time they moved us back to rest area of course this was in

France and most of us couldn't speak French very well and we was just suppose to find our place where we wanted to occupy and stay. Anyhow we took over a French house and it had two floors in it and it had a false fireplace on the second floor. We decided to build a fire in the fireplace, of course people was still living in the house and they really got excited but we didn't pay any attention to them. We ended up burning the house down. We didn't realize that it was a false fireplace and we got it a little too hot I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How large of a house was this?

Mr. Cleland:

This would have been a two-story house, I don't remember how many rooms it had it but it was a pretty good size home. Over there most of the homes are in town and if they have livestock and such they have the barn behind the house. The barn and all can be out on the street as well as the house. Anyway we ended up ... I talked to a guy about a year or so ago about that and he said I wondered how that thing got started he said. The war as such a magnitude of so much going on. I didn't realize the part of our outfit had been in battle trying to get into Herrlisheim and take Herrlisheim two weeks before we was ever committed. I didn't realize that. People will tell you stories that you know have to be true because if you wasn't there you just couldn't believe it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You mentioned that your feet and hands got frozen. How did that happen?

Mr. Cleland:

It was so cold in all these barns and everything including the 40 x 8 like I said; they said it was the coldest winter in 50 years. You didn't have gloves and somehow or another – my hands are worse then my feet. I don't have no feeling in the tips of my fingers. (caused by frost bite while a POW in the stable and building and in the 40 x 8's. pv,jt) I can hardly turn a page, read a paper – when trying to read it and the first thing you know it falls to the floor. You think you have a hold of it and nothing.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You have no feeling there?

Mr. Cleland:

No feeling.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This happened when you were a prisoner?

Mr. Cleland:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It say in this article that you are just now starting to get compensation for that.

Mr. Cleland:

I just started in '99. I had been trying for 15 years but it finally went thru.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It says here in this article says that the 12th Armored campaign in Europe 1 out of every 14 of its 11,000 men were killed and remarkably 1 in every 4 were wounded. So you did take an awful lot of casualties then?

Mr. Cleland:

You see if a tank takes a hit, boy, I tell you the steel and everything flies around thru there....

Mr. Misenhimer:

One of every 26 were captured.

Mr. Cleland:

Yes. If you want any of those figures ...

Mr. Misenhimer:

They are on tape.

Mr. Cleland:

Like I said I was captured about 4 o'clock in the morning and Smitty was captured about 10. They had moved over to Baden Baden and put me in a old school house. The street was right out by the front and it was the

next day I had been there all night and I didn't hardly have anybody there that I knew or anything. Most of the other fellows that was there was from other companies that was captured when I was. Anyway here I saw Smitty marching up the street, boy, I was able to get out and holler at him and somehow we was able to get together. Just more luck then plain sense. We stayed together and I was sure glad that I had somebody like that. Smitty cut Glen's hair and made a billfold out of the top of Glen's boots – (wife says)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you first meet Smitty?

Mr. Cleland:

Well I think the first place I met him was at Camp Campbell, Kentucky because I don't think he was out of Indiana.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was he from Indiana?

Mr. Cleland:

No he was from Chillicothe, Ohio. He was from Chillicothe and his wife was from Athens, Ohio (in follow up interview he corrected the original statement to what is seen above, pv,jt), but anyway they lived in Springfield, Ohio. He worked for the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad as a machinist.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you and he went thru basic training and everything all together? Prison camp and all?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, one had one bunk and the other had the lower bunk I don't know which one had what anymore. He was just the kind of a person that you could do things with and do things together. So many people argue all the time and everything, but we didn't we got along good. He smoked and I didn't. (For a long time Glen would not talk about his experiences- Donna said.) (in the follow up interview Glenn noted it wasn't until he retired that he could start talking about his experience. Pv,jt)

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you had three tank battalions?

Mr. Cleland:

Yes, we had three tank battalions in the 12th. And 6 months or so before we went overseas they took the 44th tank battalion out of the 12th Armored and replaced it with the 714th Tank Battalion. The 44th Independent Tank Battalion got over in the Philippines and they made quite a few headlines. They did a lot of good over there, they still associate themselves with the 12th but they were sent to the South Pacific and were more or less on their own.

Mr. Misenhimer:

End of this tape.

Transcribed by

Melinda Clinger

15 hours

This is the revised interview of Glenn Cleland as done by Peggy Van Meter, John Tombaugh and completed on this date of May 31, 2004.
40 hours (2 people total)