

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

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

**An Interview With
Abelino G. Alviar
778th AAA BN, Army
3rd Army Europe
March 14, 2003**

Mr. Misenhimer

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is March 14, 2003. I am interviewing Mr. Abelino G. Alviar in his home at 920 North Wright Street Alice, Texas 78332. His phone number is (361) 664-8230. 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. Alviar, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today.

Mr. Alviar

Appreciate you coming.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask you first. What is your birth date?

Mr. Alviar

First of March '27.

Mr. Misenhimer

And where were you born?

Mr. Alviar

In Alfred, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Alviar

I had two sisters, both dead, and I've got four more brothers.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were any of your brothers in World War II?

Mr. Alviar

All of them. My oldest, Thomas, he was in all Southern Pacific World War II and Simone was in Vietnam or Korea, and Sotera was in Korea, and Jose Anjel that stayed with mother behind most of the time.

Mr. Misenhimer

So your family has really supported this country, then.

Mr. Alviar

Oh, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

In the service, okay. And what was your father's occupation?

Mr. Alviar

My father died in 1937. He was working here and there, just labor, whatever, 1937. And well, he just worked on the farm.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to school?

Mr. Alviar

Mayer School.

Mr. Misenhimer

Mayer here in Alice.

Mr. Alviar

F.B. Mayer.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you go to high school here?

Mr. Alviar

I took the G.E.D. later but I went to fifth grade.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you go into the service?

Mr. Alviar

I went into the Service May 23rd, 1944.

Mr. Misenhimer

And where did you take your training?

Mr. Alviar

In Killeen, Texas. Fort Camp Hood, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how long was that training?

Mr. Alviar

I'd say basically, I think it must have been about 7 months.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what all did you do in your training?

Mr. Alviar

What do we do? We start training like boot camp and fire shots and dressing and whatever we're gonna wear, what we were supposed to. And we trained day by day, usually the mornings exercise and then they'd take you to the firing ranges and we'd fire the M1 rifle, I remember, the machine guns. It's the same machine gun they used to have when I got out. They had the 30-caliber machine gun, M1917, they were water cooled,

and then they had the M1917A4, that was the B1-POD and had the M1917A6 with the tripod – air-cooled.

Mr. Misenhimer

Those last two were air-cooled.

Mr. Alviar

Yes, they were: M1917 A1 B1 POD, the MG Tripod.

Mr. Misenhimer

Right. And what else did you train on? Did you have bayonet training?

Mr. Alviar

Bayonet, a lot of this grenade use, mines, and tanks would run over us, small tanks, not too big. Not like now.

Mr. Misenhimer

You'd be in a fox hole and they'd come over you.

Mr. Alviar

One time. It crumbled a little bit but we made it. It was not bad. I took training there. I completed my training there on September, I think it must've been. And most of the guys that we would meet in the same group, all of them have died. In fact, I had one of them just die. About a year ago another one died right my age. And they died one after the other. So I don't remember actually, exactly if I asked them, they probably won't remember either.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you live in there at the camp? Barracks or tents or what?

Mr. Alviar

Barracks. We'd train out on the field in tents and when we go for, pup tents.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finished that training, what did you do then?

Mr. Alviar

I came home for about 10, 15 days then I reported to Fort Hood. About 2 days, one day, maybe, later I reported to, well, it was a troop train to Ford, California. So they give us shots of all kinds there. In fact, one of my friends that died, he gave me a shot. I said, "You don't know how to use one of those deals." So he said, "Here I am." I said, "Well, okay, go ahead and shoot and that's it." You know. So then we stayed there about 2 days. They gave us cold winter clothing. About two weeks later, they bring this cold winter training and lets get some summer clothing. I said, "Uh, oh. We're going to somewhere else where it's hot." And so they had sent us the materials we needed and we crossed United States to New York, that's Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Mr. Misenhimer

Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, okay.

Mr. Alviar

I think it was Camp Kilmer, or that's where we came in. Camp Shanks, that's where we went from then we came back on Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and those 2 years that I was there, I came out to Camp Shanks, New York.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now when you went across country, how did you go? On a train?

Mr. Alviar .

No, boat.

Mr. Misenhimer

I mean across the country from Fort Hood to California.

Mr. Alviar

Oh, yeah. Troop train, nonstop. They needed those men up there. The driver on, I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer

And then, when you left New York, where did you go to?

Mr. Alviar

From across the whole trip? France to Germany.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes.

Mr. Alviar

We hit the English Channel. We went in the huge channel and we came to Le Havre, France. We got off there and got off on the platform and the first thing I saw is a bomb, about five hundred pound bomb right in front of the ramp. Right there. I said, Lord, whatever you do, don't touch that thing. So we kept on going into where this barracks where they chop us up, our hair, a little bit more and next day, they put us in a trailer, this 18-wheeler trailer where they carry the cattle. And we kind of tied in the truck and we left to a little town named Henderson, Germany I think. We crossed a pretty good-sized land on the train. And we parked in that little town and the first thing we did, they move us in the snow that hit us up to about right here, about knee-high or a little higher then we went to the barracks, which were already secured. We went inside and they select the place where we're supposed to stay and we stayed there about 2, 3, 4 days. Then they

moved us to Munich, Germany. In Germany, we landed at, lets see, the Indiana Area they call it. See, they got the town divided in areas with the name of the State. Then we went to, we went in there, we trained, they assigned us. I ended up carrying groceries up for the chow. So I carried all the equipment for eating and all that. We got together and there was 8 of us and from there, we stayed there about 6, 7 months. Then I got sick and I went to Hertz General Hospital in Munich, Germany. And so when I came out after 20 days, they sent me to Nuremburg, Germany. In Nuremburg, Germany, I got there, they assigned me to the same company. All they did is move the whole thing up there. So then I had another job. I had guard duty and all that and it was beautiful. Then we took training with their bigger training with the anti-aircraft. It was firing the 50-caliber machine gun, the 20mm and the 40mm guns. I was a gunner of the half track of those certain weapons. Then we took training about twenty something days, thirty maybe. And we trained on that thing. The airplane pass was a little small target pulled by the airplane. People get crazy, they start shooting at the tail end of it, of the airplane and then the pilot, he didn't want anymore. He said, "Aw, you guys are crazy." We're just practicing and training but some people are crazy, you know. As far as this fourth gun shoot one time. That's why I got this thing here but the government can't do nothing. I had to buy it.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Quad fifties, were they 450-calibers, there?

Mr. Alviar

One on each side.

Mr. Misenhimer

Two on each side.

Mr. Alviar

Sitting in the middle. It has a little motor on the back that's something like a washing machine motor. You started it with your right hand, here, and grabbed your grip bounce of the gun and you zeroed in four guns at one time and you fire with your other hand.

Then that little motor would move it to the right or left and it also searches back up and down. And so I fire with it in training as we supported the First Division, I think it was the First Division, Big Red One.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah.

Mr. Alviar

So we trained and I was firing these weapons, firing these 3 weapons. It's funny how you put so much power out of one thing. And half track is a good weapon but it's delicate. It's very delicate compared with what we've got here now. I can see, in fact, we was talking about it a while ago, my wife and I and my yardman was eating sandwiches. And I say, "Look, compared with what we had last time, what we got right now is very expensive. So naturally the nation of the United States being in war putting all these material, all these weapons up there, it costs lot of money." And I say, "That's why." They said, "Maybe," my wife said, "Maybe these Arabs are gonna get you. Maybe he sent you up there." Aw, we're gonna die anyway. But I'm too old. No, I think hopefully they won't get up here and then after getting here, say uh-oh. Some people say, no, they won't get. Well don't be surprised when you start seeing camels walking up and down there and start worrying about it. (laughing)

Mr. Misenhimer

You were supporting the Big Red One over there, then right?

Mr. Alviar

The First Division. You see, they pull out the whole division. We took their places. And I was usually behind the whole thing. I was translator for French and Italian and German, Polish, Czech. See I used to know all these languages and I talked a lot, you know. And right now, I can't even think, I don't know how to speak no more, not even English or Spanish. But really, I was talking with these people, they understand me well, I understand them. I couldn't understand the Nazis. The Nazis completely out of my hands. I couldn't and I'd send them back to the big battalion somewhere.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was the war still going on while you were there?

Mr. Alviar

We just barely went out a few days before.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you must've gone in in '44 instead of '45.

Mr. Alviar

'44.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, okay. You said '45 a while ago. '44, okay.

Mr. Alviar

So we take troop training and went back to our same locations and we got to start pulling guard and all that. They sent us for patrols here, patrols there. Reconnaissance is trained,

you know, but some places have. When I got there, it was not dangerous but then we went to big caves on the side of the hill from big hole in there, a pretty good sized hole and there's the people that don't know that the war was over. See, we had go get them out and by this time, they realized that something's wrong so they stay. And we took in some jeeps, rifles and machine guns and everything in case they still want to fight, you know. But no, they come out pretty clean. We wouldn't really have to worry, just bring them all in and place somewhere. It kind of destroyed Germany. I was sent to Frankfurt for a little while, not too much. You know, I went and get some of the Russians, about 5, 6, 7 miles from Dachau where they used to burn these people. I head to one side north of it. So we went up there and get whatever we needed and we go around and we take it from line battalions. In one battalion, company A, B, and C and D, they had four companies. We'd deliver whatever they needed. And so I took it easy from there on until they tell me: You're selected to go home. Because I had two kids, and I like it. Then I came here. I came alone. I was the only one that came alone to the Separation Center in San Antonio. Fort, what's that?

Mr. Misenhimer

Fort Sam Houston?

Mr. Alviar

Fort Sam Houston and they told me I was in wool. They said what's the matter with this guy right here. It was hot so they give me clothes in there and said we're letting you off cause you got family for the points and all that. I didn't want to. I wanted to retire complete and so I came, I tell them, well send me a discharge but again, leave me with the reserve, standby reserve or something. I want to be still a unit and keep putting time

there. I put in 43 years all combined, and so I came here and I started attending the, in San Antonio, the Reserve Unit in San Antonio. I stayed for a while and then I went to Corpus with the Navy Reserve. I looked odd. I was the only green, everybody white. And so they sent me to this amphibious company right here.

Mr. Misenhimer

Here in Alice.

Mr. Alviar

Here in Alice. So I stay there a few months then I ask the First Sergeant, not the First Sergeant, the Company Commander that if he would take me if I would come with them. Yeah, they'd take me so I started as Corporal it was and I became E7 all the way there, but they were all the way there. And in the Reserve, I didn't get any rank but with the National Guard, I get rank. In fact, when I'm here, we had the National Guard Unit was about 3 or 4 blocks back here and we had just a garage, just one garage. We had about 8, 9 trucks. We had some inside and some outside. So then the war in Korea started and Vietnam and we couldn't, we didn't have no space for people because everybody want to come here. They didn't want to go up there where they're taking up the draft, you know. And so we talk it over, the sergeants here, and me and I was the top sergeant most of the time here and so I start talking to them, lets go to the Duke of Texas, political, George Parr. So we went to him and these four sergeants and I, five people. We went up there and said, "Hey, Mr. Parr, you're one of the Duke, well-known politician. Why don't you try to get us an Armory so we can help all these people. We have this war. We have a bunch of people outside and if it rain and sun, that don't cut it too good so why don't you try to make us a little better thing, bigger?" He said, "No, if I wanted an Armory, I'll put

it here in San Diego." I said, "Thank you, Sir." So I left. So we went to summer camp, we went to the General Staff up in North Fort Hood, Texas. The Battalion Commanders and the Division Commander, Major General McCall, I think it was. Yeah, I think that's who he was. And we talked to him and we tell him our problem so we talked to him a little while and he said, "Let me talk about it." So eventually, they got our word and after we came back, 1972, they started the National Guard Armory here. And at the same time, they start Kingsville and Corpus and Robstown. I think that rattled them up a little bit and said, "Lets do this." And we built it. I don't forget, we were supposed to, in the open house, it was in 1972, it was supposed to be here. Well, no, all the top sergeants were sent to Corpus to get jobs. And one of our first Company Commanders here, Lieutenant Captain Mut, I don't remember his first name, Mut, Charlie Mut.

Mr. Alviar

Mut, M-u-t.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, M-u-t, okay.

Mr. Alviar

And I said, well, he came back with those _____ and all these festivals going because of the new Armory and we were up there examining whatever. And our cook, I'll never forget, our cook Joe Garza, a pretty good cook, he sat next to me and I said, "Let me have your papers here." So I look at them. His urine was dark and mine was says clear on the space. So I got up and asked the, what you call it, it wasn't the chaplain there.

Mr. Misenhimer

The medic or whatever.

Mr. Alviar

The medic, ask him what is the difference between the two? He say, "This dark, if we keep fooling with it, we find something. And clear, it would be harder to find anything here." So I said, "I didn't tell those guys nothing." He said, "No, everything is fine." Then I'm sitting there and I'm looking at where the doctors took him up there and hide him in the room and I keep looking up there, what? Then the lights go on and off and on and... so I keep on going, you know. So I ask him, "What's the matter?" We happened to be working together at central power and light company was to work together but he was working Kingsville. He transferred me up there. Pretty soon, they lay him off up here. I say, "What's the matter?" So they was working up there, pretty soon, they lay him off there in the work. I say, "What's the matter with that guy?" Nobody want to tell me what was wrong, here. So I didn't know. The Company Commander probably knew something but I didn't know. I was the First Sergeant here and I said, "I want to know what happened. Did he cross the Captain or something?" Well, no, later I found out that he was pretty sick, a diabetic or something so they just let him off and he's still living but he's pretty sick and he takes care of himself.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now back in the time when you were over in Germany, what outfit were you with then? Were you with a division or a company or what?

Mr. Alviar

I was with the Battalion with the Third Army with the Anti-Aircraft Battalion, 778AAA Anti-aircraft.

Mr. Misenhimer

778? Okay, when you went overseas, were you with them then?

Mr. Alviar

No, I dropped there. I came in on there when they were in Germany. I was like their replacement.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were a replacement when you went over there? Had you had training on anti-aircraft here?

Mr. Alviar

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you had training over there.

Mr. Alviar

We practice the 50-caliber but not as we fired it up there.

Mr. Misenhimer

And so was the Battle of the Bulge over with when you got over there?

Mr. Alviar

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

They were fighting into Germany.

Mr. Alviar

They were already inside. And we take the supplies so much and somebody else get hold of it and take it farther up.

Mr. Misenhimer

Even though you were in a Triple A outfit, you still would bring the supplies.

Mr. Alviar

I was in same group only part of it was there. Oh, they changed me around. You know, and then my discharge, I don't have nothing like that. I don't have no Good Conduct and I never do anything wrong. Well, it's all right as long as I was out in one piece. In 1962, we fired the monofibric recoless weapon and I fired 3 shots. I remember clearly because I've been, but I was young, must've been about 25, something like that. So I fired. They let me fire it. I was chosen to fire it cause I was to check in all the firing ranges so I stop and poom, poom, poom, fired three. And I could hear it ringing in my ear, erTTTT. But I was young. I didn't pay attention. But now I'm 76, everything comes to me.

Mr. Misenhimer

Hearing aids, there.

Mr. Alviar

Put them in both sides. But the doctor said, "Well, if you can't hear too much, maybe this help and this will help." I found out that none of them help.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were overseas, what did you think of your commanding officer?

Mr. Alviar

Well, as then, I had my, we were under a lieutenant which he was something like a platoon leader but he must've been something like a company commander or something like that. He'd take care of all the guard duty and everything. So everything, so I find everything was fine. They said we were in Nuremburg and this lieutenant, I can't think

of his name, we'd see him, you know casually see him so he told me you go up here and I call him Sergeant. I don't remember Sergeant. I remember one, which he was some leader, Eisenhower, he was the nephew of the President, Eisenhower. And the General Eisenhower was up there, too. So then I knew him, yeah, since he was Corporal of the guard duty and so they send me to guard and I remember he was one clearly by name. So one time, the Company Commander grouped us up, he said, "At this hour, to this Sergeant, we want to talk to all these guards." Well, they brought the guards from everybody, there was a bunch of guards, about 25, 30 guys. "Yes, Sir." In this part of the area where we were, he said, "We lost 3,000 gallons of gasoline." I say, "How? How could we?" I wasn't on guard duty one day or two days and the French, the I guess the United States had the French there for some reason. This French let his friends in this gate and I had a little something like a little shack to get when it's raining. Well, when you sit down there and you can see everything. So it was dark. I mean, I couldn't even see what was, nothing, everything was very white. I don't see why a lieutenant came by there, I think he was a lieutenant. He did just talk to me and said, everything is all right. I don't know how he walk in to me and it was dark, so I wonder how he come in the dark and just find me there, you know. And all of a sudden, in that little sitting inside the little check, you could hear everything, you know, and he came in there, approached me right here and talked to me. And I say who is this, you know? If it would have been enemies, they'd probably kill me. He go ahead and shoot me. He say, "I'm the officer of the day." I say, "Oh, all right." I said, "Will you move back so I can sit up?" And he sat up and I got the rifle and said, "Now identify yourself, lieutenant." But I could see he was a lieutenant so for some place, I could see the bars shine. I said, all right. Just walk away

the way you came in. Everything is all right. So he walked off and I didn't know who it was but he was just a lieutenant and I said, "I didn't hear him. I didn't see him on no jeep or nothing." So we stay there, I say, "I couldn't have lost all the gasoline at that time." There was no way. I could hear a truck go by the way or somebody running around taking five-gallon drums or something so I told the Sergeant. I said, "I want to change my guard location to somewhere else." He said, "All right." So they put me in the gasoline dump in Nuremborg but I was in the perimeter near the fence and I was inside and on the other side of the fence was the Polish and they had a big hole in the fence where these guys guard the inside, walk through there and go smoke way up there because of the gasoline. And so the Polish and the French, they'd go up there and smoke. So I was inside and I walked back and forth and in the morning, they changed the guards about 6, 7 times that night and I kept looking and they changed that guard. And they changed another guard and then they were changing me. So I wondered what happened. Well, 8 hours I guess. So then it was early, about 6 o'clock, we were barely come to light and I saw the truck. It was one of those ¾ ton.

Mr. Misenhimer

Weapons carriers?

Mr. Alviar

A weapon carrier and it was, there was about 6 other guys inside and they got out pretty quick. I could hear cans or something moving so I walked from the top of the hill like this. There was a fence and all the tents are down here. So I noticed the truck is up there so I went up there and just kind of leaned to see what they were doing. So then I prepared myself with the rifle. I didn't want to make too much noise. We couldn't fire the rifle

there. We'd probably blow up the whole thing. So I walked back and let him go through and I went to the phone. I called the main gate. I said, "Someone's gonna come out through the main gate. I think these are the people that carried out our gasoline at night." The Polish, they were inside, too. There was a string of Polish in there. So I want to talk to Corporal Eisenhower. Corporal Eisenhower, his Private said he will be out in a minute. I say, "I want you to hold a gate check on these guys, here. They're gonna be going out pretty quick. They say, okay. They had the gasoline tank. They had a big red tank like a horseshoe and they were pouring it in there. And that's how I found out a lot of drops of gas there, you know. So I called him and they said, "We found that and that stopped that." Anyway, I guess they threw him out, you know, outside from the gasoline belt. It's a pretty good size of gasoline drum. I think it must be for the whole town and everything, all the military deal.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were they doing with the gas? They were selling it on the black market or something?

Mr. Alviar

Yeah, I wonder where they ended up.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now they were just some regular soldiers or regular police or who was this?

Mr. Alviar

Regular police, I mean soldiers, guards.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was the guards that were doing it. I see.

Mr. Alviar

They were selling, I'm sure they were selling it on the black market.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now these police, were they Americans or who were they police?

Mr. Alviar

No, the guard, that was the main gate. The guards were American soldiers.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you mentioned there were some police inside there, did ya?

Mr. Alviar

The Polish.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Polish, oh, Polish, okay.

Mr. Alviar

Yeah, I talked to, they were both Polish or Czech I talked to were very...but I don't know what these guys were doing, you know. I talked to the ones outside, the ones on the outside fence. This was coming in the truck and it seemed like too many guards to be inside a truck, you know. They might be doing something and for sure, they was getting gasoline.

Mr. Misenhimer

How would they get through the fence?

Mr. Alviar

They get through the main gate with the truck. They fill it up and then they go out like if nothing happened.

Mr. Misenhimer

Nobody was checking them.

Mr. Alviar

Nobody, they'd pass the guard and go on through. I guess that's what happened then he checked them, even though he probably could smell that gasoline. The truck was floating in gasoline going out. (laughing)

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you say you translated. How did you learn these other languages?

Mr. Alviar

Friends.

Mr. Misenhimer

Over there?

Mr. Alviar

I was a guard, I was in guard with a Czech and well, he'd teach me Czech and I'd teach him Spanish so we got together pretty well. Instead of saying hello in the morning or what are you doing, you understand what you're saying, sure in Spanish and Czech. But I forget all about it. I keep talking to him. I mean, seems like when I hear somebody, I can't hear him. It's like they're talking too fast or something.

Mr. Misenhimer

What else happened while you were over there?

Mr. Alviar

Well, they send me home and that was it, the fun I had.

Mr. Misenhimer

When were you discharged? What day did you get out at Fort Sam?

Mr. Alviar

On June something, I forgot.

Mr. Misenhimer

Of '45 or '46?

Mr. Alviar

'46. It was in May '46. No, I can't think of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were overseas what, about a year and a half?

Mr. Alviar

Year and a half, something like that, maybe 2. Went to LeHavre, France and we went into Russianberg, that was a town that they left and it was already snowing. We were at that box car, you know, where they carry cattle in the train and we had to use the rain coats to put for the wind. It's too cold, you know. Everybody put their rain coat. I left it there so somebody has a poncho. I was the first one by name, Alviar, out. And I kept jumping and everybody jumped. We jumped and the snow was about this deep. And I had to walk right in front of them. I tell you, this is funny things that I talk about. They took me through there like I'm a zigzag on the little path you know, the zigzag and when I got up there, I was wet up to here with my overcoat and my pants, you know, my boots and everything, just wet. And I got there and say, to the third floor, so I'm with a group. I got up there and I started throwing the first bunk. It was bunk for two so I dropped my stuff and hung whatever I had to hang and start taking off my boots. And someone, lets go take a shower. No, not right now. I'm too tired to go. I'm gonna take it easy, taking

my clothes off. So I took my clothes off and I was ready. I was already cooled down, you know, warm up. I said, I'm gonna take a shower. Everybody had gone through taking a shower but this kid come late, just keep walking in, just keep walking in through the shower. The shower for about 12 people, you know. So I noticed when I opened the door, there was a two-door I opened, and one guy fall right in front of me. So I begged please, get me and pull me out of here and what am I taking now, you know. What's going on in there? so I back up and I was the only one and there's about 3 or 4 he said. So I back up and I start calling the guard that was in the hall, "Guard! Guard! Guard! Come here, Guard!" So one guy, "What's the matter?" "Something wrong in the latrine." So he went up there and I think he'd run somewhere else and got a sergeant and I went back to this room where they assigned me and I put the clean socks and warm socks and everything. So later, everything piped down, I asked the guard, I said, "What happened?" He said, "These guys walk in there and they were too cold from the legs and start using that hot water and they're paralyzed from here down." If we know was coming in Brumerhaven, Germany, that's when I was returning, that's where they laid me off, it's the First of March...no, 4th of July, 1946, that's where they got me on the boat. And so they got me in there and it was a big day. I can't forget this. By the time I noticed, there was this guy on crutches. Hey, hey, hey! What's the matter. He said, "Remember me?" "No, I see too many face. I don't remember. Maybe if you tell me your name." He probably told me, I don't know. He said, "I'm one of the ones that fall in the shower and I ask you to pull me out. He remembered that." He was on crutches. I mean, he was out, no good. So I said, "Well, I'm sorry to hear of it. I couldn't tell. I couldn't know what was going on. It seems like I've known and read about this. People

put you into a chamber, a gas chamber and turn you on.” I say, “That’s against everything.” And that was pretty bad. I went to the chambers up there in Dachau, Germany. They looked pretty bad. Big rooms like showers had the pipe there and had blocked at the door. They had so many doors, too, you know. And go into a room, just a solid room, not even, and you could see blood all over the place. I said, “Uh-oh, this is not a very good sign.” And so I looked at that then I went in to see the beds where they take and burn them in the oven. And then what they did with the ages, I think they get them together and sell them to the people, you know, the dead body.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, when you went through there, when was that? In '45?

Mr. Alviar

'45.

Mr. Misenhimer

About what month?

Mr. Alviar

Must've been, it was close to, well, it was during Thanksgiving.

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay, so in November or something like that. Now, Germany surrendered on May the 8th of '45 or May the 7th. Where were you when that happened?

Mr. Alviar

On November the 8th?

Mr. Misenhimer

No, May. May, when Germany surrendered.

Mr. Alviar

I must've been out by then. I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

In '45, you were over there in '45, yeah.

Mr. Alviar

Yeah, I was there until '46 but I wouldn't remember where I was then.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you remember hearing about Germany surrendering or anything, the war being over?

Mr. Alviar

Oh, yes, I heard. In fact, when I knew I was coming back, they gave me 12 days to go sight seeing you know. And see the culture, don't you know that was, you would go up there and go wherever you wanted. And then I ready to come, I said, "I want to see the Cage of Goering, the leader of the Nazis.

Mr. Misenhimer

Goering?

Mr. Alviar

Uh, huh. So I went up there and I saw, one day, about one day and a half. I didn't see very much and so I got in the boat on July 12th, I think. That's when they had it depart. And the justice trains in Nuremburg. And so when I came into July 4th, that was later on, and they claimed that the boat, they put it on the papers that Goering had already killed himself.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, yeah, he committed suicide.

Mr. Alviar

I said, oh, hell.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were in Germany, were the towns pretty well tore up, pretty much damaged?

Mr. Alviar

Nuremberg was. Munich wasn't.

Mr. Misenhimer

Munich wasn't?

Mr. Alviar

No. little towns wasn't, just big towns. It was where the factories and all that. they did a pretty good job for the Englishmen, I think and the Americans when they bombed the towns. When I got in, later, when I came back, I went with a guard and I was training a guy who was a cadet for Hitler. He couldn't speak English so I speak to him in German. I didn't remember too much but I made him understand and he was trained. He said that he come from Germany. He got into a Marine boat, Mariner, and he said he jumped here and there to come up here, he said, "But they caught me and I had to go to a military training for six months and then I can get my papers to stay here." So he was trying through the National Guard and he didn't know how to speak English and I tried to teach him a little bit and all that. Like if it would be during lunch and during sleeping and during all the time, you know. And he was young. He was a young guy. He said, "I remember everything Hitler used to do." He said, "You guys go to military training at the top sergeant. He just look at you and say, 'Hey, do it this way. Hey, do it that way. Hey!' Drink coffee and you guys training. Well, no, not right here. We all trained the

same. One of our privates trained, run, we run next to him. He said, "No, the big shot's sitting down and all the rest of the groups train." No, we don't do here. We got it so we can keep up.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get any medals or ribbons over there?

Mr. Alviar

Well, yes, I've got a bunch of medals. This is the Twelfth Consecutive Base was a military service in _____. This is Occupation in Germany. It's a medal for being a good military man. And this is the Texas Declaration and this is also a Texas Declaration.

Mr. Misenhimer

And this is what?

Mr. Alviar

This is an Expert Infantry Badge. You would not get this by combat, you would get it by pencil. You got to pass exams.

Mr. Misenhimer

This is not the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Mr. Alviar

No, Combat Infantry has a wreath around it.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what is this?

Mr. Alviar

That's the Unit Citation Rifle Companies, or something like that, they give these.

Mr. Misenhimer

Presidential Unit Citation.

Mr. Alviar

Oh, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you got that over there, then.

Mr. Alviar

Oh, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Which unit did you get that for?

Mr. Alviar

This was also for the Interior Trap, all the Infantry parts.

Mr. Misenhimer

But not on your anti-aircraft.

Mr. Alviar

No, I didn't get none of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs from over there?

Mr. Alviar

I got a pistol which I brought illegally and somebody got hold of it. Somebody took it out of the place where I was staying. I was going to school in Beeville for mechanics school. And where I live, I just left it there and go for this errand then came back and they already got it.

Mr. Misenhimer

I see. Did you ever see any USO Shows?

Mr. Alviar

Oh, yeah, here in the States, yeah. We went to the N.C.O. Club overseas. But then we'd go drinking and dancing somewhere.

Mr. Misenhimer

But as far as Bob Hope or anybody like that, you didn't see him. Any big movie stars.

And when you were overseas, could you get mail pretty regular?

Mr. Alviar

Oh, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Pretty regular, huh?

Mr. Alviar

Yes, that was no problem getting mail.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you recall from your time over in Germany, France, over there?

Mr. Alviar

Not really. My head is sort of screwed up right now.

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