

WWII MEMORIES
CHARLES WALTON

Tape Counter and Subject	Narrative
Burnham	This is Tina Burnham. For the record. Okay, Charles, your name is?
Walton	My name is Charles M. (as in monkey)...it stands for Merrick; I was named for my Uncle Merrick Wright who was a steamboat captain on the Mississippi River. My last name is Walton and I'm Charles M. Walton, Jr.
Burnham	Okay and where were you born Charles?
Walton	I was born in Dallas, Texas on Munger Avenue.
Burnham	What year were you born, Charles?
Walton	I don't remember it very well but I'm told I was born in November 04, 1921 which is, of course, Will Rogers birthday.
Burnham	Okay, what were your parents' names?
Walton	My father's name of course you've already heard when I told you my name and my mother's name was Lillian Addie Cornuauud and of course she married my father who was a Walton.
Burnham	Okay and do you have any brothers and sisters?
Walton	Yes, I have two. I have one of each. I have a sister who is about 2 years younger than I. Her name is Margaret Elizabeth Evans. She resides at Fort Worth, having been a school teacher and having been married to an elementary school principal. My brother is Paul Edward Walton. He resides in Mineral Wells, Texas, and is in very poor health and has been for some years.
Burnham	Where did you go to school?
Walton	The elementary schools in Dallas, most of them were named for heroes of the Texas Revolution: I went to James W. Fannin Elementary School. Then I went to Woodrow Wilson High School, one of the few high schools in the world, I think, which are known by the first name of the honoree rather than the last. It's never called Wilson High; it's called Woodrow.
Burnham	And where did you enter the military?
Walton	I was drafted. I had just graduated from Baylor University and had gone to work at McGregor, Texas where they were building a bomb loading plant. I was in the accounting office out there and it was from that place that I received my greetings and was drafted.
Burnham	Where did you receive your training?
Walton	My basic training was at Shepherd Field. I was inducted at Camp Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas. I was there only a few days and then went to Shepherd Field and went through basic training in the Air Force.
Burnham	Did you have a friend that went through training with you?
Walton	I really made only one good friend from military days. He was from Kentucky. We have kept up with each other since the war and our families know each other and that kind of thing. He passed away about a year or two ago and as I say that was the only enduring friendship that I made during those years.
Burnham	The clothing and equipment that was issued. What was that?
Walton	Well, I was outfitted at Camp Wolters in Mineral Wells, Texas. And the

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	fall had come upon us in October, I believe, so we were issued summer clothing and expected to have something warmer soon and didn't have anything warmer until next spring when it would get hot again.
Burnham	Where and what were your duty assignments?
Walton	Those are varied. I was still in basic training at Shepherd Field when a runner came out to the drill field. It was mid-afternoon, the temperature was a hundred and twenty and the runner had come to find me and I went with him to the Headquarters building and an old time Master Sergeant interviewed me briefly and said, "How do you like it out there on the drill field" and I said, "It's pretty warm". He said, "Would you like an indoor job". And so I was assigned to the final discharge section of the finance office at Shepherd Field. I am color blind with no opportunity for any promotion in the Air Corps of 1940's.
Burnham	When did you ship out?
Walton	I stayed at Shepherd Field, I guess almost two years and then at Christmas time came the word that we were shipping out. We were shipped to Louisiana, Camp Livingston, and we took basic training again this time in the infantry and over in to Europe combat as the Battle of the Bulge was progressing and going pretty much against us.
Burnham	What were your conditions like; I think it meant overseas?
Walton	Well, conditions were very interesting. When I did ship out for overseas it was from Boston; Camp Miles Standish in Boston; we crossed the ocean in what was then the largest passenger ship except for the Queen Mary, I guess. Anyway, it had been converted to military use and we crossed the ocean in that. It was fast; it was comfortable; I was seasick all the way. We arrived in England in South Hampton and spent the night in a railroad station on the floor with buzz bombs buzzing around us.
Burnham	Do you recall any humorous recollections while you were on leave or on the job or in combat.
Walton	Really can't think of anything that was very funny over there.
Burnham	Do you have any special recollection of combat actions?
Walton	Well, like I say we got to South Hampton, England and during the night and early morning hours crossing the Channel we landed in France and began the truck ride to the front. I remember very well the first body I saw lying on the ground as we were moving over toward _____???.
Burnham	Did anything out of the ordinary happen?
Walton	Well, those were hardly ordinary times, I guess, most everything that happened was unusual. I was never a prisoner of war except for one day that we were surrounded and in a way we were all captive and yet there was no direct contact with the enemy personally; just firing back and forth.
Burnham	Where and when did you sleep?
Walton	Where and when did I sleep. I remember one wonderful night when I took advantage of somebody else's foxhole and slept in sort of a hollowed out area under the roots of a big tree. My predecessor had started the tree roots to burning and it was a nice gentle glow down in there and warmth and I really enjoyed it. Most nights in that part of the combat days were spent on

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	the hood of what we called a half-track. I picked that out because they had to start those up every couple of hours to keep the batteries charged and so I took advantage of the heat on the hood to stay warm a little bit.
Burnham	What was your most frightening period? And where if there was any humorous incidents in combat.
Walton	I don't really think of anything that was funny somehow or other. I was in a Jeep one day, this was after the war was over, traveling from near Linz, Austria to Vienna. I had picked up some Russian soldiers simply because they got out in the road and blocked the way and I had to stop and they would ride down the way with me; stopped me and tell somebody to get out and they got in and I was sort of running a bus tour situation. When we got in sight of Vienna I had no passengers; then picked up one and the next I knew of his presence there he tapped me on the shoulder and I stopped and looked around and he held a Luger in my neck and I was a little bit excited about that. He was laughing and he thought it was funny whether I did or not.
Burnham	What campaigns or actions were you in?
Walton	Well, I was in the Battle of Shepherd Field up at Wichita Falls and had some other training situations but all of my combat experience was in Europe in the Theatre of Operations.
Burnham	What were your feelings about coming home.
Walton	I was happy to do so. When I got home I saw our first born for the first time. He had been born after my departure from the states to Europe. I have good memories of that time; feeding him and re-acquainting myself with my wife and she with me.
Burnham	Were there any changes that had taken place due to the war that surprised you?
Walton	Yes, surprised and very disappointed. I can remember many an hour when we sat around at night talking about how wonderful it was going to be after the war when everybody had a helicopter. I don't have mine yet.
Burnham	Did you receive any medals or ribbons or citations?
Walton	I like that Bill Mauldin Cartoon where this fellow comes in the aid station; "Don't give me any Purple Hearts; I already have three of them; what I need is a bandaid". I was very fortunate not to have suffered a hit, as we say. I had a sprained ankle one time when I jumped off a 6-x when we got strafed by the first plane that attacked us; had diarrhea a lot as did most people; had a bad case of scabies and athlete's foot and things of that sort but that's the extent of my medical record. I was discharged from a medical hospital in Arkansas.
Burnham	How has your life been after WWII? After you got home and saw your happy family.
Walton	Well, that's hard to say. Life is a mixed bag. Right now I'm suffering from a long siege of Parkinson's Disease. I've had many wonderful times, many wonderful days and nights and early mornings and all that kind of thing. It's been a wonderful experience.
Burnham	Thank you, Charles. All that, Charles, what you just said; about what you

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	changed in the Army, I mean from Air Force to Army.
Walton	My wife suggested that I recount one of my favorite stories. It's funny, I guess or maybe not. One day we were all on Autobahn, a super highway in the German nation and we would convoy fifty minutes, take a break and so on. We had just begun a 10 minute bread when suddenly when from the rear of the convoy, which was a very long one, we heard shots. Well, everybody, of course, who had gotten out of their trucks ran back and got their rifles and helmets and so on; looked up in the direction of the noise and we could tell it was approaching us. And as soon as we saw what was happening; it was a deer running along the edge of the Autobahn right at what we called the fence line; and everybody was taking a shot at it as it went by their way. Nobody hit it; the last anything was seen of that deer it was still in good health. However, once the firing subsided out of the woods came hundreds of German soldiers waving white flags. That was funny in a way....not for them.
Burnham	I think you should tell about when you became a Methodist minister.
Walton	Write a sermon. How long does it take to prepare a sermon for Sunday morning. The best answer, I suppose, is all your previous life we would hope to bring to the pulpit the interpretation of God's word and interpret it in life and that means our lives as well as the lives of the congregation and so in answer to the question as to when did you become a Methodist minister or why and so on, I resort to a similar answer. I say all my life; I had many interesting childhood experiences; my parents were very faithful to see that I was in Sunday school every Sunday and so on. When I was a child we would visit my aunt who lived down near LaGrange, Texas, and still standing down there at Rutgersville was the chapel of the old college from the days of the Independence of Texas. My cousin, my sister and I used to play church in that building and I'm sure that had some influence on my life. Another influence was a movie called "One Foot in Heaven," and there were many people that influenced the direction of my life. I don't know when I became a preacher. I guess I was preaching in that little worn old, broken-down chapel of the old college in my childhood. By the way, it was just within sight of where I had my first automobile accident. Our family had a new car and we were on vacation visiting my cousin down there; I went in to take my sister and cousin to Sunday school and on the way back ran off the road, flipped over 7 times and believe it or not, we drove that car back to Dallas.
Burnham	Thank you, Charles.