

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

**Center for Pacific War Studies**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

An Interview with

**Servando C. Lopez  
Staff Sergeant, Army Infantry**

February 8, 2002

Interview With  
Servando C. Lopez

Mr. Richard Misenhimer

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is February 8, 2002. I am interviewing Mr. Servando Lopez. This interview is taking place in his home at 1016 S. Almond Street, Alice, Texas. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific Wars, Center for Pacific War Studies for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Servando, I want to thank you for taking time to do this today. I appreciate it. Let me ask you first, where were you born?

Mr. Lopez

I appreciate you coming. I was born April 8, 1925. I was born at the Lara Community between here and San Diego.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what were your parents' names?

Mr. Lopez

My dad was Daniel Lopez. My mother was Candida Chapa Lopez. I had 4 brothers. We were 5 all together. I had no sisters.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were any of your brothers also in World War II?

Mr. Lopez

No. My next brother was in Korea and the next one to him - Curly was in Korea, and Daniel was in the navy, right after the Korean War, and Alfonso, the youngest one, was in the United States Army. He stayed in California most of the time.

Mr. Misenhimer

I see on your wall here, you have a number of pictures of much of your family in uniform. Your family has really served our country.

Mr. Lopez

Yes we have. 4 brothers have served our country.

Mr .M

And then you have a son-in-law, a grandson and others here.

Mr. Lopez

My brother-in-law, my grandson. I have an Uncle that served in World War I and World War II. I have my granddaughter - she married a sailor, also. I have a grandson, who is still a navy recruiter right now.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to school?

Mr. Lopez

I went to school in the Lara Community. Then I came over here, and I had to quit school to work. I was the oldest of the family and my daddy died when I was 12 years old.

Mr. Misenhimer

How old was he when he died?

Mr. Lopez

38.

Mr. Misenhimer

How old is your mother?

Mr. Lopez

My mother was 100 years old, last Saturday. February 2<sup>nd</sup>. We had a party for her. She is in fine health. We had a nurse visit her this morning.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your last year in school?

Mr. Lopez

I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. But then I educated myself, and after I came out of the service, I took bookkeeping and English and all that.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the last year you were in school?

Mr. Lopez

The last year that I was in school was 1940.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what did you do after you quit school?

Mr. Lopez

I went to work when they built the Gymnasium at Alice High School under the NRI Program. National Youths Program. I was the time keeper and supply man for them. After that, I was night clerk at the Queen Alice Courts. Then the Army got me.

Mr. Misenhimer

You recall where you were when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. I was here. We were heading home. Heard it over the radio.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your reaction?

Mr. Lopez

Well, I knew that I had a Great Uncle there and we just prayed that he would make it. And, he made it okay. Then he came home on leave in 1943, when I went in the service, and he was killed in San Antonio. He just got off a taxi. He was still in his uniform. He passed away and he's buried here in Alice.

Mr. Misenhimer

But, he was at Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Lopez

He was at Pearl Harbor when they bombed it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did he tell you any stories about what happened there?

Mr. Lopez

No, because I was already in the service when he came back.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you go in the service?

Mr. Lopez

I was 18 April the 8<sup>th</sup> and I was already in the service in June.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you volunteer or were you drafted?

Mr. Lopez

I was drafted.

Mr. Misenhimer

Which branch of the service did you go into?

Mr. Lopez

The Army. I had a choice of Marine, Navy, Air Force or Army. I wanted to be in Army. They had put me in the navy and I just told them that I didn't like the uniforms. They said well, we don't have a replacement. We'll just have you in the navy. I said, my mother wouldn't want me in the navy either. I had a 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin. His name is Jesus Lopez. He comes from my family tree also. He said, what are you doing over there? I said, they put me in the navy. So he raised his hand that he wanted to be in the navy. So, they changed me with him, so I went to the army. He got 7 days and I got 14 days leave. He was mad, but we both came back.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go in the service?

Mr. Lopez

I went in the service in San Antonio. From there they sent me to Camp Walters in Mineral Wells, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer

But, you were inducted there at Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio?

Mr. Lopez

I was inducted at Ft. Sam.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you come home for 14 days?

Mr. Lopez

I came home for 14 days and then I went straight to San Antonio. Then I went to Camp Walters at Mineral Wells.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were conditions like there?

Mr. Lopez

They were good. We had very good barracks. The food was good.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the training/

Mr. Lopez

The training was good. Then right after basic, I came home for 14 days and then went over to England and had amphibious training for the landing at Normandy.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long was the basic training at Camp Walters?

Mr. Lopez

It was just 18 weeks. It was in December, I was already in Washington, D.C. From there we went to New York and they sent us across. January, '44, I was going to England.

Mr. Misenhimer

Back at Camp Walters then, were they strictly infantry type training?

Mr. Lopez

Well, mostly they start giving us - got us in good physical training first. Firing range and regular army training - how to use weapons and all of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Which weapon did you train on?

Mr. Lopez We were trained with an M 1.

Mr. Misenhimer

So no machine guns? Or mortars?

Mr. L

We had them, but we didn't train with them. We were assigned to a rifle platoon. That what we had for training an M 1 and the B A R.

Mr. Misenhimer

You left there and went to Washington, D.C.?

Mr. Lopez

I left there and went to Baltimore, Maryland. Then I went to Washington, D.C. I spent Christmas in Washington, D. C. Then, by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January we were on ----we spent a couple of days in New York and we were gone.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you get from Texas to Washington, D. C.?

Mr. Lopez

We traveled by train.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was the train trip?

Mr. Lopez

Fine. It was a combined train - troops and civilians.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you in New York?

Mr. Lopez

I was there less than a week. All they did there was give us a physical and some shots.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get to go downtown in New York?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about Washington, D.C.?

Mr. Lopez

I did get to go downtown. We spent Christmas there. We were very fortunate that we were invited to go to a house. This couple had their son in the service in California and he was not able to go home. So, they took me and another buddy of mine. They took us to the house and they fed us. We enjoyed it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have other contact with civilians?

Mr. Lopez

No. That was our only contact with civilians there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then, when you left to go over seas, what port did you leave from? New York?

Mr. Lopez

New York.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know what ship you were on?

Mr. Lopez

I was on the Il de France. A big boat. A luxury liner.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how many were on there?

Mr. Lopez

I don't know. There was a bunch of them.

Mr. Misenhimer



What were the conditions like there?

Mr. Lopez

They treated us real good. I guess they were getting us ready -----

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you sleep in bunks or hammocks?

Mr. Lopez

We slept in bunks. I think they were about 3 high where we were.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it pretty crowded?

Mr. Lopez

Oh, it was full.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anybody have trouble with sea sickness?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how long did it take you to go over there?

Mr. Lopez

It took us about a week. We were not in a convoy - just us. You couldn't tell if you were zigzagging. Coming back, we did. Going over, no. It was very smooth sailing.

Mr. Misenhimer

Down below deck most of the time?

Mr. Lopez

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you land over there?

Mr. Lopez

We landed in England in South Hampton. Then we were stationed in a little village they called Pans Sans ??? it meant Lands End. It was just on the very small tip of England.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had you been assigned to an out fit now?

Mr. Lopez

When I went over there, I was assigned to the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.

Mr. Misenhimer

Once you got to England or before you left?

Mr. Lopez

In England. We didn't know where we were going until we got there. I was assigned to K Company, 175<sup>th</sup> Infantry.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there in England?

Mr. Lopez

We landed in January and then we landed in June.

Mr. Misenhimer

What all did you do while you were there in England?

Mr. Lopez

It was all amphibious training. We stayed in town in houses. We could not talk to no body or anything. It was very secret.

Mr. Misenhimer

Your amphibious training consisted of what?

Mr. Lopez

They put us in little boats and hit us. Put us in the water and we landed...simulated invasion.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were these the Higgins Boats - the LCVP? What kind of boats were they?

Mr. Lopez

They were LST. They were a pretty good size.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how many people on that boat?

Mr. Lopez

They would put by squads, which is 12 man and then we had our leaders, our trainers, telling us what to do and everything.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many times did you make a simulated landing?

Mr. Lopez

Oh, we made - It was every day, Monday though Friday. Then, we'd go into town and then we'd march. We had those hikes there. We had hikes every so often to keep us in shape. We were in town, but when we were moving out, we couldn't talk to no body. We'd go to town and talk to the people there. They were very nice.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything special you remember about England?

Mr. Lopez

In England, they treated us real nice. When I was wounded, I went back to England from September to December. When I was wounded. I was in a hospital there and we would go out. Especially when they were bombing England.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were there, in '44, were they bombing England then?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. They had what they called Buzz Bombs.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see one of those?

Mr. Lopez

We could hear them when they went by, but they were going towards London. And, we were in the south end.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you weren't bombed by them?

Mr. Lopez

No. We didn't have any trouble there where we were staying. Actually they were more concerned with London than anything else.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about German Bombers? Did they attack you at all?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you got ready for D Day?

Mr. Lopez

We got ready for D Day and they put us on those boats, landing craft. We were there a couple of days before - we didn't know - after they told us just where we were going to land. They showed us everything and what to expect and what to do. Our Company was supposed to be the contact company with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. Make contact with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division - the 1<sup>st</sup> on one side and the 29<sup>th</sup> on the other. But, we didn't contact. We just got in there and started fighting. They were shooting at us. But, they were bombing us at the -----

Mr. Misenhimer

Which beach did you go in on?

Mr. Lopez

Omaha.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you in the 1<sup>st</sup> wave or what?

Mr. Lopez

No. I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave. 'Cause we were supposed to have been the contact company - hook up with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. But, when we landed, we had to secure the beach.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were the conditions like on the beach when you go there?

Mr. Lopez

Well, there were quite a few casualties. And, they had a lot of holes already in the water. We were just waiting for somebody to float down and pull them out.

Mr. Misenhimer

How close to beach did your boat get?

Mr. Lopez

Aw, I'd say our boat was around 50 feet. It didn't go all the way in because they had our holes. It didn't go all the way in.

Mr. Misenhimer

How deep was the water then when you got out?

Mr. Lopez

It was about waist high.

Mr. Misenhimer

You waded in?

Mr. Lopez

We waded in.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were the Germans shooting at you at that point?

Mr. Lopez

Not where we were. Where we landed, we were not receiving any fire at all until we hit the land. When we hit land, they started - they didn't know where we were going to hit.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did your squad have any casualties?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. We had quite a few casualties.

Mr. Misenhimer

I mean when you 1<sup>st</sup> landed right there.

Mr. Lopez

My squad didn't have any casualties at first. Till after we landed. Then, after we landed we had some casualties.

Mr. Misenhimer

The 3<sup>rd</sup> wave had been about how long after the 1<sup>st</sup> wave?

Mr. Lopez

I would say it was about 8 hours after the 1<sup>st</sup> wave and 2<sup>nd</sup> wave.

Mr. Misenhimer

What platoon were you in then?

Mr. Lopez

I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Company K.

Mr. Misenhimer

And, there are 3 squads to a Platoon?

Mr. Lopez

There are 3 squads to a Platoon. The other one is heavy weapons. That's the 4<sup>th</sup>. We were in the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how many men to a squad?

Mr. Lopez

We had 12 men and a squad leader and an assistant squad leader. We had a squad leader and 2 scouts and a BAR man and an assistant to help the BAR man.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now that's 12 total counting all of those?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. Twelve.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had the M 1 rifle?

Mr. Lopez

Yes, the M 1 rifle.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then, when you landed, what did you do then?

Mr. Lopez

We landed and we started going in and trying to secure the beach head. After we moved, the Germans started running back. We were after them. Then we hit St. Lo. That was the first major city. We finally got it.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long after you landed was that?

Mr. Lopez

I wish I had the book.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it the 1<sup>st</sup> day, the 2<sup>nd</sup> day?

Mr. Lopez

No, it took longer than that. It took us quite a while. Let's see, we landed in June 6<sup>th</sup> and — This was about 2 weeks. Or 3 weeks before we got to St. Lo.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you had to fight all the way there?

Mr. Lopez

Yeah. They were pretty well lined up. The Germans were pretty strong there, waiting for us. Then, when Patton - after we took St. Lo - Patton took off and got them on the run. They pulled us out and we were sent, our Regiment, to the Brittany Peninsula. To secure that port. They wanted that port. That's where we were. It was Brittany -

Brest was the city. Brittany Peninsula. I was on combat patrol and that's where I got wounded.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you get wounded then?

Mr. Lopez

We were on a combat patrol and trying to find out just about where they were set. We got right on them. So we bayoneted one guy. Then - that's how close we were. It was early in the morning. Then, I was the squad leader then. I got our combat patrol there and we had (I think it was about a 10 men patrol) some boys and they started shooting us with bazookas. Shrapnel got me in the back. That's when I was laying down on the ground. I pulled all my men down. They started running and we opened a hole for them. So, we got all the men back and went back and they took care of me... sent me to the hospital. There they sent me to a hospital there in France. From there, they sent me to England. When I was in England, they gave me a purple heart, and a few days later they came in with a silver star for me. That the commanding officer recommended a Silver Star. For gallantry in action, 'cause I brought my men back from that patrol. From there, I spent 4 months - from September 7<sup>th</sup> to the last part of December, I spent in England. I went back to my unit and they were in the Ruhr area.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you were wounded around September 7<sup>th</sup> ?

Mr. Lopez

I was wounded on September 7<sup>th</sup>, early in the morning.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then, from June to September, you were just fighting all through there?

Mr. Lopez

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Pretty rough fighting in there?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. It was. St. Lo was the worst. Then, after we took Brittany Peninsula, after we opened that hole in there, our



Regiment took over and they fell to our Division.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned bayonets. Did you have fixed bayonets?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. We had fixed bayonets.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have many Bayonet charges?

Mr. Lopez

No. That was the only one I had. He was just too damn close. When I saw him go up like that with a rifle, he was just too close.....And then we started shooting the other guys. They started running. They saw us too close and they started running and we got quite a few. What it was, was an outpost, I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

So, you got all your men back?

Mr. Lopez

I got all of my men back. I was the only one that got wounded.

Mr. Misenhimer

This was something like a bazooka shell?

Mr. Lopez

It was like a bazooka shell. It blew shrapnel in both of my shoulders.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you in the hospital all this time in England?

Mr. Lopez

I was in the hospital in England all this time. In France, I was just there a couple of days. Then, they put me in a boat to England. That's where I got my Purple Heart and Silver Star.

Mr. Misenhimer

From there?

Mr. Lopez

They said they couldn't send me home. That they would send me to my outfit or send me to be a replacement in another division. I said, no. I want to go to my outfit. See how many friends I have left. I had very few, that I knew.

Mr. Misenhimer

So your company had suffered a bunch of casualties?

Mr. Lopez

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know any percentages?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you went back to the same company?

Mr. Lopez

I went back to the same Company. The same Platoon. We were there and we crossed the Ruhr River and I was wounded again in my hand. It hit my rifle and busted my rifle. Shrapnel got into my hand. I just went to the aid station and stayed in the line.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know what hit your rifle?

Mr. Lopez

It was a rifle bullet. It broke the rifle. The rifle saved my life. And, they gave me another Purple Heart for that one.

Mr. Misenhimer

You just went to the aid station there?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. I just went to the aid station and stayed there over night and went back to the line. They kind of bandaged it. Then, before we hit the Rhine River, we were waiting for the Russians. Actually, there wasn't much fighting up there then. They were afraid of the Russians, too, and they wanted to give up to us.

Mr. Misenhimer

What day were you wounded the 2<sup>nd</sup> time?

Mr. Lopez

2<sup>nd</sup> time, I was wounded was in the latter part of January, 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

During the Battle of the Bulge, were you in that?

Mr. Lopez

No. We stayed at the Rhine River all this time. We crossed the Ruhr River and when we hit the Rhine River, they didn't want us to go any further. We waited for the Russians there.

Mr. Misenhimer

How far were you from the Battle of the Bulge?

Mr. Lopez

We were quite a ways, because we were on the northern part. The Russians were coming in and the Germans were giving up. On our side. They didn't want to turn themselves into the Russians.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all take quite a few prisoners?

Mr. Lopez

We took a lot of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you take some of them yourself?

Mr. Lopez

Well, everybody was taking prisoners. We were taking them and sending them back. We just stayed in the line. They put them in trucks and searched them and took them back.

Mr. Misenhimer

How old were these people?

Mr. Lopez

They were about our age.

Mr. Misenhimer

So they weren't the old men or the young kids.

Mr. Lopez

No, they were in their twenties.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you happen to know what outfit they belonged to?

Mr. Lopez

No. We just called them all SS Troopers.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were they SS Troopers?

Mr. Lopez

I don't know. They all had swastikas.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there on the Rhine? Did you meet the Russians there?

Mr. Lopez

Yes, we met the Russians. Then, they pulled us out and put us in some barracks in Belgium ... just like army barracks. I took leave in June and went to France to the French Riviera, in southern France. I was gone for one week, but they had taken me in a jeep and they didn't come back to pick me up for 2 weeks, so I stayed there 2 weeks.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you considered AWOL then?

Mr. Lopez

No. It was our own outfit jeeps that took us there.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you met the Russians, did you actually meet a Russian yourself?

Mr. Lopez

Oh, yes. We searched them to be sure they didn't have any pistols.....

Mr. Misenhimer

No. I'm talking about the Russians.

Mr. Lopez

We did to them. We searched them and sent them back to the trucks and they took them out.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were these Russian prisoners or soldiers?

Mr. Lopez

They weren't Russians. They were German prisoners.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you say you met the Russians there?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. I met the Russians. They were bringing them over. That's where I met them - at the river.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you actually meet the Russians yourself?

Mr. Lopez

I didn't talk to them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they mingle with your people at all?

Mr. Lopez

No. Because most of the were on the other side of the river and we were on this side. We saw some that came over and just patted some of the guys on the back. But, actually, they were after the Germans.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you recall from that time?

Mr. Lopez

From that time. I was sent home and I came home. I got discharged in October, 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

I mean from January when you were sent back to your outfit until you met the Russians. Anything along in there that you recall?

Mr. Lopez

No. Just the snow. We had a lot of patrols and we saw snow.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you actually advancing?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. Once we crossed the Ruhr River, it was all snow there. We were all on patrols there and we had to be very careful 'cause anything that moved you could see it. With that white background.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have quite a few battles with the Germans then?

Mr. Lopez

Well, after we crossed the Ruhr River, we didn't have much. We did on the river.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you cross the Rhine River?

Mr. Lopez

No. Just the Ruhr. We met the Russians there at the Rhine.

Mr. Misenhimer

About when did you meet the Russians? Do you recall?

Mr. Lopez

I don't recall.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you when Germany surrendered?

Mr. Lopez

We were there, but they had already pulled us out. We were in those barracks. A lot of guys were taking leave.

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay. Any kind of a celebration when Germany surrendered?

Mr. Lopez

Oh, yes. Had good food.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any fire works or that sort of stuff?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. Everybody had a good old celebration. We were happy. Getting ready to come back home. And, I came back home and I was sent to El Paso to get my discharge. They didn't want me to get out. I was a Staff Sergeant then. They said, you better stay in, because you are going to be called back and you'll be coming as a private. I said, no. I won't dig no more fox holes. I'll go in something else. And so, I didn't stay in the Reserves. I came back and Homer Dean got me in the National Guard. And we buried veterans in the National Guard.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you leave over there to come back home?

Mr. Lopez

It was around the 1<sup>st</sup> part of October, of 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

So what did you do from May till October?

Mr. Lopez

We were not doing hardly anything. Just in the barracks. We would go out just to keep in shape - little short hikes, maybe 2 or 3 miles.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there any talk of sending you to the Pacific?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

No talk of that at all?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your most frightening time over there?

Mr. Lopez

I'd say when we hit St. Lo. Because, that was actually the roughest battle we had. Then, when I was wounded at Brest, also. That was pretty hard. But, I knew that our dear Lord would take care of us and we prayed every night.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, you were showing me some of the medals you have here. Of course, you mentioned that you have 2 Purple Hearts and you got the Silver Star. This one?

Mr. Lopez

The Combat Infantry Badge. This is the Victory Medal and the Purple Heart with the Cluster - wounded twice, and the Silver Star and the Ruptured Duck that every veteran in World War II received after his discharge, and the Good Conduct. This one here is the World War II Occupation Metal. This is the European Theater with the Arrow Head for the Landing and 4 campaigns.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were those 4 campaigns?

Mr. Lopez

It was the ETO, the Normandy Invasion, the 4 Battle Stars and the Combat Infantry Badge, but it doesn't give the -

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Mr. Misenhimer



St. Lo would have been one of them, I'm sure.

Mr. Lopez

St Lo was one of them and another was Belgium and Holland.

Mr. Misenhimer

At any time, did you have any contact with the USO?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. Bob Hope was there. We got to see him in France. It was a very good show. They had a lot of military.

They had a big field and he had a good show.

Mr. Misenhimer

Starlets and Actresses?

Mr. Lopez

Oh, yeah. And they had a very good show. This was the one show that we saw with them. He was the only one that we saw.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Red Cross? Did you have any contact with the Red Cross?

Mr. Lopez

Red Cross was there all the time. And, they would give us support and some goodies. They would usually come around to the lines. But, when we were back behind the lines, they would come by. Guys that smoked, got cigarettes. They always had lots of goodies for us.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about mail? Did you get mail over there?

Mr. Lopez

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Fairly often?

Mr. Lopez

I had quite a few letters that came from home - friends and family. We would send those V mails. But, we would say we were somewhere in Europe. We couldn't say where we were.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you would get mail pretty often?

Mr. Lopez

Oh, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How old would it be?

Mr. Lopez

I didn't pay too much attention, 'cause we didn't have much time. But, we were getting mail quite often from relatives and friends we had in the service. We would trade letters.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many days were you in combat?

Mr. Lopez

From June 6<sup>th</sup> Actually real combat, from June 7<sup>th</sup> to September 7<sup>th</sup>, when I was wounded. About everyday, I was in combat.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now when you came back in January, ?

Mr. Lopez

When I came back in January, we were in the lines, but there was not hardly any combat going on.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the uniform that you wore?

Mr. Lopez

We wore OD's. Wool. Wool pants and boots. They were class A dress pants.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about a shirt?

Mr. Lopez

It was the same thing. Wool shirt. It was cold over there. We had field jackets. It was the same color. We didn't have any camouflage or any thing.

Mr. Misenhimer

How far down did it come? Past your waist?

Mr. Lopez

The jacket was just past the waist. It had buttons. We had combat boots.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a change of uniform?

Mr. Lopez

We had change.

Mr. Misenhimer

How often would you get a hot meal?

Mr. Lopez

When we were behind the line, we got a hot meal from our company. When we were in line, we just had K Rations. It actually not ---- if you weren't being fired on they take us a hot meal.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the longest you went without a hot meal?

Mr. Lopez

It's hard to tell. I would say 3 or 4 days. We had a good mess. The Mess Sergeant, he always took care of us. I know in France, one lady got mad at us because we stole her potatoes. They called them Po ta tos. Our mess sergeant made French Fries for us. That lady was mad and we said we didn't ask to come here.

Mr. Misenhimer

What do you remember about your officers?

Mr. Lopez

I had a very good Lieutenant. We went across together. He was a Sergeant in the Pacific. He came home and

went to Officers' Training School and we went together over seas. He was our platoon leader - 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant. Then he became a Captain, and became Company Commander. His name was Doyle Condant, from Connecticut. He survived the war. After we came back, I heard from him one time. I loaned him some money. He was going to England from France. We loaded in France to come back home. He had to leave and go to England. He had a girlfriend over there. I loaned him some money and he sent me a money order when I got home, thanking me for it. But, I haven't heard from him since.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you recall any other officers you had?

Mr. Lopez

Well, he was the main one, 'cause he was real close to us. We had Captain King. He was the 1<sup>st</sup> commander we had. Condant was very close to us, since he had been in the war in the Pacific. And he came over. Actually, he had lots of information. But, they sent him to Europe. He was real good. He had experience.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any other funny incidents happen to you?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Just potatoes and the French woman?

Mr. Lopez

Well, she was mad at us. I said, we didn't volunteer to come over here.

Mr. Misenhimer

Of course, the winter time over there was quite cold?

Mr. Lopez

It was cold.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have an over coat or anything like that?

Mr. Lopez

We had over coats. When we were going over seas, we had our physicals in New York and it was cold. They sent us into a theater in just our underwear and it was cold.

Mr. Misenhimer

No other clothes on?

Mr. Lopez

No. Everybody was mad, because everybody was cold.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you remember what ship you came back home on?

Mr. Lopez

I came back on a liberty ship. It was a small ship. It took us, I think, 2 weeks to get here. And, it turned around. I had a good time, because I met a sailor and he kind of liked me. He said you can come and eat with us. He always invited me and I always ate with them. See, the first night on the boat, I was the Sergeant of the Guard. So that's how he met me and he invited me. So I didn't have to eat with the rest of the troops.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did the sailors have better food than the army on the ship?

Mr. Lopez

Well, I don't know, 'cause I didn't eat with the army. I ate all my food with the sailors.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did anyone get seasick on that trip?

Mr. Lopez

No. We had a good trip. They treated us real nice.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you land here?

Mr. Lopez

Coming back, I think we landed back in New York.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how long did you stay there?

Mr. Lopez

We didn't stay there long, because they already had us ready to come back and we thought we were coming to San Antonio, but they sent us to El Paso.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were on a train there also?

Mr. Lopez

No. We went on a train to El Paso, but from El Paso, I came home on a bus. 'Cause they paid us when they mustered us out, and they told us that we shouldn't buy a ticket there at the bus station, because they were robbing the Military. So they put us on a bus and we got our tickets and paid for our tickets, this side of El Paso.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you were discharged in El Paso?

Mr. Lopez

Yeah. From there I came to San Antonio and from San Antonio, I came home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get paid while you were over seas?

Mr. Lopez

Yes. Well, I got parts of pay. We had my mother and brothers as dependants. I didn't need any money, cause I didn't smoke and I still don't smoke, so most of my money came home.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were your feelings when you got home then?

Mr. Lopez

Great. It was great.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you notice any changes in the country when you got home?

Mr. Lopez

Well, yes. Actually, the town had grown a little bit more and the people were friendlier.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was about 2 years you were gone?

Mr. Lopez

Yes, I was gone a little over 2 years.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, where were you when Japan surrendered, August of '45?

Mr. Lopez

We were here.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were probably still over there, cause you hadn't gotten home yet. You came home in October?

Mr. Lopez

I was still over there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there any celebration?

Mr. Lopez

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had a reunion since you've been out?

Mr. Lopez

No. My division is too far out. It is more or less a Maryland Division 29 Divisions out of Maryland. Just couldn't afford to go up there.

Mr. Misenhimer

But they have had some?

Mr. Lopez

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else in particular you recall?

Mr. Lopez

No. I had a good friend from Robstown. His last name was Ditlinger. We always kid each other and he stayed at the cadre for training. He says I'm staying here. I said fine. They gave him a couple of stripes, they were acting stripes. He went up there and they were still acting and I was already a Staff Sergeant. He came to my same unit. I said, now I'm your boss.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you went in you were a private, of course. When did you get PFC?

Mr. Lopez

I got PFC when I got there. I made PFC right away.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about Corporal?

Mr. Lopez

Corporal. I was a Corporal just before we went to France. And, then I became a Sergeant after we landed. We lost 4 Sergeants and I became a Sergeant. I was just a plain buck sergeant. Then I became a squad leader and then Staff Sergeant. I was a Staff Sergeant when I came out. Then, when I joined the national guard, I was a tech sergeant.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that 2 rockers or 1?

Mr. Lopez

2 rockers.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your pay, when you first went in?



Mr. Lopez

I don't recall, because mama got part of the check and I just got partial pay. Just enough for shaving equipment and things like that. I didn't need much money over there, because like I said, I didn't smoke. My youngest brother was not quite 6 years old. He was born in August of '37 and my daddy died in '38. I went in, in '43 and he was not in school yet.

Mauricio Cuellar was medic. I was on combat patrol, for his regiment, and he was killed right after the landing.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was his name?

Mr. Lopez

Mauricio Cuellar. Blackie Cuellar's daddy. I mean brother. We were good friends. He was in a different regiment. He was in the 115<sup>th</sup>. Frank Reynolds, his daddy used to be a janitor of the schools. His daddy used to take us to the football games in the truck when we were kids. He would take the equipment and stuff to football games in Benevides and like that. But Frank was in the same division, but the 116<sup>th</sup>. Different regiment.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was he killed also?

Mr. Lopez

No. He's here.

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