

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**

**Nimitz Education and Research Center**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**James M. Jones  
Corpus Christi, TX  
March 29, 2011  
Company M 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion  
387<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment  
97<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is March 29, 2011. I am interviewing Mr. James M. Jones by telephone. His phone number is 361-852-5298. His address is 601 Peerman, Corpus Christi, TX 78411. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research Center, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Pete, 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.

Mr. Jones

You're very welcome. Well, thank you.

Mr. Misenhimer

The first thing I like to do is read this agreement with the museum. When I do this in person, I hand the paper to them and let them read and sign it but since this is by telephone let me read it to you. "Agreement Read." Is that ok with you?

Mr. Jones

Fine.

Mr. Misenhimer

Next thing I like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out sometime several years down the road we try to get in contact with a veteran and he's has moved or something. Do you have a son or daughter or someone we could contact if we needed to?

Mr. Jones

My son, James M. Jones Jr. Presently he is living with me at 601 Peerman, Corpus Christi, TX 78411.

Mr. Misenhimer

Does he have a separate phone number or cell phone?

Mr. Jones

He's got a cell phone.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would that number be? Do you know it off hand?

Mr. Jones

Oh, no I don't.

Mr. Misenhimer

Alright, if you were to move away he would stay there then, right?

Mr. Jones

Yeah, I got that phone number

Mr. Misenhimer

Ok.

Mr. Jones

It's 254-681-5190

Mr. Misenhimer

Alright. We like to get a cell number because no matter where he moves he will keep that same number.

Mr. Jones

That is probably true.

Mr. Misenhimer

What is your birthdate?

Mr. Jones

August 29, 1923, that makes me 87 right now.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. Jones

I was born in Austin, TX.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Jones

I have a brother, I think born March the 6<sup>th</sup> 1924, no, no he is 3 ½ years older than I am.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that the one you mentioned that just passed away?

Mr. Jones

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

About three weeks ago you said.

Mr. Jones

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that the only brother that you had?

Mr. Jones

Yes, I have a sister who is also gone.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was she involved in war work during WWII?

Mr. Jones

Uh, no, she was still in high school.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Jones

Well, we were without food for awhile. My dad was a lawyer and he got paid with marble tables and sewing machines and that sort of thing so we didn't have much money living there in Austin. And we had a lot of meals that were just popcorn and we had a lot of vegetables from truck farms around the Austin area there. When he couldn't pay the electric bill we did our studying by lamp and candlelight. So that was during the depression and eventually when I was twelve my father and mother separated, probably because of the lack of money. So, that was my early life before I moved to south Texas, where I lived one year in Corpus Christi and the rest of the time I went to school in Alice.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you move to Alice?

Mr. Jones

Let's see, 1937. I graduated in 1941 from high school in Alice.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you go into the service?

Mr. Jones

Well, when I graduated school from high school in Alice, I was a freshman at A&M that same year and I was in the ROTC, of course, and I joined the enlisted reserve corps in December 1942 and then they called me into the Army on March of 1943. They let me finish my semester and then they picked me up in a troop train with the rest of the Aggie's in my class and took us to CA for basic training.

Mr. Misenhimer

What date did they pick you up on that troop train?

Mr. Jones

Oh, I have no idea; it was probably the first part of June of 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

On December 7, 1941 when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Jones

Yes, I was on a bench outside the dormitory there listening to the radio. As it so happened, I heard the president speak about it.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you think that would affect you?

Mr. Jones

Well I knew it would affect me because when they declared war they moved the Army into the dormitories with us. That cut down a lot of activity that went on.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you joined the enlisted reserve that would have been the Army of course, right?

Mr. Jones

Yes, Army Enlisted Reserve Corps.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you choose the Army because of A&M or did you have another reason to choosing the Army?

Mr. Jones

Right, right.

Mr. Misenhimer

The ROTC at A&M is the Army, of course.

Mr. Jones

Well, it has other branches also.

Mr. Misenhimer

Does it now?

Mr. Jones

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Back then it just had the Army, is that right?

Mr. Jones

That's right. Obviously they had the Air Force in there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Early on the Air Force was part of the Army.

Mr. Jones

Right, the US Army Air Corps

Mr. Misenhimer

You went to CA for your basic training?

Mr. Jones

Yes, Camp Roberts.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about your basic training.

Mr. Jones

Well it was heavy weapons infantry training where we fired all the big heavy machine gun, 30 caliber. And we learned how to fire mortars, 81 MM mortar. Then later on I was assigned to a heavy weapons company. But first I decided that I wanted to go to the Army Air Corps and after I finished basic training I transferred to the Army Air Corps and then they shipped me to Buckley Field, CO and there I took all the tests to see if I qualified for pilot, bombardier or navigator and then they shipped me to college training detachment. It was in Ft. Hayes, KS where I spent 4 months and about that time they had the Battle of the Bulge in Germany and they decided that they didn't need anymore pilots, navigators or bombardiers, so they shipped me back to the Army.



They sent me to Ft. Leonard Wood, MO where I joined the 97<sup>th</sup> infantry division and there I trained again, took basic training, more unit training with an infantry division. And then they shipped the whole division to Ft. Ord, CA and we had amphibious training for about three months where we landed on the beach everyday. That was out at San Luis Obispo, CA for that amphibious training. And then we went to Camp Cook, which is near Vandenberg Air Base where we did training and also packed our boxes to go to the Pacific. About the time we were ready to ship out they had trouble over there in Germany and they decided to change our route to go to Europe, so we unpacked and repacked with winter clothes and we went across the country on troop trains all the way to Camp Kilmer in NJ where within three weeks we were onboard a ship there at Staten Island. We had an experience there, they put us on the Staten Island ferry, the whole battalion on one ferry and we had to stand up until we got to Staten Island and we got on one of the liberty ships, troop ship and went to Le Havre, France. We were in a convoy where the ship, every 10 minutes or so would change course.

Mr. Misenhimer

Zigzagged

Mr. Jones

Yeah, zigzagged and there must have been 50 or so ships that was in this convoy.

Mr. Misenhimer

What date did you depart to go over there?

Mr. Jones

Oh Boy, about the end of February 1944, no wait a minute 1945 I meant. We went over there and landed in Le Havre, France where we got off the ship and went to one of those;

they had cigarette camps over there and I went to Camp Lucky Strike. But we didn't stay there but a couple of weeks and then we got onboard on those 40 and 8's, I don't know if you have ever heard of them or not?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes I have, that's one of those small box cars.

Mr. Jones

I was on those for three of four days and went to the Rhine River near Cologne, between there and Düsseldorf. And there was where we met the Germans across the river. So, we stayed there for awhile and then we crossed the river and we went through central Germany and then on into Czechoslovakia. I got credit for two battle stars. I was only in combat about 2 ½ months and we wound up in Czechoslovakia where we met the Russians in May of 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that at the Elbe River?

Mr. Jones

Yeah over there, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Which Army were you in over there?

Mr. Jones

I think we were in the Third Army.

Mr. Misenhimer

Patton's Army, right.

Mr. Jones

Yeah, later on we were in a different Army, down in Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Misenhimer

In the 97<sup>th</sup> division what company were you in?

Mr. Jones

Company M 387<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment, 97<sup>th</sup> infantry division. I was company M, which was heavy weapons and the third battalion.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your job in the heavy weapons company?

Mr. Jones

I was on a machine gun platoon and that is heavy, water cooled. I wound up as a staff sergeant in charge of a section of machine gun. That is two machine guns. And then when they declared the end of the war they pulled us back to near Bamberg, Germany and put us in tents out in the woods and told us that we couldn't celebrate it or anything and within two weeks we were onboard on the 40 and 8's going back to France. So, we wound up in Camp Lucky Strike, I think, Old Gold or one of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, there is Chesterfield, Old Gold and Lucky Strike and I'm not sure what else.

Mr. Jones

Yeah, I think it was Old Gold when we came out. So we got on another troop ship and we came back and we were some of the first troops to get back to New York City and we went to Camp Shanks where they sent us on a 30 day leave and I came back to Alice; that is where my family was still at the time. And after 30 days I got on a troop train and

went to Ft. Bragg, NC and we were there for about 3 weeks when they dropped the bombs in Japan and that was where I was in a barracks there. And then they had the surrender, I forgotten the date of it but ...

Mr. Misenhimer

August 15, 1945.

Mr. Jones

Yeah, so I got on another troop train and went 6 days and 6 nights to Seattle where we loaded on another troop ship and we were out on the way to Japan when they signed the peace treaty. So we went all the way over there and they weren't ready for us in Japan, because it was so soon after they signed the peace treaty. So, they sent us up past Luzon to Cebu where they got us off and we double timed through the port area which was all bombed out and got back on a LST and then back on a troop ship and we went on to Japan at that time. We went through Tokyo Bay, the battleship *Missouri* was still docked there, and we went to Yokohama and that was about three weeks after they signed the peace treaty and we were in Japan, so that was traveling quite a bit there. We got on a troop train there at Yokohama and went through Tokyo and we saw all the bombed out area where they had fired bombed. It was strips, about a thousand feet wide that were completely burned out, there would be a strip of buildings about a thousand feet and that was all the way through Tokyo along the railroad. And we got to an air base there on the edge of north Tokyo and we stayed there and then later on we went by convoy and we were some of the first troops in those northern prefects. We wound up in Utsomyuia where we guarded different areas while we were in occupation. I finally got enough points after four months; also while I was there I went down to another air base that was

part of the cadre training recruits that they sent directly over there. So I had a little of that operation, also. I was still a Staff Sergeant.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you are still with the 97<sup>th</sup> division?

Mr. Jones

Still with the 97<sup>th</sup> division until they pulled me out and sent me back to Yokohama where I caught another troop ship home. And I got back to Seattle about the middle of March of 1946 and then I got on a troop train again and came on back to Ft. Sam where I was discharged.

Mr. Misenhimer

What date where you discharged?

Mr. Jones

About the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, somewhere in there, 1946.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me go back and ask you some questions.

Mr. Jones

Of course I didn't end my military career.

Mr. Misenhimer

Ok, go on.

Mr. Jones

Well, I signed up for the reserves and I stayed in the reserves while I went back to A&M that fall. Picked up where I left off when I went earlier and eventually I got back in the ROTC, I wanted to finish out my contract that I originally had. So when I graduated in

June of 1949, I also got a Second Lieutenant commission in the infantry and then immediately I got into the National Guard here in Corpus Christi, part of the 36<sup>th</sup> infantry division, 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion. Then I went through the ranks for 16 years, I had to get out when I was a Major. I was an executive officer of the battalion when I got out and went into the Army reserves and there I was promoted to Lt. Colonel because I had completed my schooling and qualified. And I got into a school unit where we went out to different National Guard and Army reserve and taught classes in the MOS area. And I stayed in that for 10 years, so my earlier reserve time I had 14 years in the Army reserves and I got out when I became age 53. My last three years in the Army reserves was teaching a command and general staff class, which I had completed myself.

All this time I had a degree in Civil Engineering, which then I got a job with the highway department when I graduated from A&M and I worked 38 years for the Texas Highway department. Most of it was building freeways; I was an expressway engineer here in Corpus Christi for 13 years building expressways. So, all together I had 33 years and 9 months military time while I was working for the highway department. And that was about it, now what were your questions?

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were in Europe, what was your first combat?

Mr. Jones

Sometime in March.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where was it that it happened?

Mr. Jones

Oh, we were on one side of the river just keeping the Germans on their side I guess. We had patrols that went across the river, our division did, but I didn't get into those. Except we set up the machine guns and were ready in case they came across the river. There near Cologne.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now in March and April there were still some pretty good fighting going on over there, I think?

Mr. Jones

Yes sir. We relieved the prisoners in some of the prisons as we went through.

Mr. Misenhimer

Are you talking about the concentration camps?

Mr. Jones

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Which one of those did you release?

Mr. Jones

I don't remember which ones they were.

Mr. Misenhimer

Ok, there was Buchenwald, Auschwitz....

Mr. Jones

No, no not those big ones, they were smaller.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it Jewish people that they had in them?

Mr. Jones

Uh, no, mainly prisoner of war.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, POWs, ok. American, English or all different ones?

Mr. Jones

Well, some of them were Russians. We met the Russians up there and my division got credit for the last round fired in Europe. There is a monument in Ft. Benning, GA to that effect.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of round was that, rifle or artillery?

Mr. Jones

Rifle round.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you ever under artillery fire when you were over there?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, lots of time. Also, German 88's on the tanks.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was a wicked weapon wasn't it?

Mr. Jones

Uh-huh.



Mr. Misenhimer

Were you attacked by tanks?

Mr. Jones

No I wasn't, thank goodness. But I saw some. In this infantry division I was in, we got credit for over 30,000 miles as a division. So we did a lot of traveling.

Mr. Misenhimer

30,000 miles, does that include going to Japan and all of that?

Mr. Jones

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, that is a lot of miles.

Mr. Jones

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any dogfights between our planes and theirs over there?

Mr. Jones

One time, yes. Also I saw a lot of bombers going overhead.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you were there right after the Battle of the Bulge was over then?

Mr. Jones

Yes, I was in the Ruhr pocket and also Central Germany campaign. I got those battle stars.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider your most frightening time over there?

Mr. Jones

Oh, under artillery shelling. Also, my division went in some of the forests looking for those, I can think of the name of what they called it, oh werewolves. Yeah, we were looking for werewolves there for awhile there going through the forest.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you find any?

Mr. Jones

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

I think that was kind of a false rumor.

Mr. Jones

I think so too, because we looked.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, they had spread the rumor that some of the German troops were going to go back into the woods and continue to fight for years, I don't know. I never talked to anybody that has found any of them.

Mr. Jones

(laughing) No.

Mr. Misenhimer

What are some other things that happened to you there in Europe?

Mr. Jones

Lets see, I really cant think of anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was anyone in your machine squad wounded or killed?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, we lost our Lieutenant, he was a West Pointer and our platoon leader.

Mr. Misenhimer

What happened?

Mr. Jones

Well we were over there in Czechoslovakia, he was a lieutenant that they must have taught him that every time someone started to fire to stand up and look around. He was walking past a driveway and he got somebody who was looking for a hoe in a barn back in the back there fired a burp gun at him and of course it killed him, hit him in the head. He was from San Antonio that is where his parents were. I called them when I got back to San Antonio and told them about how he died. That was when I was getting my discharge.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you actually meet any of the Russians?

Mr. Jones

Oh, yeah. They were already celebrating the end of it too. They pulled us out of there and stuck us in the woods so we couldn't do too much celebrating.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever have any relationship with the German People?

Mr. Jones

Just farmers, when we were moving we would stop in the evening and take over a farm house for bedding and what have you.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were they friendly enough?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah they were friendly.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the French people?

Mr. Jones

Didn't get in contact with them much, they didn't give us a pass into the town or anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

You didn't get to Paris then?

Mr. Jones

No. Later, I went on a cruise and went to Paris.

Mr. Misenhimer

But not in the military?

Mr. Jones

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned these forty and eight's, tell me what a forty and eight is?

Mr. Jones

Its kind of like a small boxcar, it will carry 40 men or 8 horses. And what they do is they spread hay out on the floor and they give you a can of DDT to take with you because there is usually lice in the hay and they go down and they pull you slow, not to fast and every time they stop, of course they don't have bathrooms or don't have kitchens. There is no way for you to get from one boxcar to the next unless the train is stopped. So every time a train is stopped everybody would jump off and go to the bathroom, no matter whether it was in a town or wherever it was. (laughing) They fed us; they came to a stop and then they put out the emergent heaters and stuff so you could clean up your mess kit and we eat then and jump back on the train and away we would go. All of it was on the ground. Yeah, that is what they were, just little old boxcar. The 40 men had to lay a head to foot and when one rolled over they all had to roll over.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were up towards the frontlines did you dig a foxhole everyday or what?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, it was usually just a slit trench. You know what that is.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, it is just a lengthy....

Mr. Jones

That is where your body is just below the surface.

Mr. Misenhimer

Six feet long and maybe a foot deep or something like that.

Mr. Jones

We never stayed in one place long enough to dig a foxhole.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you find any foxholes that the Germans had left there?

Mr. Jones

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the POWs that you rescued, what kind of physical shape were they in?

Mr. Jones

To tell you the truth some of those Russians were all missing an arm. They fixed them up real good.

Mr. Misenhimer

You think that they were amputated them once they were captured?

Mr. Jones

I think so.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Americans or the English?

Mr. Jones

Oh, the ones we saw had been fed properly. Of course this was late in the war.

Mr. Misenhimer

Starting in January of 1945 some of them had been on a long march, 600 mile march just trying to stay ahead of the Russians.

Mr. Jones

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

And some of those people didn't get fed to well. They came out in pretty poor condition.

Mr. Jones

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you catch many Germans?

Mr. Jones

Yeah, they were all surrendering. There was one time, since I was a section leader they sent me over to a school and there was a whole battalion of Germans there and they had thrown all their weapons and everything in a big pile there and they had a bunch of old beat up busses and I was suppose to round them up, get them all loaded and of course we had to search them too. Put them on these busses and I had this machine gun up front and I was back in the rear and we started out about 50 miles to an internment camp and the first thing you know, some of the busses started conking out on us and of course they pulled over to the side, you know. So I had to stay back with all of the broken down ones and finally we got them all to the proper location but it was about midnight that night.

We started out in the daylight. (laughing) Boy that was a job, trying to keep up with that many prisoners.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many people did you have to help you?

Mr. Jones

Just the two jeeps.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's all?

Mr. Jones

Yes sir, we were just going to lead in a convoy in those old beat up busses until we got them all there. That was exciting.

Mr. Misenhimer

Who was driving the busses?

Mr. Jones

Oh I don't know, it was them.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was Germans, I mean?

Mr. Jones

Yeah, they were old German busses.

Mr. Misenhimer

Of course they were probably anxious to get to camp weren't they?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, they were through with it. But you always got some nut that you have to watch.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever have anything to do with the SS?

Mr. Jones

Uh no, I don't think so.



Mr. Misenhimer

They were the ones who were pretty hard to get along with.

Mr. Jones

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now April 12<sup>th</sup> of 1945, President Roosevelt died, do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, I was in one of the towns searching the buildings while that was going on. We found out about it at that time while we were; we had to go through the buildings looking for weapons and what have you.

Mr. Misenhimer

These were towns that had been liberated?

Mr. Jones

Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you find many weapons?

Mr. Jones

No, of course they probably had them there but we didn't find them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there still German soldiers in those buildings or had they already gone out?

Mr. Jones

No, there were a few in there. They didn't give us any trouble.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you heard about Roosevelt, what was the reaction people had to that?

Mr. Jones

Well I don't remember. We certainly didn't celebrate.

Mr. Misenhimer

Of course on May 8<sup>th</sup> when Germany surrendered, you said they wouldn't let you celebrate then right?

Mr. Jones

No they wouldn't. We were out in the woods by that time out at Bamberg. That is where they put us on the forty and eights to take us back. You see we were scheduled; the reason we did that we were scheduled to do beach landings in Japan and we had amphibious training so we were Johnny on the spot and the last troops over there. We were one of the last two divisions to get to Europe. The other one was the 46<sup>th</sup> infantry and they were down in the Philippines.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Jones

Oh they were very good.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any A&M graduates among them?

Mr. Jones

No. Our platoon leader was a West Pointer, the one that got killed.

Mr. Misenhimer

He was pretty strict on things, was he?

Mr. Jones

Yeah, I was his radio operator there sometime too. I was pretty close to him.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Axis Sallie on the radio there?

Mr. Jones

No, I don't think so. That was over in the Pacific I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

No, that was Tokyo Rose.

Mr. Jones

Yeah, that's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Axis Sallie was over there in Germany.

Mr. Jones

No, we didn't have any radios.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was the morale in you outfit?

Mr. Jones

Oh very good.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you ever under friendly fire?

Mr. Jones

Oh yes, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What happened?

Mr. Jones

Oh, mainly artillery.

Mr. Misenhimer

They got the wrong coordinates or what happened?

Mr. Jones

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the medics, did you see much of the medics?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, they had a medic with us.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of the medics?

Mr. Jones

He was assigned to each platoon. Oh they knew what they were doing.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see the signs "Kilroy was here"?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, I saw some of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs from WWII?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, from Europe I brought back some German daggers and a .32 pistol.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you still have them?

Mr. Jones

Yes. When I went to Japan I brought back two *Samurai* swords.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any USO shows anywhere?

Mr. Jones

Yes, I saw Bob Hope when I was training in CA. I got a three day pass and went into Los Angeles and saw a football game and also went to the, uh, canteen there.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Stage Door Canteen?

Mr. Jones

Yeah, I went there one time and the Andrew Sisters were there that night.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was pretty nice?

Mr. Jones

Yeah, it was crowded, you could hardly move it was so crowded.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Jones

Yes, they came out to the battlefield, actually. They had a little trailer there and we had some coffee and a donut.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it men or women or both?

Mr. Jones

It was both. And when I was in Japan I saw one of their USO shows, I saw Dennis O'Connor and Leo Durocher was there. It was in a hangar. That was crowded.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider your worst day?

Mr. Jones

In combat?

Mr. Misenhimer

Right, uh-huh.

Mr. Jones

Well getting into the city in Czechoslovakia. We were pinned down quite awhile there. We had to go through a railroad crossing and it was way down low and we had to climb the banks on each side to go into the town.

Mr. Misenhimer

What town was that, do you know?

Mr. Jones

Uh, I don't know but it had an airfield. I thought it was Heaton or something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got to Japan what did you think of the conditions over there?

Mr. Jones

Well since we were the first troops in there they hadn't cleaned up any of the bombing area that I told you about in Tokyo and we drove down from Tokyo going north, we were some of the first troops into the prefects of. All the old men and young boys came out and saluted us as we went by. They hid all of their women for two or three months, they thought we were going to rape and plunder. That was interesting. And they had the honey wagons over there and you had to watch and not hit one.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have much interaction with the Japanese people?

Mr. Jones

No, just whenever we went into town but they were very friendly. They didn't want us to hurt them.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said when they saluted you, did they make a salute like we do?

Mr. Jones

Yeah. We didn't mess with them. They had them around cleaning mess halls and whatever but I am sure we were paying them. The only problem over there in Japan is that we weren't allowed to eat any of their food or drink their water because it was all contaminated. In Germany we had trouble there too. All those farm houses that we stayed in, they had attics or you could go up and sleep in the hay and most of them had a deep pit right by their well where they dumped all the stuff from the cow pens and you

know what that did to the water. And besides that they had their animals in another room in the house. The house smelled almost like a barn. They were in one end of it and the cows and horses were in the other end.

Mr. Misenhimer

There is a different life over there.

Mr. Jones

Yeah it is.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else that you recall from your time in Japan?

Mr. Jones

Uh, well when I was in Yokohama, the sergeants and everybody was pulling KP there and while I was on KP there was a building there that had, like a two story barracks and it caught on fire and I ran down there and they had a hose tied to a fire plug and all that would come out of it was a trickle of water so a lot of them lost their souvenirs, clothes and everything, their bags were in the barracks. They didn't get them out; they got everybody out of the building but let the whole building burn down. They didn't have any fire department.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got out did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Jones

Well, not much. I was in a restaurant pretty soon after I got back and somebody slammed the door and I went down on the floor. (laughing) Sounded just like a artillery barrage hit. Yeah, that is about all.



Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions of your outfit?

Mr. Jones

Yes, they have had a bunch of them but they aren't having them anymore, there are too many that have died off. I went to about six reunions, they had about 12. I went to Atlanta, New Orleans, Dallas, oh where else.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was this just the whole 97<sup>th</sup> division or your regiment or what?

Mr. Jones

No, just our company. I think they are still having divisions. I don't get the notices anymore. The person that organized ours died, so it kind of died with him.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you use your GI Bill for anything?

Mr. Jones

Yes, I built a home and of course I went to A&M on the GI Bill. Finished my degree.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said you got two battle stars, what other medals and ribbons did you get?

Mr. Jones

Oh, I got a bronze star, I got the combat infantry badge, also had an expert infantry badge.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you get the bronze star for?

Mr. Jones

I guess for being there. Back there after the war they gave them out. When I retired from the Army Reserve unit I got a Meritorious service medal. Of course I had the good conduct, I had the three theater ribbons, and I had the Army of occupation ribbon.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that for Germany, Japan or both?

Mr. Jones

Uh, just Japan and then I got the Army reserve medal. I can't think of the others.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else that you recall from your time in the service?

Mr. Jones

Well, lets see.....no, not right off.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were in the Pacific were you in any typhoons?

Mr. Jones

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you went to Japan or back or while you were there?

Mr. Jones

They had one but it went through Okinawa about that time. I had a cousin there that rode it out. They had to go up in the hills where the tombs were. It tore all their tents down.

Mr. Misenhimer

Ok, thank you for your time today and for your service to our country.

Mr. Jones

Thank you. They gave us a jeep and trailer you know to take the machine guns forward.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you always had to carry them around and they were heavy huh?

Mr. Jones

Oh yeah, the tripod weighs about 50 pounds.

Mr. Misenhimer

Two pieces or three?

Mr. Jones

Just two and then you got ammo bearers. That can of ammo was 250 rounds and it was kind of heavy too.

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