

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

Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with
Paul "Red" Davidson
35167672
Cpl.
Headquarters Company 5th
B Battery 530 Field Artillery
Cannoneer 864
USA

Interview by
John Tombaugh and Peg Van Meter

Paul "Red" Davidson
35167672
Cpl
Cannoneer 864
HQ Co 5th B Battery 530 FA
USA

Medals Earned:
American Defense Ribbon
American Theater Ribbon
EAME Theater Ribbon w/ 2
Bronze Star per WD GO #33-45
Good Conduct Ribbon
Marksman Rifle

Original Interview by
John B. Tombaugh and Peg Van Meter
completed
June 11, 2005

My name is John Tombaugh and Peg Van Meter and I are interviewing Mr. Paul "Red" Davidson on June 11, 2005.

Mr. Tombaugh

Would you please state your name and address.

Mr. Davidson

Paul "Red" Davidson, PO Box 100, Leiters Ford, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

What were your parents names and where were they born?

Mr. Davidson

Thomas M. and Laura Bell McIntyre Davidson; my father came here from Ohio to homestead with his father and mother and I don't know where they were born.

Mr. Tombaugh

When were you born?

Mr. Davidson

On August 8, 1917.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where did you attend school?

Mr. Davidson

I attended school at Leiters Ford, Indiana and graduated in 1935.

Mr. Tombaugh

What did you do after school?

Mr. Davidson

I pitched hay in the summertime. I then went to work in Clarks Restaurant in South Bend, Indiana in 1936.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where were you on December 7, 1941?

Mr. Davidson

I was in Houston, Texas walking down the street and along came a Army truck. They stopped and the MP's got out and said: "Get in, your going back to the base." That's how I learned we had been bombed.

Mr. Tombaugh

When did you go into the service?

Mr. Davidson

I went into service September 5, 1941.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where did you take basic?

Mr. Davidson

At Camp Wallace, Texas.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you remember the conditions of the Camp?

Mr. Davidson

Basically it was a new camp which was located on the flats halfway between Houston and Galveston, Texas. Everything was done within the ordinary Army barracks and on the sea shell roads. I didn't get out of the camp much to see around the area.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where did you enter into the military?

Mr. Davidson

I was drafted and entered at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

How did you get to Texas?

Mr. Davidson

At Fort Benjamin Harrison, I was sitting in the barracks and in came a fellow from Leiters Ford. He had been in the Army for fifteen years, I suppose, and he was in the reassignment division down there. He came over and said: "Would you like to go into town and have lunch?"

I said: "Yes." So we went in and were talking and asked me where I would like to go. I said: "Do I have a choice?"

He said: "I don't know, maybe we can arrange it. Let's go back by the office and I will see what is coming up tomorrow."

So we went back and he looked it over and there were several places he mentioned and he said: "Here's one at Camp Wallace, Texas. It's a coast artillery outfit, at least you will be warm this winter."

I said: "Russ, I think I would like that." So the next day they came around and called my name and I was on the train that afternoon. I wound up at Camp Wallace which was assigned by Russell Appleman.

I was at Camp Wallace until Christmas time because I remember when they were sending us out of there everybody had goodies from home and it all wound up in the corner of the barracks because they couldn't take the goodies with them.

They would read off a list on the board and you pack your clothes to ship out. I was on the board four times before I was shipped out. I wound up at Fort Screven, Georgia as part of the 252nd Coast Artillery and it was a division made up of North Carolina National Guard.

In February of 1942 we went to the island of Trinidad off the coast of Venezuela. I suppose this acted as a guard of the southern

entrance to the United States. They figured if an invasion came they would come through there. We were there from Feb. of '42 to March of '44. We then came back; of course we had big guns and all they had to do was put wheels under what we had and then we were classed as field artillery. They transferred us to field artillery and gave us two months training and then they sent us to Italy.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you remember how you got over there.

Mr. Davidson

En route to Trinidad we were on the SS Evangeline which was a converted passenger liner. We always embarked by alphabet. They called us by name and I started up the gang plank. My best buddy to this day is Roy Davis and he was right behind me. I knew he was there because anytime we did anything he was right there.

I turned and said: "Where the hell you going?"

He looked up at me and said: "Just following you." I just about fell off of the gang plank laughing.

While en route we had a stop over in San Juan, Puerto Rico. We didn't have any money so he went one way and I went the other way on the ship. He came back and had found somebody that loaned him two dollars. We went into San Juan and we passed two or three guys that had been drinking. We came to this nice shinney place all polished and everything and went in and ordered a beer. He threw his dollar up on the counter and got back a dime. Well forty-five cents for a beer back then was more than we could take, so we left there and went to another place where we found a dive where we could buy beer for a quarter. We had a couple more beers. We then had a dime left and we asked the bartender if there was anything we could get for a dime?

He said: "Yes, two shots of rum."

I said: "Give them to us." So we had the rum and went back to the ship broke.

He said: "You go one way and I'll go the other way to see if we can get some more money." When I got back he had six dollars.

I said: "How in the world did you get six dollars?"

He said: "I got it."

We went into town and we did pretty good on six bucks. So then we got back on the ship and went on down to Trinidad. There we lined up for pay. I got my money and I owed Roy some money.

When he stepped up to get paid the Captain said: "You don't get paid until we figure out what you owe for those two khaki uniforms that are missing." He had sold two khaki pants and shirt to a merchant marine for six bucks. I tried my best to pay him for what he had to pay back. He said: "Only four dollars."

The food was bad, you could not eat it but we were hungry.

Now we had little bunks in the bottom of the ship. One night we got up and went to the galley. The only thing we could find up there was a big can of orange marmalade and a bag of onions and some bread. We took them back down to the hold of the ship and began making sandwiches; Roy Davis was acting like a carnival

barker. He said; "We've got orange marmalade; we've got onion sandwiches; we got combination orange marmalade and onion sandwiches." We made the sandwiches up and ate them.

Years later I received a small box in the mail and put it under the Christmas tree. Everybody in the family said; "Dad, open Roy's box."

I said; "Not till Christmas." When it came Christmas Eve I took the box and Rosemary peeled it back and looked inside and said; "You better look at this."

I thought: "What is he up to now?" so I opened it up and reached inside and there was an onion and without looking in the other side I said; "All I need is some orange marmalade." And low and behold, there was a jar of orange marmalade.

We have kept in contact over the years and I wouldn't surprise me if the phone would ring and it would be Roy Davis, who lives in Iowa. We talk at least twice a month even after all these years since we have been discharged. I had three brothers and I never thought more of them than I do of Roy Davis.

We came back as the 252nd Coast Artillery in 1944. It was then that we were converted from Coast Artillery to Field Artillery. We were then were given the designation as the 530th Field Artillery and we finished up as members of the 530th of the 5th Army.

On the way home from Florida we were close to Fort Screven, Georgia and we decided to go see the base. When we got there the only thing that there was a 252nd CA Museum and you could see the gun emplacements. They were all tilled and with sand on them. Today there is a big housing development there.

We went into this museum and there was not one word even mentioned of the 252nd Coast Artillery. It was all about the infantry. There was not one thing there that indicated that we were ever there or even existed.

If given the choice to pick who I wanted to serve with me I could not have picked a finer bunch of men. They were from all over the midwest and when we first assembled I was the only person from Indiana in the whole outfit. Finally there was a lame-brain from Gary, Indiana name of Spoto. If they wanted to ruffle me us they would say; "Well Indiana, Davidson and Spoto."

Mr. Tombaugh

What was the food like at basic?

Mr. Davidson

It was pretty good. I had a hard time eating SOS for breakfast; it took me four or five half days out on the drill field with an empty stomach before I could come around and eat it. It became a pretty good breakfast.

We had a gun Sgt. down at Fort Screven, Georgia who had a little nephew and brought him down for breakfast. They served him SOS and he looked up and said: "What do you call this Uncle Clint?"

Sgt. said; "Cream beef on toast."

The little nephew said; "That's not what you said; you said shit on a shingle."

Mr. Tombaugh

When you first went in you were issued clothing. Did it include brown shoes and spats or leggings as they were called?

Mr. Davidson

No. The two new pairs of shoes that we got were the ankle high type. The way they measured your foot was to place your foot on a gage and you would reach down and pick up a bucket of rocks in each hand. That would spread your feet that's how they measured your feet.

When I arrived at basic I got blisters during the marching. I would put that foot into the shoe and I could touch first one side and then the other by moving my foot inside the shoe.

I told the sgt. of the barracks: "These shoes do not fit and they are killing me. How can I get rid of them?"

He said; "The only way is wear and tear. I'll tell you what you to do. Go on KP and when you scrub be sure to get your shoes wet. There should be a can of lye back there in the back of the mess hall. Set the lye along the soles, and then put them up and let them dry. When they're dry put them on and do a deep knee bend. You also want to use a little sandpaper to scuff them up. Then you can get a pair that will fit."

I did that to two pair of shoes but they still wouldn't let me turn them in. Later I finally did get shoes that fit.

Do you remember the Andrew Sisters and their song: "Rum and Coke-a-Cola."

One time Pat O'Brien and Morry Amsterdam came down with a USO tour. We got Pat O'Brien drunk on rum.

We had a boat that went from our Camp into Fort Spain (which was about 80 mile). I played on the basketball team which was going in on this boat with the USO tour.

We started singing this song "Rum and Coke-a-Cola," and added a few of our choice words as they were and it was nothing but a dirty lousy song. Morry Amsterdam got out his guitar and we sang the song. Low and behold two months later the Andrew Sisters had a number one hit.

The Camp we were in was located within a great big coconut grove on a hill overlooking the ocean. We had two observation towers, one on each side of the guns so we could calibrate. I was in this one observation tower. The channel was mined and a ship, not a large one, hit a mine and sank.

A few minutes after this happened the col. called and asked: "Did a boat go down there?"

I said: "No, sir."

He said: "Jesus Christ don't tell me a boat could sink in right in front of you and you didn't see it."

He didn't ask me if one sank.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you remember his name?

Mr. Davidson

No. I am going to say Wishard, but I am not sure.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you remember any of your CO's through out your time in the service?

Mr. Davidson

One in particular was Steve O'Mare from West Bound, Wisconsin. He busted me. He was a good guy; but he busted me and I was innocent.

Mr. Tombaugh

After you returned to the States where did you go?

Mr. Davidson

We came home for furlough and then reported back to Fort Jackson.

Mr. Tombaugh

How did you get to Fort Jackson?

Mr. Davidson

Our own transportation to Fort Jackson.

Mr. Tombaugh

How did you come back from Trinidad?

Mr. Davidson

We came back on a liberty ship to Fort Dix.

Mr. Tombaugh

What is the first thing you did when you set foot on U.S. soil?

Mr. Davidson

Shaved off my mustache. Five of us decided to grow a mustache until we got home and anyone that shaved it off before had to pay twenty-five dollars. I had mine trimmed with a razor one hair width all the way across both sides. One was dark headed and he grew handlebars and parted in the middle, he was like the old fashion bartender, he wore that for seven or eight years after he got out of the service.

We had all talked about getting a good cold beer. I walked in the PX's there and they had a big glass case and four bottles of milk setting inside it. I had not seen a glass of milk in over two years. I reached in and got a quart of milk and drank it all and forgot all about the beer. I thought of all the priorities but when I saw that milk that changed my mind.

Mr. Tombaugh

What did you do while you were there?

Mr. Davidson

We were just there for one night and they processed our furloughs on the way to Fort Jackson.

Mr. Tombaugh

What did you do when you came home?

Mr. Davidson

Lots of visiting with friends and kind of sad also because my brother, Jack was killed in France on July 4, 1943. He was a radio operation on a B 17.

Mr. Tombaugh

Were there other brother's and sister's?

Mr. Davidson

Yes. Dennis was in the Air Force; Frank did not go to service. My sister's: Gertrude, Margaret, Maude, Frances, Lucille. I am the only one left.

Mr. Tombaugh

On furlough or later did you ever see any POW's working in the fields?

Mr. Davidson

We did when we came through Ft. Dix's from Trinidad. The POW's were serving the chow lines.

One instruction before we ever went in was: If you want to be serving us just lay a hand on one of those prisoners.

When we went through the line we ignored them.

When I worked at the restaurant in South Bend, a little Italian worked there and he had a brother that was a POW that wound up in Indianapolis, Indiana. He went down from South Bend to Indianapolis to see his brother.

Mr. Tombaugh

When were you married?

Mrs. Davidson

We were married on December 3, 1950.

Mr. Tombaugh

Mrs. Davidson your full name please and your children's names.

Mrs. Davidson

Rosemary Ault. Our children are Laura and Paula. We have two deceased: Jack Andrew "Andy" and Judith A.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you remember the name of the ship you took to Europe?

Mr. Davidson

All I remember was it was a Liberty Ship.

I remember when we came home and the Statue of Liberty was on one side and everyone rushed to that side of the ship and see the Lady, you could actually feel the shift of the ship.

Our bunks were pipes with canvas and if the guy above you turned over you would hit him they were real close together.

We had one guy in the outfit that was artistic and on the way over he drew a full length picture of a naked woman. It took him about a week and he did a good job of it to.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where did you land and what was the date?

Mr. Davidson

We landed at Livorno, Italy on 16th of March, 1945.

Mr. Tombaugh

Would it have been during the warm weather.

Mr. Davidson

No, it was 40 degrees and rainy and bone cold. You wished you were somewhere else.

Mr. Tombaugh

Once you were unloaded where did you stay?

Mr. Davidson

We just put up tents and didn't take long before we were someplace else.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you remember your first location?

Mr. Davidson

No, I can't remember the town, there were so many of them as we were on the move until the big push.

Mr. Tombaugh

You went from town to town and met all kinds of people.

Mr. Davidson

Yes, during one stretch there in Italy we even had a barber. He attached himself to us and he would get food for cutting hair.

When we moved ahead we had to have an advanced position to move those big guns into and it had to be leveled and dugout, sandbagged and so forth. That was my job to supervise and layout a gun position. One day we moved into this position. Right across the road was two or three houses that had been shot up, but people were still living in them.

We had a box that ammunition come in and it was just the right size for a toilet. We cut a hole in it and when we moved we hung it over the trails of the gun. The next place we would dig out a place and set up our throne over the hole.

Another time we were going to dig a hole for it and we did not get the shovel in the ground when this little man came out of a house waving his arms. He finally got us to understand that he had

hidden his seed corn from the Germans in a jug and that was the spot we were going to dig.

Another place we had a dry ditch and we went down and dug a hole and put this throne on it. This one kid we had in our outfit was always in trouble. He had somehow gotten his hands on a German potato masher (grenade) and pulled the handle off and taken the detonator out. He then replaced the handle back and somebody said; "Ramanaoski get rid of that damn thing, don't play with that thing here." He took it by the handle and threw it in that dry ditch and where the toilet was placed. The sgt. was on the throne and he came up out of that ditch with his pants down running. We thought it was funny and we laughed. For some reason that sgt. didn't think it was so funny. He wanted to know who threw that thing. I give the man credit because he owned up to it. He did get 30 days of digging graves for that stunt. Your punishment if you went to the guard house was to be put on grave detail.

Another time a fellow cut a fence so I could get through. If it hadn't been for him I wouldn't have made it. The next week that same man was caught sleeping while on guard duty. I went before the CO and explained to him that he had saved my skin and begged for CO to be lenient. The CO requested that I write that down on a piece of paper, which I did, and next week the man was back on line.

You couldn't walk down the streets of towns without a little kid pimping for his sister. He had all the english words just for that and that probably was his entire vocabulary of the language.

After the war we were sent to guard a black market sugar warehouse. Their sugar was like our real coarse salt, there were six of us on guard duty and they brought our meals to us. We would eat what we wanted and then give it to people around us. This old lady we gave food to everyday came up with her 16 year old daughter. She got the idea to marry the girl off to a soldier and she would have free passage to the United States. We would say "not understand."

Another time we had given a girl food and she had wine. One day she didn't have any wine but she got out this bottle that was pure white and she poured a little in a wine glass. I thought boy your stingy, then I took a drink. Man that was fire. I stood there and gasped and then I understood why she only poured that much, it was called Gropa, a distilled wine. Pure Fire.

They would always send in the children with a can to get food. We would dump all of the leftovers in together in this can. It might be meat, gravy, peaches or whatever was left in the mess kit all piled together and they would eat that mixture.

Mr. Tombaugh

Any other stories about Italy?

Mr. Davidson

I was in charge of advance detail and we went up to dig in and they got on the wrong road. There were about 10 or 12 of us and a machine gun opened up on us. I dove for the ditch and got behind a culvert and every once in a while that machine gun would open up

and hit the culvert I was behind. That cement would come off and hit me on the back and legs. I didn't know if I was getting hit or not. I laid there and another guy dove behind the wheel of the truck and he got hit right in the head. Another man got hit in the belly getting off the truck. So when it quieted down that's when that kid crawled up and cut me through the fence. I couldn't get turned around in the ditch and get through the fence and dig myself through without standing up. He dug me through and we got in a ditch and we were there for two or three hours. We then got off and into a woods and were there for the rest of that day and part of the next day until we got out and back to our lines.

When we got back to the first aid station. The first thing they did was warm up some food. I took a bit of chicken and noodles out of one of those K ration cans and wanted to throw up right there. That was when I realized my belly was so empty that it wouldn't accept the solid chicken and noodles. I just sit there and sipped coffee for better than a half hour before thinking about eating. It was a harrowing experience.

Two days later we left again with the exception of the guys that had gotten hit. We came to a "T" again and the officer that had been with us before said: "I think we go this way."

I said: "Like hell! I am not moving a damn thing until you find out where we are suppose to go."

He didn't argue with me one bit. He obtained the needed information for the right way to go.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did those men that got hurt make it?

Mr. Davidson

No. The sound of a bullet hitting a person in the head is a sound you never forget. It's a splat.

Sometimes you never knew what really happens to some of them. When we took casualties we would then get replacements in. Toward the end we were getting 18 year old boys and that's what they were, just boys. Some of them matured fast and some never got a chance.

As we were getting shelled pretty heavily this one young man was standing outside the foxhole looking up at those bursts.

I said: "Get in here, LaValley." He just stood there I jumped out and said; "Get in there." He had his eyes set. I hauled off and slapped him as hard as I could and then I gave him a shoulder block into the foxhole. Two weeks later he was sent back to the psycho ward for help. He was a nice kid.

In 1951 we started having Army Reunions of the 530th and 252nd. We had 50 reunions in a row every year until two years ago and the 50th reunion we were down to just nine of us left. We decided to let it die a peaceful death. The children decided to have the reunion and it was held in Michigan last year and this year will be in Jackson. They want to keep it going from the friendships and contacts they made through the reunion.

We were down at Trinidad one night. The coconut grove there was hilly and the barracks were spotted on the hills with a road

proceeding down between them. At 10 o'clock one night, if you can imagine, there was no traffic, nothing, it was as still as death. Now Joe Endeno from Oak Park, Illinois was the bugler and he got drunk on rum. He started to play Taps at 10 o'clock but his taps turned out to the "The stars at night shine big and bright deep in the heart of Texas." We all about busted our guts laughing but that colonel didn't think it was so funny and busted him. He did 30 days in the brig for that. Now that colonel paid a hell of a lot more for doing that than Joe Endeno did. I had given Joe my scout bugle and when he died it was buried with him.

Mr. Tombaugh

While in Italy was clothing ever a problem for you?

Mr. Davidson

I was always well dressed. Sometimes it didn't fit too good. When we came out of the line we would go back to the shower unit which was located about 20 miles behind the lines. This was about every 6-8 weeks. The shower was 150 feet long with a long pipe with shower units on it and a wall on the side. When you went in you stripped down and put your things into a barracks bag with your dog tags hanging on the outside. You would then start through the unit. First you wet your self down, then soaped and so forth and when you knew the end was coming and you wanted to stay longer everybody behind was yelling move, move. When you come out you would get your bag and go over to a counter. There you would get clean clothes but it looked like you had slept in them for six months. Most generally you would get pants made out of material like a flannel blanket and itch. It was an adventure.

Mr. Tombaugh

Were you ever invited into a home for a meal?

Mr. Davidson

One time; and the man made homemade spaghetti. He did the best he could but it wasn't really tasty.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you take food to him to compliment him?

Mr. Davidson

I don't remember that we did.

I remember one time a guy came in with a chicken and we cleaned it and put it in a pot. We had a blow torch and were cooking that chicken in the back end of a truck. Things seemed to be going along pretty well to this point. Here came the captain and this little jabbering Italian talking and waving his hands. The captain said: "Any of you guys steal any chicken?"

Finally this guy LaRess said: "Yes, I did."

Captain said: "Why?"

La Ress said: "I offered to buy it from him but he wouldn't sell so I just took it." As it wound up we all had to kick in two bucks

per man to pay this Italian off and the captain gave him the chicken too.

When we got rations you could take a carton of cigarettes which held 10 packs and you could get twenty-five dollars on the black market, they were 5 cents a pack to us and you could get five dollars for a cigar or two dollars for a candy bar on that same black market. When we got rations we got seven packs of cigarettes a week and seven cigars, seven bottles of beer and usually a bar of soap and a few things like that.

This one fellow on the gun crew had two loves in life. Beside himself it was beer and cigars. He knew I didn't smoke cigars, only cigarettes. He called me Beathead and said: "Beathead what are you going to do with your cigars?"

I said: "I am going to trade them for beer, would you give me your beer for them." He knew if he waited I would give them to him, but he never gave me one of his beers.

This was an on going thing from way back, when we were down in Trinidad getting ready to come home. We were sitting in the barracks and had everything all packed up and mattress were all rolled up. We were sitting there playing cards and he pulled out his last cigar and went around the table and I saw it coming. I grabbed it, bit the end off and lit it and proceeded to take two puffs. I then threw it on the floor and ground it down with my shoe. He didn't say very much, only: "Beathead, you Irish son of bitch. That's just like casting pearls to the swine." We became quite good friend's - at times, but not always.

I told you about getting busted one time it was over him. I had a date and there was a restaurant below and somebody said: "Red, Vito's in trouble down below." So I excused myself and went down where I found he was in an argument with the proprietor of the restaurant over the price of the bill.

I said: "Hey, let me have the bill. We can straighten this thing out." About that time the MP's came in and asked him who is causing the trouble and he pointed to me first. I said: "Now wait a minute, you know better than that."

That guy said: "He's one of them." I started after him and the MP's had my arms pinned and I was on the way out. Being picked up by MP's for being drunk and disorderly cost me my rank even though I wasn't.

When I tried to tell the captain what happened he said: "Can't you guys behave yourselves in town."

I said: "Captain, you won't believe this."

He said: "You damn right I wouldn't!"

One thing I would like to talk about occurred after the war while we were at Milano, Italy. That's where we pocketed 50,000 of the enemy. The Krauts didn't want to come off that hill and they called us up. That was the only time I was issued 8 inch howitzer and we took four of them up and dug them in. We then aimed them at the Germans. They were invited to come off or we would take them off. They decided it was time for them to quit and they were strung out with mile after mile of them with their hands over their heads.

Then we pulled back to Lake LaGarda which is a very beautiful place to see. There are both the mountains and the lake. We set there for about a week then Josip Broz Tito, the communist partisan leader in Yugoslavia kicked up a fuss. Tito wanted Trieste as part of Yugoslavia.

The following taken from: "WORLD WAR II 4,139 Strange and Fascinating Facts by Don McCombs and Fred L. Worth"

"Tito, Josip Broz (1892-1980)

"Communist partisan leader in Yugoslavia during World War II. During the Spanish Civil War, he had gone to Paris as an undercover communist agent to supply volunteers to fight for Loyalist Spain. Tito traveled with forged papers as a Czech named Jaromir Havlicek, sending 1,500 Yugoslavian volunteers to Spain. The Russians gave him the code name Valter."

They summoned the big guns and we had to go 300 miles south in order to find a pass over the mountains. Then 300 miles back north to Trieste, Italy. We then dug them in and next week they started negotiations. Finally Tito backed off and we never had to fire a shot.

This fellow from Michigan had very little to say, but he said: "As bad as I want to go home maybe we should finish the job while we are here."

They pulled our guns with the running gears of a sherman tank. This one fellow we called "Buckeye." Down in Trinidad he didn't get much exercise and drank a lot of beer and he got a very large tummy. One day a guy asked him what he was going to call it. "Buck, you look like your pregnant and going to be a mother!" That name mother stuck with him and he was called either mother buckeye or mama buckeye. One night we were in the PX drinking and he was sitting there with tears rolling down his cheeks sobbing. Somebody said: "Mother, what's the matter with you?"

He said: "Everybody calls me mother or mama and somebodies going to think that I'm a queer." He could drive those tanks over those mountains drunk or sober.

After we got done at Trieste they gave us a pass into Vienna. That's were they picked us up to take us to Rome for our final trip home.

Mr. Tombaugh

How many pets were picked up by the guys over there?

Mr. Davidson

I did in Trinidad; it was a little dog. I fattened her up and she was my dog. Everybody would say they knew where I was because she was always by my side. I called her Mopsie after the prostitutes in Trinidad.

When I left I should have had her destroyed but didn't have the heart to.

Mr. Tombaugh

Anything you want to say about those battles?

Mr. Davidson

No. We were support troops in the back edge. Sometime we would wake up and we were being supported by machine guns behind us.

It was a black and white army. They pulled us in behind a colored outfit and we opened up for them to move and they never moved. They knew where we were at. It didn't make me feel too good for the infantry men anyway. They pulled them out and they put the 442nd Niesi (Americans of Japanese decent) Infantry Regiment in and we opened up and they moved 10 miles up and before we could fire they were already moving forward again.

"The following is taken from the files of John B. Tombaugh:

"The Niesi Division is the Japanese American Division that fought in Italy and earned more medals than any other division. The Japanese Americans of the 100th Infantry Division, 442nd "Go for Broke" Infantry Regiment had played a major part in the capture of Bruyeres. Continuing on in the Alsace plain to the sector of Selestat and following christmas in were committed to the Lemberg sector."

Davidson continues:

We dug in three times and never fired a round. When we finally caught up with them it was at the pocket.

They were the most decorated outfit in World War II.

There was one weapon which they had that worried the enemy to death. It was a wire about so long (18") with a ring in each hand and they would loop it over the person neck and jerk and that was payday. They had those people scared to death.

Mr. Tombaugh

One thing that bothered the Germans was the blacks would silently infiltrate as they took their uniforms off and walked among them. They would pick out one and either kill or take them along ~~along~~ with them back to the Allied lines. They had excellent night vision.

Mr. Davidson

In Italy one thing that the blacks told the Italians was they were night fighters and the shock had turned them black. You know, anything for a little fun.

Mr. Tombaugh

How did you come home after being discharged?

Mr. Davidson

I was discharged from Camp Atterbury on October 5, 1945 and I came home by train.

Mr. Tombaugh

What would you tell the young people of today of your

experiences?

Mr. Davidson

I was drafted before the bombing but if not I would of enlisted on the 7th or the day after.

I never complained a lot. I never did anything more than anybody else.

I am proud of what I have done.

I have had experiences that have been rewarding throughout my life. I made many friends and still have contact with them today.

I have a feeling of security in life.

I retired as postmaster in Leiters Ford, Indiana and now spend my time writing poetry since I have lost my eyesight.

-END-

16 hours