

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**

**Center for Pacific War Studies**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**Dr. John E. McAuliffe  
Worcester, MA  
October 16, 2009  
M Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion  
347<sup>th</sup> I.R. 87<sup>th</sup> I.D.  
81 MM Mortar Squad  
End of Battle of Bulge  
Crossed Siegfried Line**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is October 16, 2009. I am interviewing Dr. John E. McAuliffe by telephone. His phone number is 508-754-7183. His address is 425 Pleasant St. #1410, Worcester, MA 01609. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Dr. McAuliffe, I want to thank you for taking time today to do this interview today and I want to thank you for service to our country during World War II.

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes, I appreciate that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the first thing I like to do is read to you this agreement with the museum.

Agreement read. Is that ok with you?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, the next thing I like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out that sometimes several years down the road, we try to get in contact with a veteran and he's moved or something. Do you have a son or daughter or someone that knows where you are?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

And who would that be?

Dr. McAuliffe

I would say my nephew, Timothy O'Malley.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you have an address for him?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes, it's is 20 Ellis Dr. Worcester, MA 01602

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you have a phone number?

Dr. McAuliffe

508-754-3456

Mr. Misenhimer

What is your birthdate?

Dr. McAuliffe

My birthday is October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1923.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Dr. McAuliffe

I was born in Brooklyn, NY.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Dr. McAuliffe

I have 2 sisters and 2 brothers.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were any of them involved in WWII?

Dr. McAuliffe

My younger brother, Francis who was 3 years younger than me, was in the Navy CB;  
Stationed down in the Leyte, in the Philippine Island.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is he still living?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes he is.

Mr. Misenhimer

If you don't mind I would like to get his name and phone number and possibly interview  
him.

Dr. McAuliffe

Ok, that will be fine.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you have that handy?

Dr. McAuliffe

Francis J. McAuliffe, 508-755-5727.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were your sisters involved in the war work of any kind?

Dr. McAuliffe

No, they were not.

Mr. Misenhimer

You grew up during the depression, how did the depression affect you and your family?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, I had an unusual circumstance. My mother died when I was 6 years old and that was in 1930 and my father was a sculptor in the employ of Mrs. Whitney in New York City. In that area I don't think that there were many commissions for sculpturing and he did not do much of that type of work. But, my little brother was only 3 months old when my mother died and my father put the rest of us in a nun's school up in Hastings, on the Hudson, New York and run by the sisters. And my younger 3 month old brother came up to Worcester to live with my aunt; they were both school teachers. But I was in that school at St. Claire's for six years. So that is how the depression affected me at a young age.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Dr. McAuliffe

After those nun's no longer accepted high school boys, I came up to Worcester, MA to live with my aunt, who was my guardian, and they put me in a brother's school, a Catholic brothers school in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. The name of it was Mount St. Charles Academy. And I was there when I graduated from high school in 1941.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do when you finished high school?

Dr. McAuliffe

I went directly into Holy Cross College right here in my hometown of Worcester in 1941,

in September. Of course in December, Pearl Harbor came and most of the boys were leaving college and being drafted into the service. I was taking a pre-medical course and I had a deferment from the service because the government anticipated young men becoming doctors. We didn't know how long the war was going to last. So, I had a deferment and I stayed in college and I went to summer school, through the summer I mean. And I had not applied to medical school and I graduated in 1944 in June and I was no longer under the cover of the deferment and I was drafted into the Army.

Mr. Misenhimer

What date were you drafted?

Dr. McAuliffe

I would say the later part of June in 1944. I don't know the exact date.

Mr. Misenhimer

You went into the Army?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes, I was sent down to Camp Wheeler, GA for infantry training specializing in heavy weapons which was the 30 caliber machine gun and the 81 MM mortar.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me back up, you mentioned December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941; how did you hear about that?

Dr. McAuliffe

It was Sunday morning and my sister was studying, she went to college too here in Worcester. She was studying in her bedroom upstairs and I was downstairs in the living room and she came bursting into the room saying that Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese. She was all excited. So no-one knew where Pearl Harbor was, of course, so

we went looking for the map and found out it was down there in the South Pacific.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you feel that would affect you?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, I guess remotely I thought that we were going to be at war and the next day the papers told how many thousands of young men across the country went down to their draft board and signed up. But I had to stay in school. I wanted to go into the army in 1942, I mean the service, but my folks said "why don't you stay in college as long as you can."

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you took your basic in Georgia, you said?

Dr. McAuliffe

It was Camp Wheeler, Macon, GA.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you travel down there?

Dr. McAuliffe

I was told to report to Boston and the draft board one day and they sent us by truck up to Camp Deven. It's in MA, Fort Devens, to get outfitted with basic clothing. I think we were there for maybe two days and then they put us on a train and we went down to Macon, GA.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that train trip?

Dr. McAuliffe

The train was full of young men going off to those camps. It was rather gusty, sooty drive and it was June, it was hot and you were issued the suntan uniforms and they got pretty full of coal dust.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have anyplace to sleep on that train?

Dr. McAuliffe

No, we had no bunks; I think we slept right in the standard seats. I don't know how long it took us; I forgot how long it took us, maybe 2 days, in those days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had you been that far from home before?

Dr. McAuliffe

No, I just came up from Brooklyn to MA, and that was it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about your basic training, what was that like?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, it was a pretty large camp and they had sectioned off two areas like battalions, the first battalion and the second. And each battalion area had a camp field like a campground. The training was divided off to various schools. So, we had lectures on personal hygiene, lectures on medical, how to take care of yourself and lectures on how do you use weapons out in the field and take apart the rifle. We had training and lectures in how to use the machine gun and mortar and how to use the bazooka, and things like that which was relegated to infantry people.



Mr. Misenhimer

Were you assigned to a particular unit at that point?

Dr. McAuliffe

No. We were segregated to units specific to the camp itself, not to general orientation.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you live in there?

Dr. McAuliffe

We lived in wooden barracks that had first and second floors. Two aisles of beds on each floor with, perhaps, about 30 on the floor, 60 in the barracks. And they were heated by a coal furnace stove in the back of the barracks and each man had to tend to the furnace each day, took turns to keep the fire going and to keep the hot water hot. They called it banking the coal stove. It was a coal furnace in those days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have the infiltration course where you crawled under the live ammunition being shot over you?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes, before we left the training we had to undergo the infiltration course where you crawled under a wooden frame where the machine gun was held stationary, immovable, but nonetheless we were kind of concerned.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else happen in basic training?

Dr. McAuliffe

Oh yes, certain training areas we had to move the basic camp, which was a huge camp

but you were off the basic grounds and in the surrounding areas. There were many black families living in these huts and shamble shacks, you know. Being a northerner, this was my first exposure to poverty down in the south. We would see these little kids running around with hardly any clothes on and kind of emaciated. And that was kind of striking to me.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there any funny incidents in basic? Anything comical?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well I wouldn't call it comical but at the end of our training, it was around November, it was Thanksgiving time, and at the end of your training you go on a 20 mile hike that so full field pack, rifle and equipment. I survived that, I didn't have any problems because I was rather athletic and well trained then but we finished our 20 mile hike and we stayed out in the woods and didn't go back to the barracks. We were told to fix camp out in the woods with our tents and this was Thanksgiving Day, and they brought the meal out to us already cooked in a kitchen mess. So we all sat down out in the field with our mess kits eating, well, almost a regular turkey dinner with all the fixings, as they say. And then we went to bed that night and maybe around one or two in the morning I felt kind of queasy and I had to use the bathroom, and I get out of the tent and relieve myself up against a tree and pretty soon I'm looking around the woods and I see a lot of flashlights and I see figures crossing through the woods. What happened was everybody in the company, there were 200 men, we all came down with diarrhea and they were digging slit trenches by flashlights. It wasn't too comical then but when you think of it, it was a real not too pleasant Thanksgiving dinner. There was one man who was, what they call a cadre, he

was a sergeant and he had been through many cycles of training the troops and he was the only one who did not become affected with it. We were always suspicious that they knew what they were doing and didn't eat the meal. So, he didn't get sick but the rest of us did. That was an experience.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else that you recall from your basic training?

Dr. McAuliffe

Ahh, I didn't find it too difficult. I learned a little bit, not too much of everything. It was real basic, you know. It was really not enough to put you on the frontline, like the troops that were drafted earlier back in 1942. They had longer periods of training then we did but the war was on and they needed infantrymen in a hurry and we were kind of rushed through. Just got into basic and that's when we went overseas because it was just basic, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finished your basic training, where did you go then?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, we finished in November and we had maybe, I think it was, two weeks at home for furlough. This was the end of November and the first two weeks of December and I was reading the newspaper at home about the war over Europe and I got really kind of concerned because I knew I was heading there. But after the furlough was up we went to Ft. Meade down in Maryland. Preparations were made to be being sent overseas. We were there for a week or two and they gave us skin hair cuts and a little orientation. Then they put us on the train for Camp Kilmer, then one night they put us on special ferry

boats to cross the Hudson to the docks of New York City where we all boarded the Queen Mary, the troop ship. And then on January 1<sup>st</sup>, early in the morning the ship set out of New York harbor for overseas for 18,000 troops onboard; all who were soldiers.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to? Where did you land?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, the ship went along without escorts because the Queen Mary and the Elizabeth were very fast troop ships and they didn't need escorts because they could out run submarines across the Atlantic and we landed up in the Firth of Clyoe up in Scotland. I think those ships went there every couple of months to unload the troops and then we get off the ship and onto trains. And those train traveled from the tip of Scotland, the tip of England, all the way down to South Hampton in maybe 2 days.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long did that trip over take?

Dr. McAuliffe

I think it was 5 days. Maybe it was 5 or 6.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you took the train down to South Hampton, then what happened?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, we were down in South Hampton and we stayed there overnight and then they put you on what they called a LST, and landing ship troop ship, and then it was across the English Channel to the port of Le Havre. Le Havre was the only functional port in use at that time. Pretty much demolished but you were able to get a ship in there over at the

harbor. And they have you over there overnight and then they put you in boxcars, more than 10 men, they were real jammed crowded with troops. I can't say how many, it was 20 in a car.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that what they called the 40 and 8's, the boxcars?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, in WWI they call them that but I think they were a little bit larger in WWII, they were the boxcars.

What happened was, when I was on the Queen Mary I went up on top deck to get some air. We were close quarters down below and we had that new equipment impregnated with these preservatives and when you get a lot of that in close quarters you would have a particular aroma which was really gagging, you know. So I said "I'm going up to the top to get some fresh air." And I lay down on the open deck with my overcoat and I was asleep and someone came along and took it off of me. I don't know why. So, I went ashore without my overcoat and it was really cold and I nearly froze in those boxcars.

Three days across France and they let us out in Metz, France. That is where they unloaded and we were put into, I think this particular building was some kind of a military academy where they bedded us down for a couple of nights until they sent us off the various divisions where we became replacements.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, when we were ready to go they took us to what they used to call the Repple Depple, a replacement depot and they outfitted you with your weapon and your ammunition and I got my overcoat back and a stool helmet and a pair of galoshes. Now the troops that were up there fighting, many of them did not have galoshes. They had the combat boots but the replacements going in got there in time to get the galoshes which were a real blessing because those combat boots when you were standing in snow and water and they leaked. They had frosted feet or frozen feet, but the galoshes really kept the snow off the boots. They were a little bit awkward to walk in but they prevented you from getting frozen feet.

Mr. Misenhimer

And that is where you were assigned your weapon then?

Dr. McAuliffe

That is when they gave me, see I was in the heavy weapons mortars and the weapons for those men were smaller guns, a carbine. Now, if you were assigned an infantry rifle you would get the M-1. But my training was in heavy weapons I was assigned a carbine. It was good at close range because our main weapon was the mortar.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you assigned to a unit, yet?

Dr. McAuliffe

Not yet. Well they sent you out, you know, to various units, to various places by truck. I guess they had it all figured out where you were going. The group I was with was sent to Echtermatch, Luxemburg. That is on the border of Germany and we were going to be

assigned to the 87<sup>th</sup> division. Now, the 87<sup>th</sup> division just got done fighting up in a place called Moirey, Tallet, Dirun pre Bonnerve, it was about 8 miles west of Bastogne in Belgium. They had some severe fighting there but originally the division I was with was to replace the 26<sup>th</sup> division down in Metz. There were a lot of forts in Metz, which we really did not capture and they really dug in there.

And then my division went down into Germany in the Saar Basin, they called it, and they were there for about 4 days when the Bulge broke out on the 16<sup>th</sup> and those troops had a 300 miles truck drive from the Saar Basin in Germany all the way back to Rheims, France and up northward. It was terrible conditions they were in open truck in rain and snow. We really had it very cold and I had to ride in those open trucks for three days but they fought up there, maybe a couple weeks.

After that was over they were sent down to into the country of Luxemburg and that is when they sent us replacements to Echtermatch, Luxemburg. After that they drove us out to the 87<sup>th</sup> division where they were stationed in a very small town and that is how I joined the 87<sup>th</sup> division.

Mr. Misenhimer

What regiment were you in?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, I was attached to the 87<sup>th</sup> division area and I was assigned to a M-company, the 347<sup>th</sup> the regiment there were the regiments 365, 6 and 7<sup>th</sup> and they were all down there

along the Saur River facing Germany and I remember that 8 of us were trucked out to M company headquarters, which was the heavy weapons.

And the captain sat us down in a barn, we were in a barn, and he was sitting down on the hay interviewing us new fellows coming in. Asking where you were and what you did and I told him that I was a college student and he told us about himself. And that was in the barn, that was the headquarters and the phone was ringing and there were some excitement and I heard one of the fellows in there saying “There is a German machine gun shooting at one of our companions off” as soon as I heard the words German machine gun, Uh—Uh! That is when everything changed for me. Everything was nice and safe up to there. You were parading around in your uniform kind of proud but now you are down to business. You hear the words ‘German Machine Gun’ and Uh-uh! That is the end of the good time in the army. That really shook me up a little.

So the next day the platoon sergeant took the men out into the woods and assigned them to their squads. I was with three other fellows with M’s; Marini, Manley and McAuliffe, all M’s. My friend, Marini, Donato was born in Italy and his father took him out of Italy in 1935 and brought him to this country. He did not want him to go to school under Mussolini, the fascist system. So, he arrives in Boston and I think he becomes a welder, he learned the trade and he was making ships down at the Fore River shipyards in Quincy, Massachusetts. That is where they made battleships and aircraft carriers. But they no longer needed his service and that is how he got drafted. And that is how I met



him, at basic training; we were the letter M, Marini and McAuliffe. I got to know him pretty well and we got assigned to the same mortar unit out there in the woods.

Well sergeant Kelly said “ok, I’ll take Manly and McAuliffe.” And Marini went to the other squad. So Kelly said “Ok, McAuliffe here is your hole.” It was a deep hole already dug, so Manly and I. That was our hole, the foxhole for the night. We got in the hole and got back to back and covered up with blankets and a foot of snow on the ground and my turn to stand guard at night. And I’m out there all alone under the trees with snow all around and those guys are underground and its dark and I’m thinking what the hell am I doing out here? I really got concerned, it really changed your whole attitude on how’s life and stuff like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Dr. McAuliffe

Oh, I got kind of concerned thinking about of folks back home, your mind goes to that. So, you got to get with it, so we were out there, maybe almost a week. We were right on the river and they sent patrols down by the river and you could look across and see the Germans on the other side of the river. That was the river that separated Germany from Luxemburg and France. We were there for about a week during mostly the occupation of defenses.

Then the division was sent back into Belgium. We were all on trucks and we had to go back into Belgium. I remember that it was a 16 hour drive, probably didn’t go more than

40 or 50 miles but it took us 16 hours on the narrow roads and the snow and our truck got lost. So quite a few hours later and finally we got where we were going and you were too late because the mess hall had closed and we didn't have any supper. But, that is where we up to a town in Belgium and then we were fighting from there across the Siegfried line into Germany.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about crossing that.

Dr. McAuliffe

It was dark; we went through the Siegfried line into Germany. That is where they have a place called Gold Brick Hill the division had, not my regiment, one of the regiments they went up on Gold Brick Hill they were many pill boxes up there, 12 pill boxes. They had to fight up there.

The fellow I met after the war at one of the reunions said that he got wounded up on Gold Brick Hill. He was in a hole and artillery wounded him and the guy right next to him just disappeared. He never knew what happened to him, I think he was just obliterated. But, he knows a little story about this time he was put in stretcher between two tanks and he was yelling to get me out of here. He was afraid that the tanks were going to start up and run him over. So, these 2 Germans prisoners were carrying him and they were passing a bunker and another explosion blew them into the bunker. Anyway, the stretcher bearers met a farmer with ox cart and they put him on the ox cart and took him down a little hill, and about 11 o'clock at night the ambulance picked him up and took him to the aid station.

Well, that story of Gold Brick Hill, they had to take a lot of pill boxes, but ah, our regiment did not take the hill. And I was down in a small farm house, I could see the hill and I could hear the artillery going off in back of me and the rounds going over my head and I saw them exploding up on this bald face hill. That is where those troops were.

Well, I didn't know anything about it then but I had written a letter home to the folks telling them about that experience. But I never knew anything else about it until I started to go to reunions and the fellows started to talk about it and I said "oh, that is what that was. You guys were up on the hill and I was down there watching the artillery explode up there." So, when you go to the reunions and you get to talking to the other fellows the pieces start going together and you get a good idea of what was happening around you.

At that time you never know nothing, where you're going or when you're going until it is all over with and you put the pieces together

Mr. Misenhimer

You were with the 81 MM mortar squad?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, we were the 81 MM squad. We were M company and we had to support K, L and I Company, they were rifle companies. And I guess the captain in charge had the maps and knew who we were to support and where, so we just followed orders and every place we went you had to dig a hole, maybe 2 ½ feet deep to put the mortar in and then dig your own foxhole. That is a lot of time digging holes!

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your position on the mortar?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, it was 7-8 men squad and being a replacement the other men were like number 1,2 and 3 man and the rest of us were ammunition bearers and that was what I was being a replacement. The only way that you moved up is if somebody got wounded or killed and then they moved you up, you know. But we didn't lose many men. A couple of men we lost to frostbitten feet. And I carried a 6 mortar rounds and they weighed almost 7 pounds apiece and we had a pouch which you put over your head with 3 compartments on each side. But you couldn't put it over your head because you had a pack on your back and it wouldn't fit, so you lugged it over your shoulder. And, of course, you had all your other equipment, the heavy overcoat, pack and rifle. So, I had 42 pounds and I weighed about 150. So you had to carry that and if you went long distances, each section, two squads, had a trailer with a jeep. We threw the gun and all the ammunition in the trailer and that is the way you had to go if you went long distances.

So, if you had a firing position in the woods, you had to carry the ammo. I remember once we were up in Manderfeld, there were huge clumps of woods. When in between the wide open spaces and the meandering streams, well you had wide open fields of snow and when you come up to one edge of the woods and there was a lieutenant there and he was sending the men out across the open field 25 yards apart. I came up to him and I was carrying all this stuff and he looks at me and says "That is too much!" and I said "what can I do?" and he said "ok, go ahead." So we get out in the open expanse and there is some rounds and stuff coming in and I fell down and the fellows laid down on their face in the snow. I kept hoping that none of that shrapnel's didn't hit my ammunition. You

get all kinds of thoughts going through your mind. So finally Sergeant Kelly comes along and says "Get up, Mac! Get up and keep moving." So we get up to the other edge of the woods and we get in there and the artillery is coming in and hitting the trees and scattering down on you. So another fellow and I get underneath this log and we come out of there after the shelling was over and this kid next to me was holding his knee kind of blown open. He didn't get under the log, so he got wounded. Pretty soon I was looking for the rest of the men and he said "they went down into a bunker." and I said "Where? I don't see any bunker." So we went around the back end and there was a camouflage and we went down these stairs and it was the bunker on the Siegfried Line. It was a sleeping bunker that the Germans used for sleeping because there were cots in there, maybe about ten. So we stayed in there for the night and we were at least out of the wind and cold and protection. So you could get the chance to take off your shoes and boots.

Normally we would look for a farmhouse to sleep in. All the civilians had left and gone to somebody's else's house. The fellows took over the beds and I slept on the floor most of the time. I thought that I wasn't accepted by the group yet, so that is why I never went looking for a bed and just slept on the floor. But you never took your shoes off or your boots, the galoshes, which I did that time in the bunker because I had to go on a detail and my hands were so frozen that I couldn't hardly lace the boots and buckle the galoshes. Charlie said "What the hell is holding you up, Mac? Come on!" I said "I can't buckle my shoes. My hands are so frozen." So I finally got the boots on and the galoshes and that is when we left that bunker.

So, it was pretty cold. I wore long underwear, and two olive drab pants and shirts, a wool sweater, a field jacket, an overcoat and a scarf. That is a lot of clothes! You still felt the cold. And I had a wool knit cap and helmet and gloves and I managed to keep moving and try to stay as warm as possible. But some of the guys didn't have as much and they really got frostbitten a lot more.

Mr. Misenhimer

I understand that was one of the coldest winters there.

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, I think some say 25 years, so say 30-40 years. But it was cold and it was mostly below 10 and sometimes below zero and you had a foot of snow or more drifting. And the days were short because we were up north in Belgium and the days were only 8 hours and it would get dark at 4 o'clock and of course it didn't get light until 8 in the morning. So it was kind of disheartening in a way, you know. With all the darkness and wetness and dampness, you were down in the dumps most of the time wishing you were someplace else.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, we started moving a lot of different places. I remember going through the streets of this one town and we were going one way and coming towards us the other way were civilians pushing wheelbarrows, baby carriages and they were getting out of it. And we would stop in a town and we went into a small church, it was a Catholic church. Of

course I had so much Catholic upbringing and I was really indoctrinated, really religious like. And when I saw the guys pushing the pews out and spitting all over the floor and in my mind I was like “Wow, you can’t do this to a church. It’s not the right thing to do.”

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me again what happened at the church?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well we laid down to sleep and being kind of religious I went up to the altar and put my hand in the middle of the altar and started saying a few prayers, you know, and do that.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said that they moved the pews out to make room for you all?

Dr. McAuliffe

You had to get up in the middle of the night to do guard duty and people were lying all over the floor and they get up in the dark and they would walk over your feet. You would be cursing at them because of your feet; kind of numb.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, a funny thing, my sister gave me a watch for graduation, joining the army. It didn’t have any radium dials on it, it was a nice watch. So I wore it and I would use it for guard duty but they couldn’t see the hands in time to change the guards. So they took a shelter half or a raincoat and put it over their heads because they had a light to light up it to see what time it was. Pretty soon they got one with radium dials, but I still have that watch. I stopped using it years ago but if you can believe this, last week I took it out to the

watchmaker to have them oil it up and to clean it. So, it's still out there and I have to pick it up in a couple days. Quite a souvenir that went through the war with me.

But, ah, we didn't fire the mortar too much because we had three other mortars supporting and we took turns supporting different companies, K, item and L. But the machine guns were all active, I think. But, ah, the rifle troops were ahead of us maybe a 100 yards. We had it a little bit better; we could shoot our weapons from behind the barn or something without being observed and out of the line of fire. But we were always getting artillery rounds coming at you now and then. And they were pretty scary. I never got wounded but fellows around me did.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the German artillery, was that the German 88?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, most of the fellows will talk about the 88, but actually the Germans at the beginning of the war were using the French 75. That was a great weapon for WWI modified. They were using mostly that because the 88 were primarily for anti-aircraft but they used them against personnel, too. It was very active because it could hit a dime a mile away. But the fellows always like to claim that they got hit by an 88, you know, it sounds a little more dramatic. But it could have been a 75 but they're both lethal.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, that was up in the Siegfried Line, ahh, around March 1, 2, 3 and at the end of



March we were coming out of the Siegfried Line across Germany and it was now the line mans campaign. The Bulge was over on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, so I was in the second half of the Bulge, I think. The Germans were coming after the American forces, that was the worst part of it. I was mostly in the second half where we were pushing them out. They were still shooting at us.

Pretty soon when the spring came, the middle of March, fellows started throwing their overcoats away. It would be hot during the day but the nights were still cold, so I didn't throw mine away, I knew it was going to be cold at night so I hung on to it. Luckily I did.

Pretty soon we came up to the confluence of Themoselle and the Rhine River that is up at Coblenz. We went across two rivers, pretty good size, and they took us in the woods to show us how to carry a boat and how to paddle it one afternoon. Some of those rifle troops crossed the Moselle, paddled, being in the mortars we went across a day or two later. They built a pontoon bridge and the troops and tanks and vehicles went over on the pontoons. And then we came up near the Rhine River where they joined, up at Coblenz. Then we get down on the Rhine River and we saw a lot of action there. Of course, I tell you my experience except that the rifle troops had a little bit more, they had to drive the Germans out while we gave them support from a distance.

But, I remember that we set up our guns, the mortar, to shoot over the Rhine River and they had us in the pit and Sergeant Kelly told me to trace the telephone line up to the

observation post. So, I eye-balled it and started following it and pretty soon he yelled at me "Is that the way you trace a line?" so I had to go back and feel it on the telephone and run the wires through my fingers all the way up the hill, maybe a hundred yards, and up there they had their observation post in the chicken coop and I could see the Rhine River up there in front of me, down below, maybe a half a mile away. And the officer in there was directing the firing and he had binoculars. I stayed all of five minutes and then I had to go back down. I heard them say "I swear that last round took that SOB's head off!" I guess there were Germans across the river doing something on the roads and the railroad tracks over there. But that is what I heard them say. So I said "at least we are hitting something, anyway."

But pretty soon we get down to the river and right opposite of us there was a German machine gun shooting over our heads with Tracer bullets and all of the sudden I see a P-51 airplane come by and he mowed a couple of guys in that gun and knocked them out. Well, that was good. But that night we walked along the river about a half mile and they had some landing barges, like Higgins boats there, to take the troops over. Little did I know that early the afternoon before the infantry got into the small boats and paddled themselves over and they really got beat up because they had German in the hills with 20MM shooting down and a friend of mine was in my company, he was a machine gunner, he did a lot of running those boats, and he said "Yeah, I turned around and the boat in the back of me had completely disappeared." They shot a few of them up and they were floating down the river. But some got ashore and they had to attack into town.

But when I got to the boat at 2 o'clock in the morning down there, they had like landing craft and I said "lets get in them" and they took us across at 2 o'clock in the morning and we get out and we decide to walk along the road to daylight back to where we were on the other side. And I looked down the road and there was a machine gun lying in the road and I was talking to one lieutenant just last month, we keep in touch with each other, the fellow was on D-Day but then he got transferred to our division; he was a platoon sergeant and he worked his way up to the battlefield commission. And he led L-Company into the town there and they had to flush the Germans out of the houses and stuff. I said "I never saw that because I came over after you." But the rifle troops had to do all the fighting; we kind of supported them.

But, anyway, we get down to where we were in early in the noon, Lieutenant came down and he got me and 2 other fellows were going to go on a patrol up the Rhine River, up the Rhine Hills, they had vineyards along the Rhine, steep banks. Well one of the fellows had a radio on his back and I guess we were looking for mortar targets and there were three of us and the lieutenant. So we climbed up the bank of the Rhine River Hill and he said "take a break now." Well, I was up against a tree and I had a K-ration and I started eating something out of it, a candy bar or something, and I could look right down on the Rhine River. Wow! There was not a boat in sight, not a boat in sight. Everybody had crossed over. But here I am, I was at the centuries old Rhine River and here I am looking down on it. In 1996 our association had a tour of Europe and we went to the same spot along the Rhine River and you get a boat ride on the Rhine and there were boats of all

kinds. There were motor boats, pleasure boats, barges; it looked like this expressway out here with so many boats. But that day there was not one boat on the river.

He said "Ok, let's go now." So, we started going up the hill creeping and crawling through the woods and everything and he finally said "Ok, I don't see anything. Let's go back." We were coming back and a machine gun opened up and it was one of our troops coming up the hill towards us and they had us pinned down, Geez, luckily there was a ledge there because we jumped over the ledge and kept yelling "This is Night Company! Stop the firing! Night Company!" bullets were spraying all over our head and finally they let us out and the two officers had words with each other and then they went up the hill where we were and we went back down the hill where they came from.

And going down the hill we walked by a dead German lying on the ground with his face up. So, me and my Catholic upbringing and training it stuck with me and I went back and I leaned right over that German and I said a prayer, what we call the Act of Contrition, a Catholic prayer, asking God to forgive him of his sins and stuff like that. So, I leaned right over his face and I said that prayer and sometimes they ask you "were you religious or did you have training?" and I said "Yeah, I did a lot of praying." I didn't see that many faces of the enemy but I did that day.

So, we got back to our squad and everybody was moving out to the next town and we get to the next town, the name of the town was Bad Emf. Now Bad in German means spring, a resort, a health spa, a rejuvenation of your mind, body and spirit. So, we get down

there and the order came down "Get your hair cut!" We look very disheveled, long hair, dirty necks, beards and everything. "Spruce up and get your hair cut." So, we cut each other hair, and this guy he really butchered me. He really gave me a bad cut and they always remember that, bad cuts and bad M's. And that is my story of the Rhine River.

So, after the Rhine River crossing, it was pretty wide open. It was early April and we came into the Autobahn, the German Highway, was really wide open. So, the various divisions got on those and we only covered about 25 miles a day, just sped on, not too much opposition. But then one day in April, we came upon the German concentration camp, Buchenwald. Now, I didn't see them because my company was about 20 miles away but they formed a task force, one of the Colonels, and that was something. They got some tanks and some infantrymen and they formed a task force, maybe a couple hundred men and they went out ahead of the main division. That's what they did, they send them out first to scout the area. They came across the concentration camp at Ohrdruf and the larger camp at Buchenwald and some of the fellows told the story how they shot the locks off the gate and went inside and brought all these emaciated prisoners, and all of the dead or dying. So used to the Germans watching them, but they saw the American Forces coming that they abandoned the camps to get out of there. Of course, prisoners are just roaming around, very emaciated and hardly living at all. I guess some of the fellows wrote up a story in the Golden Acorn news. I know that other divisions really get in a head of us. We didn't stay there long, they just saw them and went on. Troops coming in after took care of them, so I was told.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, we kept going, moved around. Oh yeah, Overhuf, got into this town that was known for winter sports. Went to name of the town but it had a ski jump there and some toboggan sleds and I think we had a counter attack for days. I saw a piece later, someone had cut it out for my folks at home because it was about our division, and they quoted one of the soldiers and this was the New York Times, and he said "We got here too late for the winter sports but the shooting sure was fine!"

Then we get to another town, Saalfeld, some guys killed going in there. I remember coming out of that town and we were on vehicles, trucks, and we were in a line moving out and I was in the back of the truck and an officer came by on a jeep and he said "Where is your Major?" Well I happen to see a Major go up ahead of him and I told him "That's him. He's up there on the right." It wasn't the one he was looking for but when he got up there, there was a railroad crossing and this other Major was hit. It was at a crossing about 200 yards, out in front in dense woods up on the hill and the firing came from there, and he got hit and that slowed up the line. And so they went up and tended to that and we got off the trucks and we got down into the road. And we started to set up the mortar thinking that we were going to find a gun up in the hills but the order never came down to fire. There was a tank on the railroad track and out in the distance was an observation tower from the hills, and that was burning. The tank put a round in it and burned it.

Then we had taken down our guns and we had to fill up on the wrong side of the boxcar, which was broken from the enemy fire. So we took the gun down and I was the last one out; I was clearing the ammunition, and very foolishly I sat down against the wheel of the boxcar for a couple minutes which gave that machine gun up in the woods to take a shot at me which he did. And the bullets were spraying all around and you could hear them hitting the boxcar. Well, I got out of there in a hurry! I was lucky that I didn't get hit. I could see mark of the bullet on the wheel there, it was shiny. It was a foolish thing to do anyway.

But, while I was there I saw this medic that had a couple of packs of supplies on him and the Red Cross on his helmet and his sleeve. He ran right out in front down the road because the forward group was around the bend of the road before we got there; must have been somebody hit because he ran right straight down that road. Geez, I thought that he was the bravest guy I ever saw. He just disappeared around the bend; I guess he was going to attend to the wounded up the hill.

So, we left that town finally, I don't know how. Then we kept moving forward and we got into a large city of Plauen, it was a large city! And a few days before we got in the Air Force had bombed it, it really leveled the place. But could you imagine the few days we got in that those German people had the bricks all piled up in the road, there weren't even dusty, the civilians. Everything was all neat and clean, tidy, the bricks were picked up, and the roads were cleared. My God, the war was still going on! But here they are cleaning up the mess.

So we kept going forward until we ended up in a small town about 4 miles from Czechoslovakia, and the little town, this was about May 6<sup>th</sup> and we were going to get up and move out and the word came down "Call it off!" And "What's going on?" Because they had made us pitch tents on-top of the hillside, had our tents out, and they say "The war is over!" Wow! And a whole regiment of Germans surrendered to our regiment, they were in trucks and vehicles. Some of our guys went amongst them taking cameras away from them, daggers, I mean. And my buddy, Donato, he got a hold of a camera and he had his shirt stuffed full of film he got out of some store and he was taking pictures all over the place. He got pictures of Germans surrendering to our division commander, of guys sitting by a tent; I still have those pictures now. When he came home he had them all developed, and I got a few negatives from him and fortunately developed my own so that I had sort of a reminder.

But anyway, Danny said "there is a pond down there in the middle of the town, lets go down and see if we can have a little swim." It was a warm spring day. So we get down there to this pond and I still have my long johns on, so I took my clothes off and took the scissors and cut the legs off the long johns and used them as bathing trunks. So we went in the water, on the way down there we had heard some singing and the other side of the pond, it was about, maybe, a half a size of a hockey rink, there were these Germans and they were washing up, too. They were our enemy two days before and now here they are singing "Lillie Marlene", the best song that ever came out of the war. A German song "Lilly Marlene", I think they sing it in many languages, Italian, French, German. And



they were, you know, washing up and we didn't bother them and they didn't bother us.

It was a nice warm day and we had a nice long swim.

We were probably there a few days and then they took all of our weapons away from us, steel helmets and left us with basic clothing. We found some field and we set up tents again and we were there a few days. Meanwhile they send us out on 10 mile hikes just to keep us in shape; to keep us out of trouble mostly. And then we evacuated the area and went back to what they called camp in France, it was Camp Lucky Strike, you probably heard of it, Oklahoma, Camp Oklahoma. It was a huge camp where troops were preparing to get on ships to go back to the states. Well we may have been there a week or so just hanging around doing nothing until we boarded on the, we got on the West Point. It is formerly called the U.S.S. America; they had changed it to the West Point. We had 2 divisions on that ship; I mean 2 regiments on that ship. The other regiment came back on different ships. It took us five days to come back into the port of New York. Were we happy to see the Statue of Liberty!

Funny thing how you are on a ship coming into New York City, I was out walking around and I went out on the forward deck. And they had a new guard who was a Marine guard that had a Thompson machine gun and there were 8 or 9 or 10 Japanese scientist. They were not soldiers, they were in civilian clothes and I observed this, they were pulling out slide rules and trying to figure out where they were or something. But anyway when we got right at home I saw a news reel, of course in those days they didn't have televisions and radios, you went to the movies and saw a news reel. That's how

they broadcast the news in those days, Movietone News, or Paramount News. We had a couple pictures, comedies and the coming attractions and the news reel. And it showed those Japanese Prisoners, they were captured in Germany. Now, years later I was reading someplace that the Japanese were in Germany finding out about atomic warfare. Of course the Germans perfected the rocket ship, the V-1 and V-2 rocket and the Japs were there to find out what the Germans knew about rocketry because I think that they were going to make a bomb, too. These were all scientist and that was what they were doing on the front of the ship when I looked out there. So, I put two and two together and said “yeah, they were captives from Germany that were sent back.”

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me go back and ask you some questions. When you were in England, did you get a chance to go into the little towns there or anything?

Dr. McAuliffe

No, I was a replacement and my division went over on the Queen Elizabeth in October and they were stationed in England quite awhile before they went over to the mainland and I got to talking to some of those fellows at the reunions and they lived in private homes there, you know. They got to do a little association with the native Englishmen, you know, in the pubs and stuff. But, as for me, as a replacement we didn't see any of that. We came straight from Scotland to South Hampton without even leaving the railroad. They took you straight over to the continent. But many troops trained in Ireland even, and they were in England maybe a good year before the invasion, but those fellows had a lot to do with having girlfriends and all that sort of stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you mentioned the V-1 and V-2's, did you ever see any of those?

Dr. McAuliffe

I never did where we were. I talked to fellows who did and they say that it sounds like a locomotive and all of the sudden the engine stops and that is when you have to worry because it is going to come down on you. But, ah, I came back to Belgium and I talked to the natives over there and up in Liege, Belgium, they took over 3,000 V-1. 3,000! They have them pinpointed on maps, just where they fell. Boy that is a lot in one town.

Mr. Misenhimer

When was the first time you got into combat?

Dr. McAuliffe

I would say around the middle of January, the 14<sup>th</sup> of January. The division was fighting early in December, I would say, before I got to them.

Mr. Misenhimer

So it was the last part of the Battle of the Bulge then?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you fire a lot of rounds during the war?

Dr. McAuliffe

Not really. I was surprised; we didn't get to fire it too much. Maybe because they were on the offensive and they were moving along pretty good. Maybe when we were on the defensive we might have fired more. But I remember one particular time our section,

mortar section, maybe early in the morning about one or two, we had to load up the jeep and the trailer with our gun and the rounds and we quietly went down this old country road and of course the Sergeant had the map and he was using a flashlight and he set the gun up, two guns to a squad. Set it up near a farmhouse, dug it in, started to commence the firing. They laid down a pattern, maybe of 30 rounds, and then maybe redirected direction and laid down another pattern and I remember "Geez, it was really deafening!" one round after another, you know and the base plate was in soft ground, what do you call it, recoil of the guns. It's just the base plate straight up in the air and kept pounding it to the dirt, the soft ground, you know. We would take it out and set it up again. The recoil would do that. But that was one of those times that I remember the real firing pattern. Then we just left the area and went back to our campsite, Bivooac, that is where we were. It really did a number on my hearing.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you ever attacked by German tanks?

Dr. McAuliffe

No. I talked to a lot of fellows who saw more action than I did, and they didn't see many tanks. During the early part of the Bulge, that's all they saw was tanks. But, ah, we saw some tanks. Sometimes they were moving up and you would jump on the tank and ride it up. I saw one tank destroyer, he was having a lot of fun, but it was a small German car, almost like a Volkswagen and he was running that tank back and forth over it and he had it flatten out about two feet in thickness. Just kept running back and forth on that thing, getting his jollies off.

But I saw another tank and I pulled up on the street next to it and he was firing down this long narrow street; at the end of maybe a couple hundred yards there was a bend in the road, but there was house down there and he was going down there but before he got down there he wanted to make sure that there was no gunmen back inside that house. So, that is the only time I saw a tank firing at something. He was just shooting down the end of that street.

Mr. Misenhimer

What army were you in?

Dr. McAuliffe

We were attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army, General Patton's Army. We were 8<sup>th</sup> corps. We got shifted around a lot, but most of the time we were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Army was in the most southern part of Germany. The 1<sup>st</sup> Army was in the Northern part.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see Patton?

Dr. McAuliffe

No. I talked to fellows who claimed they saw him. But my battalion commander, he got sick up in the Bulge and at one of the reunions I was talking to a lieutenant who knew him, this battalion commander, and he said "Yeah, he lives out in Arkansas now." So I said "I'm going to write him a letter."

So, I wrote some poems about the war and I sent them to the Colonel and he answered my letter. He thanked me for the poems and he said that he gave them to his grandson to look at and he said 'you know, I'm 91 now and my wife is 89. I use to know General

Patton before the war, we lived next to each other and up in the Bulge he came up to the battalion and he visited me.' He said 'I took him out into the woods and we were up near the foxhole and he crept up to two soldiers in the hole and he asked them their names and where they were from. Then he said, "You know you have to stay here don't you? Or it's going to be your ass." The General wrote that to me in a letter. And then he said 'you know, my wife and his wife use to go horseback riding together.' They use to ride horseback and sure enough a year or two after General Patton died, his wife was thrown off a horse and I think she broke her neck and died; Beatrice was his wife's name. But, the old Colonel said he knew Patton very well and that he visited. He has pictures in our division archives that shows Patton in a jeep. I guess that is the time he came up to visit the Colonel. Some of the guys said that they saw him, you know, the MP's and the engineers said that he would be out in the road directing traffic, swearing at some troops.

Mr. Misenhimer

What battalion were you in?

Dr. McAuliffe

I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the 347<sup>th</sup> regiment.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Dr. McAuliffe

Most frightening is when we come up out of Luxembourg and up into Belgium, back into Belgium, and we were at a bend in the road up to Manderfeld and I looked over in the ditch and I saw 5 guys lying motionless and I said "Dear God" About ten minutes later the rounds came in, several rounds and very close that you could see the smoke passing

over. None of us got hit but we were only a few feet away and that was very frightening because the concussion was very loud and you could feel it going through your body. So that was scary. But the times that I got shot at didn't scare me because the bullets were going by me. But after awhile you get use to it and a few seconds after then we pass it off. I suppose if you are under it was very, very severe, some bombardment, it would be a lot different. It didn't last more than a few minutes in my case.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of the officers you had over you?

Dr. McAuliffe

They were good officers. We had a lieutenant, a nice fellow. And the original captain that we had he was 6'3" and he played football for the University of Georgia and they called him Big Jake. Some of the guys didn't like him because he was very tough. One of the reunions one of the men said that "he drew a 45 at my head to get an answer out of me." I didn't think that was nice. He told him to do something and the kid didn't want to so he took a 45 out and put it up to his head.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was the morale in your outfit?

Dr. McAuliffe

The morale was good. I mean they went along and obeyed orders.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you ever under friendly fire?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, the time up in the Rhine River when we had the machine gun firing at us almost

point blank.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, near the end of the war we were coming at the end of the day; you're moving along and then when it comes to the end the day you move into a house to bed down. Well I entered into this house and our squad went into this house, and the first thing that came to my line of vision was a bookcase over the sofa and I said to myself that there had to be something behind those books. And I slipped them all out of there and I pulled out an officer's dagger, dress dagger. And I got it right here in the drawer in back of me. It is a real neat dagger, it has a blunt edge but there is an inscription on the blade in German 'All for the Father Land. Power to Deutschland' or something like that. And then the officer's uniform was on the top floor and nobody bothered to take it, it would be too cumbersome.

And then when those Germans surrendered to us, I got a Polish 9MM gun and a cheap Italian Beretta and a camera. When they gave up, those guys were taking everything from them. Then before I came home one of my friends gave me another dagger, a real sharp edge dagger and I got both of those. And before when we were down at the Rhine River I went into a house and there was an aluminum combination spoon and fork, they folded on each other, you know, I got that here. Then I had a lot of German, ah; what we use for the rifle is a rod, a cleaning rod. Take a swab of cloth on the end and draw it through the bore to clean the rifle; well the German had a chain, like a bicycle chain



almost and you fold it up and put it in your pocket and I had one of them. Then there was a German fighter plane out in the field, when he was shot down the motor had separated from the body and the body had melted metal on it and I ripped a piece off and stuck that in my pocket as a souvenir. So the prize ones are the two daggers I got. I gave away the pistol to a friend of mine. I have a lot of pictures, though, from Danny.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Axis Sallie on the radio?

Dr. McAuliffe

No. I heard of that, that was the one in Japanese theater?

Mr. Misenhimer

No, no, that was the one from Germany.

Dr. McAuliffe

Oh, Axis Sallie? No, I never did. I guess the fellows in England use to hear that because they had access to a radio.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, April the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1945, President Roosevelt died; do you remember hearing about that?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, we heard that over there.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the reaction of people?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, kind of saddened, you know. We didn't get all of the particulars but we knew that

he was dead. The word got around pretty fast. We were kind of wondering who the next one was.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now on May the 8<sup>th</sup> when Germany surrendered, did you have any kind of celebration?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes, the one we went into the town with the pond to swim and then that night was the first time we were allowed to have a little fire. You know, throw some twigs together and build a little fire and some guy, one of the fellows had a bottle of cognac or something, and they took a swig or something and that was the extent of the celebration.

I have a; that friend I told you about, he is still living in Fairfax, VA. The friend of mine that got the battlefield commission and he became an officer of L Company. Well, it was May 6<sup>th</sup> and he got a jeep and a driver and he went off behind the lines for two or three days and the Germans; the word didn't get around yet that the war was over, and he went up by himself and he encountered these huge German regiments and he talked with the Generals and he demanded their surrender. He had forty thousand surrender to him. He went to another camp and he had more surrender and he would lie to them and he told them that he was a Captain, he was only 21 years old, and he was a second lieutenant and he got the battlefield commission. But he kept lying to them telling them that he was an officer demanding that they surrender. Just a few years ago one of the company commanders had a note in his pocket and he gave it to me because I was the historian for my battalion and he wanted me to write up the story. He got a note from Major Lythers about setting up a prison camp, a temporary prison camp while we were

stationed over there and he wanted me to write up something. Fortunately, this officer I am talking about comes back and he called me up and he wanted information and I said “I got something for you that you might be able to use it.” And it was that note. He said “Gee, thank you.” Because he wanted to use it in his story about his captain but he wrote up that whole story and put it on our division website. So, he wrote up a little about Captain Miles and myself and how we were a part of it. We weren’t part of it, he just wanted to include us in the story. So, I told about us swimming there in the pond and the area. But that was some story, to go off by himself and demand that they surrender. The war was over but the German’s didn’t know it.

Mr. Misenhimer

I would like to get his name and number, do you have it handy?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, if you want to hold the line.....Thomas Stafford, 703-273-4151 in Fairfax, VA.

Now, he has a big story. He stayed in the Army and made a career out of and he ended up a Colonel and he met a German woman over here and he went back there and married her. He has another story about the town of Plaven where his company held a bridge and they had to hold near the end of the war. But he has some good stories. (Editors note: I interviewed Mr. Stafford.)

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any USO shows anywhere?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, we saw one right at the end the war. It wasn’t the USO, it was our division put it

on ourselves for the troops. Well some of the troops organized it but I never saw a real one.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Dr. McAuliffe

Only going from Scotland to South Hampton where you stopped in the railroad station and the Red Cross was there handing out donuts and coffee; right in the railroad station where the troops were moving onto the trains.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were overseas, did you get your mail with any regularity?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes, it came regularly. I never got too much mail. My division emblem was a Golden Acorn on a green background and I wanted to let my folks know at home which division I was with, you couldn't write the number down, but my sister was at state college here and her newspaper was the acorn because there were a lot of oak trees around state college here and I wrote home something about that, mentioning the acorn but she thought that I was trying to tell her that I was in Aachen, Germany. So we laughed about that when I got home.

Mr. Misenhimer

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Dr. McAuliffe

Well, I just got the European, the EAME; the three Battle Stars and the German Occupation; Good Conduct; the French medal; the Victory Medal; and of course in

retrospect, I think General Eisenhower years after the war he wrote out a lot of it all those that got the Combat Badge should get the Bronze Star medal, so being in the infantry we got the Combat Badge and we automatically got the Bronze Star.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, you didn't get the CIB, did you? Did you get the Combat Infantryman Badge?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes, I did. They gave it to us when we were up there in Germany. They handed them out one day. I didn't get the other medals at all until about 20 years ago and I wrote to my congressman who I was and what I did.

Now, I had ear damage in basic training, I was on training on the rifle range all day and when I got back to the barracks I couldn't hear. They didn't give you ear protection in those days and we were right up next to the other guy, he was suppose to be coaching him and then with the mortar it got worse. So when I got home, I was on furlough, I went and saw my family doctor and he was a colonel, medical man and he said "Ok, I'm going to send you up to Ft. Devens to see a doctor up there." So they evaluated me and they sent me to a hospital down in Butler, PA and down there all the fellows were hard of hearing and deaf! They had Air Force, Army and Navy and I stayed there for three months and they gave me treatment, lip reading courses and you get out of there and they discharge you with a hearing aid. I've been wearing hearing aids for past 65 years. That is why I don't hear you to well today. But, the hearing aides I got now are pretty good, I can hear good. Now it seems that people our age, everybody is wearing them but I had

bad hearing through the war. I had to wear hearing aids going to dental school; after the war I went to dental school.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life when you got out?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yes I did. I had a period where I couldn't eat very well and I lost my appetite, I couldn't eat. I don't know what it was, psychological or what but I kept it to myself and I gradually got over it. I kind of liked the army after all those school regimentation I had. I thought it was a piece of cake. I mean, the food was a lot better and I was getting in the institution.

Mr. Misenhimer

When were you discharged?

Dr. McAuliffe

I was discharged on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the highest rank you got to?

Dr. McAuliffe

I was a PFC.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you use your GI Bill for anything?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, I went to dental school. I went to Georgetown University Dental School down in Washington. 100% of our class were all veterans from the Army, Air Force, Navy and

then I went into practice with another dentist as an associate and the Korean War broke out and I got drafted again. Because they needed dentist and doctors, but I didn't go overseas, I stayed in Washington D.C. I was stationed at Ft. McNair for almost a year and a half. It was just like being in private practice, only you wore a uniform. I didn't have to do any training or anything. They overlooked my hearing difficulty, I still wore a hearing aids.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you go into the Korean War?

Dr. McAuliffe

I went in November 1952 and I got out in February 1954 and I was stationed all the time at Ft. McNair, Washington D.C. I lived in bachelors quarters on the post.

Mr. Misenhimer

You have had a lot of reunions, right?

Dr. McAuliffe

I've been to a lot of reunions and I just got back from Arizona for one.

Mr. Misenhimer

You are the Historian for your division, is that right?

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah, our division just disbanded last fall but they have the legacy group which is running it. Those are the sons and daughters of the veterans and they are doing a good job. Some of them wanted to quit and some of them didn't. But, I didn't find out about our division association having a group until maybe 1990 or so. Ever since then I have

been going to reunions. Battle of the Bulge has a national organization and I founded a chapter up here in Massachusetts in 1992. We were the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter, they got 55 now.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else that you recall from your time in WWII?

Dr. McAuliffe

Oh, those that I told you are mainly highlights, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer

So, again, I want to thank you for your time today and thank you for your service to our country.

Dr. McAuliffe

Yeah and I appreciate what you are doing for everybody. I had an interview when I went over to Belgium and some people are running a museum up there in Belgium. It was a nice museum, a personal museum and he took me out to the headquarters in Belgium and some fellow interviewed me like you. I had more interviews for high school, you know, but not really a long one.

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