

# WORLD WAR II ORAL HISTORY SERIES

A Project of the

Burnet County Genealogical Society

In Partnership

with the

Burnet County Library System

**Joel Alderson**

Volume 22

Interviewed by: JoAnn Myers, 10 April 2007

Transcribed by: Teresa Tucker, Nov 2008

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Joel Alderson  
1944

## Interview Transcript

Interviewee

Name: Joel Daniel Alderson Date: April 10, 2007

Transcription Overview

Interview Data (check one):

Side 1  Side 2  Length: 530 on counter

Estimated Counter on Tape: Subjects covered in approximate order (please spell out names of people and places mentioned):

027 Pearl Harbor Day.

043 Training at Camp Swift, Texas

084 Shipping out from New York. Italy, France, England.

101 In Germany to Munich. Duties and combat. Capturing a flag.

118 Dachau, dead Jews

181 In Salzburg, Austria.

213 Generals Patton and Eisenhower.

226 USO Shows.

240 Daily life in the trenches.

291 Interaction with the German civilians.

328 Friend from Brady, Texas. Raynell Riggington.

336 Friend from Catchings, MS, James Gregory. (see book: Double the Guard)

338 Friend from Austin, TX, Victor Polanco. (see book: Double the Guard)

346 Captain Seeger.

353 Basic Training.

372 Marriage to Nila Laveta Jackson.

386 Life overseas.

397 Pearl Harbor Day.

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430

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Coming home.

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453

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Sherriff Wallace Riddell.

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474

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Life in Burnet, Texas.

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508

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The Nazi flag submits to a quilt maker.

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528

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Burying Jews.

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End.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
002 Myers	This is JoAnn Myers. Today is the 10 <sup>th</sup> of April 2007. I'm interviewing for the first time Mr. ...
003 Alderson	Joel D. Alderson.
003 Myers	This interview is taking place in the home of Mr. Alderson at 13116 East FM 1431 in Marble Falls, Texas.
005 Myers	Ok, Mr. Alderson. First off, I'd like to say thank you for letting me come into your home today and talk to you about your World War II experiences. I really appreciate it. Let's start with where you were born and when and the names of your parents.
007 Alderson	I was born in Tuscola, Texas, that's close to Willis, in 19 and 25. I moved to Burnet as a baby, but my mother's name was Lizzie A. Alderson...
010 Myers	Elizabeth?
010 Mr. Alderson	Lizzie.
010 Myers	Lizzie.
011 Alderson	"A." Alderson. Adeline is her name and my daddy is Joel Andrew Alderson. They're both deceased at this time.
012 Myers	Did you have any brothers and sisters?
012 Alderson	I had two brothers besides myself, and one of them got killed in 1939 in a car accident. Had five sisters and I still have one brother alive.
015 Myers	We've already talked to your sister and her husband.
016 Alderson	[can't understand comment]

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
016 Myers	When and where did you enlist or get drafted?
017 Alderson  Camp Swift	When I got drafted. When I told... in 1934 [actually 1944], I think about two or three weeks later then they called me out of San Antone and told me to report down there. So, I went into San Antonia, and then we got processed there and they sent me to Camp Swift, Texas – which is down close to Bastrop. And Camp Swift is where I taken my basic training.
022 Myers	Ok. So you went to San Antonio and got processed, then went to Camp Swift. How did you get there?
023 Alderson	By bus.
023 Myers	By bus? It's not very far, is it?
024 Alderson	Down near Austin.
024 Myers	So, you didn't decide to go into one or the other, you just got drafted?
025 Alderson	I got drafted to – wound up- I didn't even know what I was in, in the beginning, but shortly I did, I knew I was in the 206 <sup>th</sup> [can't understand words] Combat.
027 Myers	Well, where were you on December 7 <sup>th</sup> 1941?
028 Alderson	1941? I was in Burnet.
029 Myers	Were you still in school then or working?
029 Alderson	It mighta been in a cotton patch but I wasn't in school. I shoulda been, but...

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
030 Myers	You were working.
030 Alderson	I's working. I started at Christmas – in December or sometime, I don't what time it was. After Christmas, anyway, I started.
031 Myers	You were a teenager, though, you said you were 18 when you entered the army, and so you were a teenager. So what did you think about it as a teenager?
032 Alderson	About this whole war...
032 Myers	About Pearl Harbor.
032 Alderson	Oh! Man, I thought it was terrible. That was an unbelievable [can't understand words]
033 Myers	Did you know where it was?
033 Alderson	Pearl Harbor? I knew about where it was.
034 Myers	Do you remember your parents talking about it and the implications?
034 Alderson	Oh, yeah. Of course, we realized it was World War II – that's pretty plain. I even knew that as a teenager back then.
036 Myers	Do you remember hearing the broadcasts on TV – on the radio?
036 Alderson	On the radio.
037 Myers	Did you hear it?



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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
037 Alderson	Yeah, I heard it.
037 Myers	It was on Sunday morning. Were you in church or fixing to go to church?
038 Alderson	The Japanese did it.
038 Myers	Did you hear President Roosevelt's address the next day?
038 Alderson	I did.
038 Myers	You remember that?
039 Alderson	I remember that.
039 Myers	What were you thinking?
039 Alderson	Well, I thought being that young I really didn't know the seriousness of it. But, I found out shortly after I got in the service.
041 Myers	Did you think that you might be drafted or that you might have to go – even though you were young?
041 Alderson	Oh, I knew I'd be drafted. Yeah, if I could physically pass...
042 Myers	You wanted to go.
042 Alderson	No, I didn't want to go.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
042 Myers	You didn't want to go?
042 Alderson	No, I didn't want to go. I can't say I did.
043 Myers	Well, tell me a little about your training then. So, you went to Camp Swift...
044 Alderson	Uh, huh.
044 Myers	How long was your training?
045 Alderson	The training down there was, I believe it was 16 weeks.
045 Myers	Wow. So, that included basic training and...
046 Alderson	That was all of it.
046 Myers	Your marching ...
046 Alderson	Everything.
046 Myers	and marksmanship...
046 Alderson	Marksmanship, forced marches and every other thing. We did it – it was terrible – really [can't understand]. It made a man out of ya.
047 Myers	Did you think it was really hard to do all the marches and stuff?
048 Alderson	It was hard, cause ... the pack that you had to carry, the full pack that you had to carry on all of this, and the maneuvers you had to do, and the campouts and

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
	this kind of stuff, I didn't weigh but a hundred and twenty-five pounds, when I went in the services, so it was pretty hard work for me and –but, I made it.
052 Myers	Were there any other boys from Burnet that you met up with down there in basic training?
052 Alderson	No, not from Burnet. No one down there, sides myself.
053 Myers	So then you took training for your job specialty down there at Camp Swift, as well. Right?
054 Alderson	I took training at Camp Swift for what I was going to do overseas when I got there.
055 Myers	And what was that?
055 Alderson	That was building bridges, roads, anything the engineering people would do and we built bridges in between the enemy and the infantry so the infantry could cross. We had to make approaches to it and we did a lot of things, along about that time, we floated [can't understand] across and I'd do all of that – that's right.
060 Myers	Did they teach you how to drive the heavy equipment and [can't understand] and operate...
061 Alderson	I already knew that because, like I said, I's farm boy, and I was used to all that. I started driving when I was 10 years old and Daddy got disabled and we went up, he couldn't drive, so they just give me a license and he had to give his up. So, [can't understand].
065 Myers	I didn't know they did that.
065 Alderson	Drove tractors and everything.
065 Myers	Maybe that's why they put you in the position that you got in.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
066 Alderson	They had my history when I went in – so...
066 Myers	Did you have to register for the draft?
067 Alderson	Well, I had to register, but then I didn't have any choice, they drafted me and said you be in San Antonio – so I had no choice except go.
068 Myers	I just wondered if you remembered registering for the draft and how old you were when you did that, when you turned 18?
068 Alderson	When I turned 18, I mean the day after I turned 18, I had to sign up in the courthouse in Burnet. They [can't understand] it was sent right on in.
071 Myers	So, you were there 16 weeks what was the living conditions like there for basic training?
071 Alderson	For basic training they were good. Basically we had to cook and clean it was up to every G.I. If you didn't have your bed folded and made just right you got in trouble. I missed a time or two and I had the first sergeant come in and jerk all that stuff off and say "Do it again. You're going to keep doing it until you get it right." And they [can't understand].
075 Myers	Did it make you mad?
075 Alderson	Not really, because, I started to get mad, But, I knew what was goin' to happen, you know, so...
076 Myers	You just did it.
077 Alderson	You don't talk back to them. You can – but you'll wish you hadn't.
078	Ok, so after your 16 weeks, you found out where you were going?

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Myers	
078 Alderson	No.
079 Myers	No? Where'd ya go?
079 Alderson	I was shipped out by train, the whole battalion, shipped out in a train, to New York.
080 Myers	Tell me what the name of your outfit was, cause we haven't got that down. You were assigned to what unit in the army?
080 Alderson Assigned to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Army	Third Army.
081 Myers	Third Army?
081 Alderson	But, I didn't know that until I got where we were going.
082 Myers	Oh, ok.
082 Alderson	I didn't know nothing. I couldn't even tell HER [referring to wife, Nila, sitting at table] where I was going. Cause I didn't know.
083 Myers	So, you just got finished with training and they said you're going on the train tomorrow and be there ...
084 Alderson	That's right.
084 Myers	So, where'd you wind up?
084	In New York.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Alderson	
084 Myers	New York.
084 Alderson  Shipped out of New York - Italy to France	And I shipped out of New York – still didn't know where I was going. And I ended up in Italy. And we stayed in Italy there for a short time till they, they put all our equipment together that this battalion supposed to have. And then we went from there to the English Channel and loaded all the equipment on these boats – you remember seeing those huge boats where the front end of them lifts down and you [can't understand] equipment off it? That's what we crossed the English Channel on. We crossed it and landed in France.
090 Myers	Do you remember what port it was in France?
090 Alderson	No, not really, I don't. It might be in that history book there. [referring to a publication titled "Double the Guard"] But, I can't remember off hand.
091 Myers	So, this group went to France and unloaded.
092 Alderson	Unloaded everything...
092 Myers	Did you know where you were going yet?
092 Alderson	Still didn't know. We knew we were in France. They did tell us that. We knew that we were fighting the Germans at that time, but that's about the first time that we knew, actually. We knew what we were supposed to do, but we didn't know where we was going to do it at.
096 Myers	How long did you stay around there waiting to find out.
096 Alderson	We went right up on through France.
096	Oh, you did?

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Myers	
097 Alderson	Right up on in there and we got into, they just about, at that particular time, had France taken back. And, but they liked a little and that's where we entered the war zone.
099 Myers	Ok, was this during 1944?
099 Alderson	This was about 1945.
099 Myers	By that time.
099 Alderson	About that time.
100 Myers	Early? About January, February time frame?
101 Alderson  Munich, Germany  Nazi Flag	<p>Yeah, early. And we went on up into Germany. It take us a good while to get any further than a third of the way, or something like that. They was a still a tremendous amount of fighting going on.</p> <p>But, I know that on the drive up through there went through Munich, Germany. And you had a lot of – the infantry was just ahead of us. We stayed behind the infantry. And we they needed something up front of them, then we'd go up in front of them. And, they'd take over a city, or something like that, the infantry would get them calmed down to a point, not completely, because they had a lot of snipers – women, children – upstairs a couple floors up in buildings, you know, shooting at you.</p> <p>So, one time we had to back out and let the infantry finish their job. Then we'd take maintainers, dozers, loaders, whatever it is and open up the street, so the main part of the infantry to get through and go on up ahead of us and during this where Hitler used to make his speeches – remember that big stadium he stood out on, you know? Those flags that he used to fly on each side of him up there? I had one of them.</p>

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
101 Myers	Did you?
115 Alderson  Demolition of buildings	We, had the pleasure, and it was a pleasure, we was in the demolition part of it too. And we blew that thing to pieces. I confiscated that flag before [can't understand] put the demolition around it. We got through with that, they wasn't nothing but a pile of rocks.
118 Myers	Good. You got a great satisfaction out of that.
118 Alderson  Boxcars of Dead	Oh, that was great satisfaction. But, just outside of, the outskirts of Munich they had a big cremating plant there. They's cremating Jews. And they had boxcars full of them down next to the railroad tracks as far as you can see they was boxcars and they were all loaded with dead Jews.
122 Myers	You saw that?
122 Alderson	I saw that. That week we was to fire it up and start cremating. Of course, they destroyed a lot of stuff there. We got it back in operation and when they called us on, they had to have a bridge. So, somebody else finished the job. We never did get to cremate anybody, but... thank goodness for that, cause that was a mess.
126 Myers  Dachau	I wonder if that was at Dachau?
127 Alderson	[can't understand]. But, that was horrible, it really was, it's something you don't want to see and something you don't want to remember, if you don't have to.
129 Myers	Right. But you know there's people today who say that whole thing about Hitler destroying the Jews is a myth. That it didn't happen.
130 Alderson	Well, it did happen! [can't understand] knew it happened. Now, Hitler himself didn't do it, but his troops did.
132	Right. And that's why I think it's important to get history like this from people



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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Myers	who saw it.
132 Alderson  Bailey Bridge across Rhine River	<p>Well, it was [can't understand], we fired the thing up, but we didn't cremate anybody, they called us ahead to build a bridge – the infantry couldn't get in.</p> <p>Built a bridge across the Rhine River, you remember hearing about that river- that's a huge river. Well that was the river we put a Bailey bridge, what's called a Bailey bridge, you drive piling down in this metal. But a lot of our bridges was built on pontoons.</p> <p>Huge things. And then they'd – we had all this stuff.</p>
137 Myers	You'd just carry all this...
137 Alderson	...everywhere we went. And it had big – oh they's about 20 foot long, or something like that, [can't understand word] they was [can't understand] you put a cable across along the river – not the Rhine River – this was other river – after them on each side and then we tie these boats to it. We had [can't understand] had the boats, [can't understand] and they was side by side tied off to these cables. We had these big platforms that lay down across them. They just fit them and they latched in to each other. And that's the way they took, you know, the trucks and carry the artillery, and stuff like this, across.
144 Myers	I guess you could put together something like that relatively quickly?
145 Alderson	Oh, we could do that real fast, yeah. It would take a company, I think a company made up of a hundred soldiers something like that, I believe it was, somewhere along there.
146 Myers	And you could put it together about – what?
147 Alderson Bridge in 4 hrs	That kind of bridge, depended on how long, how wide the river was, but, a lot of them we could put across there in three or four hours. Have the trucks crossing.
148 Myers	That kept them moving good.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
148 Alderson	Absolutely.
149 Myers	What about the piling bridges, how...
150 Alderson	We didn't go back and take them up. I don't have no idea what happened to them after the war. But, we didn't go back and take them up.
151 Myers	How long would it take to build one like that?
152 Alderson	...hauling those pilings and every thing, that'd take about two or three weeks, but we could get across it within [can't understand]...
153 Myers	Is that what you did for the Rhine?
153 Alderson	Yes, for the Rhine River, that's what we built across it. We built, two or three others besides that one, that was out of actually iron, but it was all built to snap together. Put these piling in the right place and set 'em down and they snap together.
156 Myers	That's amazing that they had it, a system, like that.
157 Alderson	Course, they's a lot of work in doing it, but we had crews, pile drivers, just any kind of piece of equipment that we needed. That was something that was wonderful.
159 Myers	It's hard to imagine all that equipment and all those supplies were [can't understand] along behind the infantry like that, just carrying all that stuff and all those people. Must have been a pretty big convoy.
161 Alderson B Company	And we lost some... out of B Company, we lost quite a few of the... the enemy pounced when we was building this bridge. And they zeroed in on that bridge and that was one of these pontoon bridges. We lost quite a few of B Company.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
164 Myers	They dropped bombs on them?
164 Alderson	Yeah. No - artillery. We went back to work on it, and then our artillery plus bombers went over. And I tell you what, ours shooting over top of your head, they screamed too, I'll tell you. Scared you death.
167 Myers	I bet that was scary.
167 Alderson	Well they dropped the bombs there for two or three days and then, they said it was clear, so we went back up with another company and finished up the bridge, and started all over again. It was... all these bridges you'd have to build an approach to them and a road to them and all this kind of stuff. And they wasn't paved roads either.
172 Myers	You'd just grade them out and make them as smooth as you could, I guess.
173 Alderson  Defending Bridge Building Effort	They was strong enough that that artillery that these trucks pulled, and everything, that's them big guns that you turn a loose of and fire, you know. And [can't understand] and weapons carrier had 50 caliber machine gun mounted on them or 30 caliber machine gun mounted on them. And, like I said, when we floated them across, the jeeps, that was reconnaissance people that [can't understand] and fought. Which was a very dangerous deal but that was part of the infantry, we just got the jeep across.
179 Myers	Well, what kind of equipment did you operate it. All of it?
180 Alderson  Operated heavy equipment	Just about all of it. Operated a maintainer, dozer, even a pile driver, just about all of it I could operate and they taught you that right down here in Camp Swift.
181 Myers	That's amazing.
181	But, the people that replaced, as far as B Company, they came in trained, just

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Alderson  Salzburg, Austria	<p>like we were, so it wasn't on-the-job training. We's already trained.</p> <p>So, anyway, I ended up in, wound up in, Austria. Salzburg, Austria. We were there about – that's where Hitler was supposedly last seen. He had an underground home up there. Well, of course, we went in and we made sure Hitler wasn't there. And he wasn't there, so. Anyway, we blew it up.</p> <p>And we stayed there for a peaceful – well the war ended. And shortly after that, though, we were shipped back to the coast and we was on our way to Japan. Fortunately, I say for us, a little rough on the Japanese, but they dropped that atomic bomb. So, we didn't have to go.</p>
195 Myers	But, you knew you were already going ..
195 Alderson	We were shipped back to the coast to go.
196 Myers	I've heard a lot of stories about people knowing that they were going to Japan or they were going in on the invasion of Japan and just in time that bomb dropped. So, how did you hear about the war being over?
198 Alderson End of War	[can't understand] Oh, it was just about on everything. We didn't have television but radio, and the company commander and the battalion commander everybody that [can't understand]
200 Myers	Did y'all party?
201 Alderson	Yes, ma'am, had a big party. But it was still dangerous, they was still a lot of diehards there.
202 Myers	It didn't just stop.
202 Alderson	It didn't just <i>stop</i> . I'd say [can't understand] it actually did, but you had some snipers, that what they call them, so you had to watch out for them.
204 Myers	Were you in Salzburg then when it ended?

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
205 Alderson	No, I was in Austria. Just got into Austria when it ended. We'd already went through Germany, it was basically over, because we could pass 50, 100 Germans comin' down the road, you know, there was infantry already – they got where they didn't even capture them, they just sent them back. They taken everything they had in the way of weapons and everything...
208 Myers	And just let them go...
208 Alderson	And let them go. They didn't have no place to put them anyways. We knew, before we got to Austria we knew the war just had to be announced - the end of it.
212 Myers	It was just a formality.
212 Alderson	Yeah.
212 Myers	Did you meet any big generals or celebrities or anything.
213 Alderson  Eisenhower and Patton	I met Eisenhower. I met him on two occasions. And I met General Patton – we was assigned to General Patton for about 30 days. His limo would run out of fuel and all that – you remember that story on him there? Well, we wound up carrying fuel up there. So we were assigned to him. Let's see, what was Patton – 5 <sup>th</sup> Army?
218 Myers	I think so.
218 Alderson	I believe it is. That was for about 30 days and then we can back under Eisenhower again.
219 Myers	So, you rescued General Patton?
220 Alderson	Yeah, rescued General Patton. Somebody had to do it, but I tell you, he was a fightin' dude.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
221 Myers	What did you think of him?
221 Alderson	I thought he was one of the finest World War II generals I ever met, other than Eisenhower was a little more on the down-to-earth type. Patton was, that old boy, said "I don't give a damn, I'm going to win this war."
224 Myers	He's a warrior.
224 Alderson	But I never ran into MacArthur.
225 Myers	He stayed in the Pacific.
225 Alderson	He stayed in the Pacific. But he wasn't beaten.
226 Myers	What about USO shows, things like that. Did you see any celebrities?
227 Alderson	Oh, yeah. He's dead now – what the heck was his name of that man? World War II veterans, pretty happy...
229 Myers	Bob Hope?
229 Alderson	Bob Hope!
229 Myers	Did you see any of his shows?
229 Alderson	Oh, yeah! I seen several of them.
230 Myers	I always love watching him on TV.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
230 Alderson	He's a comedian, if I ever seen one. He's a good one, too.
231 Myers	But, the movies I've seen of his World War II shows, he's really out there for the troops.
232 Alderson	He was. He was.
232 Myers	Those singers and dancers and...
233 Alderson	[can't understand] brought some of them with him, some of them I didn't meet, but Bob Hope would go through the soldiers, and everything, shaking hands with them and tell them how proud he was of them and this kind of stuff. He was a – he was good. And he brought troops a lot of laughter.
237 Myers	See any big bands?
237 Alderson	No. Just...
238 Meyers	Just him.
239 Alderson	They was some others that I didn't get to see, we didn't get to see all the celebrities that went over there, but... we did – you'd have to be close to where they was going to be.
240 Myers	Yeah. How did your mail keep up with you? Did you get letters...
241 Alderson Mail censored	Yeah, I think they did quite well with that. I wrote her back a lot of times and about half of it was blanked out. But I think she could read most of it. And, but I received letters from her. She'd get them from me, but I'd say some things that they didn't want in the letter, so they'd black it out.
245	What about Christmas presents. Did you get Christmas presents from home?

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Myers	
247 Alderson	Oh, I don't remember. Didn't do that, don't think. It was hard to get packages and mail was about what you could get.
249 Myers	But, you were happy with letters?
249 Alderson	Oh, yeah. And that wasn't handed to you every day, either. It had to catch up with you.
251 Myers	About how long did it take before you got mail, about two or three weeks?
251 Alderson	That's roughly. About two or three weeks, from the time she wrote it till I got it.
252 Myers	Well, that's not bad.
252 Alderson	That's not bad, to go through all of that, you know.
253 Myers	What about your living conditions in the war itself.
254 Alderson	You coulda have lived in tents and foxholes and stuff like that, you know, and eatin' sea rations, sea food, you know...
255 Myers	Did you have to dig foxholes?
256 Alderson	I mean to tell ya. Let me tell ya, when they're firing at ya, it don't take you long to dig one, either. You dig pretty fast.
258 Myers	Did you have any close calls?
258 Alderson	Oh yeah, I had quite a few. I had a buddy that was killed right by me.



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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
259 Myers	In a foxhole?
259 Alderson	No, we wasn't quite in that fox hole yet. But, anyway, I did have that and a lot of wounded soldiers as we went on up through there. Lot of times, you were talking about them Jews a while ago, the reason I know, we had covered with a dozer. Dug a hole and covered them up; they was in piles.
264 Myers	That must have been a horrible situation.
264 Alderson	It was. So, who ever told you that Hitler didn't have this done, just wasn't where I was, I'll just put it that way.
266 Myers	There're several groups of people who that say that's not true. They're trying to say it never happened. And it's important to get history down, I think, it did happen.
268 Alderson	Believe me, it did happen. And that's terrible when you have to get one of them dozers and push off in there first and cover them up with the dirt you taken out, so...
271 Teresa	You know that story you told us about the demolition where you blew up the...
272 Alderson	...the stadium?
273 Teresa Tucker Poisoned alcohol	Well, the big kegs of alcohol and beer, and how some of it was tainted.
274 Alderson	Yeah, we had two that died from them – cognac, that they call it over there. We had two that drank it, of course, you credit it to [can't understand] kind of stuff, that was cognac they called it, it's kind of like, I don't know what's it like, it's whisky of some kind. We had two poisoned on it, and they died.
278 Myers	It had poison in it?

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
278 Alderson	Oh yeah, they poison that stuff when they leave.
279 Myers	Oh, my gosh. In Munich? The German's store...
279 Alderson	Yeah, it was underground.
280 Myers	And they had deliberately poisoned it because they knew the soldiers...
280 Alderson	Yeah, they knew they's going to drink it and then we went into a cheese factory, it was underground, and of course, they ... after that the soldiers, they didn't feed on that cheese, because they didn't know what it was till later on, until it was proven that it was all right. Then we ate some of it – I even ate some of it. But it was huge things. But, we didn't blow that up, we left that intact, because that was food for the civilians, so we didn't blow that up, we left it. But, it was full of cheese, you could tell they had Limburger cheese down there too.
290 Myers	For your food during this time, they only supplied your food – did y'all get food from the villages and stuff you went through?
291 Alderson  Germans hated Americans	No, no, no. Some may have, but I didn't because, like I said, you don't know if it's poisoned or what it is, cause, you know, even the civilians will kill you. Because, that was their country and they hated Americans, you know...
295 Myers	They didn't all see Americans as liberators?
295 Alderson	No, no. They did not.
296 Myers	Well, what was the weather like then? Was it...

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
297 Alderson	It was pretty, it was rainy, it was snowy – and let me tell you, it could snow in Germany. Pretty deep and it can get very cold over there so we had just about every type of good and bad weather that you can imagine. All the way through it.
300 Myers	So, you went through some of the snows in your travels...
300 Alderson	Oh, yeah, yeah, you bet. Had a lot times, we'd unload the dozers, push it out of the way, open up the road and go on. It was pretty rough, like I said, it wasn't a vacation over there.
304 Myers	They have lots of forests over there in that area...
304 Alderson	Lots of forests.
305 Myers	Did you have to clear any of the trees to make the roads?
305 Alderson  German Farmers	<p>We did, we had to do that and make the roads with it. They had these – they were good farmers – very good farmers – of course, they'd have the house built above – underneath the house was the cow pens, stuff like that. They're very clean with it, they – I don't know where they got the water, but anyway, they kept their floor washed down.</p> <p>And it all went into a pit underneath and then they emptied it into these "carts" they called them. They had wagon wheels, pulled by ox, cows. They went out to the field and they sprayed this on their fields out there.</p>
313 Myers	Wow, that's seems very efficient.
313 Alderson	They was very efficient. They was great farmers. But, places like that, you know, unless we have problems with them, or something like that, we didn't bother those people. We just didn't go through killing every thing we seen – we didn't do that. Our infantry didn't do that. The civilians, most the civilians that was killed in the bombing raids and stuff like that. People out in the country, you could call it, out, they wasn't bothered.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
321 Myers	Right.
323 Alderson	And we didn't go through there just blowing up everything either, you know, we just, we did what we had to, we're trying to win the war and go home, that's what we're there for.
324 Myers	To find the German army...
324 Alderson	That's right, that's the one. Those SS Troopers was the most dangerous one of 'em. They don't take prisoners. Shoot 'em right there. Just kill 'em.
327 Myers	Who were you closest to during this period of time. Did you have any special friends?
328 Alderson  Raynell Riggington, friend	Yeah, Raynell [Riggington] who lives over here in Brady. Was I guess as close a friend as I had.  He was a jeep driver, he drove the company commander around, you know. And I was alternate, if he was sick, or something like that, then I drove the commander around. Most the time he did that. That was his position.
334 Myers	Did you meet him in Basic Training?
334 Alderson	Oh, yeah. All of them I met in Basic Training. Well, we, Gregory...
336 Nila	His last name was Gregory [can't understand].
336 Alderson	He was from Mississippi. He was a good friend of mine.
337 Myers	Did you stay in touch after the war?
338	Went to see him after the war. Went to see Riggington. And then I had a

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Alderson	Spanish fellow that was awful close and I can't remember his name. He visited me in Burnet. Stopped by Burnet one time.
340 Myers	Wow, that's neat.
341 Alderson	So, I stayed in touch with a few of them. Also, a company commander, I seen him one time after the war.
344 Myers	What was your company commander's name?
344 Alderson	Uh... I called it while ago. Captain...
345 Nila	Here's some of the names that I got marked, that you knew [referring to the publication titled: Double the Guard ]
346 Alderson Capt Seeger, CC	The company commander, do you see him in there? Hubert. No, that wasn't it. Captain Seeger!
350 Myers	And what was he like?
350 Alderson	Oh, he was a great guy. He really was. And we had a good first sergeant and I can't think of his name. But he was tough. He had a coarse voice, and I'll tell ya that done it...
353 Myers	Paid attention [?]
353 Alderson	<p>I know down there in Basic Training that 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant was giving us our inspection on the rifles, Camp Swift, and he was plenty tough, he thought, anyway, if he snapped for that gun and you didn't release it, you got in trouble, you'd have to go clean that gun again.</p> <p>But this one ole boy, it was in my barrack, and he said "I'm going to get him. [can't understand] you watch me." At morning lineup he was three or four down from the end, and I was watching him out of the corner of my eye, ya</p>

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
	<p>have to look straight ahead, you're at attention. Anyway, this 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant went for that gun and when he first moved that arm, he turned it loose and it fell before he could catch it and hit right on the toes. He taken that gun up, handed back to that soldier. [and said:] "Fair play. Thank you."</p> <p>And he walked around about half crippled there for a couple of weeks. But I guarantee you, and he did get it, that's what he wants, that's what he got. But I just never was that quick. But, he was nice about it. He just picked it up [can't understand] handed it back to him.</p>
372 Myers	Were you and your wife already married when you went off?
373 Alderson	She begged me to marry her, just before I went.
374 Myers	When did y'all get married?
374 Alderson	We got married in 6 <sup>th</sup> September 1944. As I tell her, the next day or two, I left for New York.
377 Nila	We were married six weeks...
378 Alderson	Maybe it was six weeks... Seemed like three or four days to me. Anyway that's when we was shipped out. I was through with Basic Training when we got married. And I knew I was fixing to leave – I didn't know where I was going.
382 Myers	You didn't stay in New York long enough to come back and visit her...
383 Alderson	Oh, no. She couldn't a done it anyway. They wouldn't allow that, you know. It's a little different than it is today, you know your wives can go with you and all that now, at times, but back in World War II, it didn't happen that way.
386 Myers	Were you ever wounded or anything?

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
386 Alderson	Never was wounded.
387 Myers	Or was hospitalized while you were over there?
387 Alderson	Yeah. I caught the flu.
387 Myers	You caught the flu?
387 Alderson	Caught the flu. And I was in the camp hospital, anyway I was in the hospital for little over a week. Then when I got out of there me and another friend out of company was in there and I didn't see him but one time all the time we was in there, but when we got ready to leave, they got us back together and they shipped us back up and we caught up with our company.
395 Myers	Reckon it was pretty serious, having the flu back then.
396 Alderson	You bet. Anyway we caught back up with the company.
397 Myers	You said you were ready to go to Japan – you thought you were going to Japan when you heard about the atomic bomb, so what happened then after VJ Day...
399 Alderson  Going Home	<p>World War II, as far as we were concerned, was over. And that's when you threw another party.</p> <p>The only thing I hate about it that's when... President Truman was in, was president at that time. We were setting there waiting for a ship to bring us out and some of these GIs in the meantime had married some of these German girls. Well, he [Truman] was allowing them to be shipped out ahead of us.</p> <p>And I never did like that man after that. I was right there in port, I knew what was happening but nothing we could do about it. And I never did like Truman after that.</p>

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
410 Myers	Well, I wonder what the rational was cause they hadn't been over there any longer than you...
412 Alderson	They were a lot of problems over there.
412 Myers	A little hard feelings, huh?
412 Alderson	Oh, you bet. And let me tell you something, even our company commanders and stuff, that was with us, they knew what was going on, too. We had a major that was over the battalion and that's where you got this "Double the Guard," this book, this history book.
417 Nila	Handle it carefully, 'cause it sure is rotten.
418 Myers	Did he put that book together? The major?
418 Alderson	He didn't, he had it done. But like I said, it was based around – where we got the word "Double the Guard." That man was always behind with his headquarters company. And every time that he'd hear a shot or something, he'd tell the captain to "double the guard! Double the guard!" and that's the reason that was named after that.
424 Myers	That wasn't meant to be very complimentary. [laughing]
424 Alderson	No, it wasn't. He was a very scared man.
425 Myers	He was looking out for him.
425 Alderson	He was good man, but he – well I imagine - when I say "double the guard" he already had more than could walk around his tent.
428 Myers	[laughing] But, he wanted to protect that equipment and his men, that's what he wanted to do.



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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
428 Alderson	Uh, huh.
430 Myers	Once you finally got on your ship to come home, how long did it take you to come home from the time was over, when did you ...
431 Alderson	You know, I can't remember that. I don't remember where I landed, I know at Camp Swift, Arkansas is where I was discharged. And I can't remember what port I landed in coming back. It was just excitement, you know, you didn't remember things like that. Like I said, I'm sure it's in some literature I got here.
438 Myers	Were you able to tell your family or your wife that you were coming home?
439 Alderson	Oh, yeah.
439 Myers	They knew when you were going to be back in the states?
440 Alderson	She knew exactly when I was going to be back. And then I called from Camp [can't understand], Arkansas when I landed there and then they had to go through all the process, discharging and all that before...
443 Myers	So, you got discharged right there? So you're out of the army, how did you get home? Did they send you home?
444 Alderson	I got home on a bus.
444 Myers	Did they give you a bus ticket?
444 Alderson  Bus ticket home	Bus ticket. Some of them, you know, they gave you that \$300 mustering out pay and some of them, there was just a lot of people around there, they'd rent a car, or something and take them home much faster. I figured the bus would be all right, you know. We needed the money when I got home.

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
451 Myers	Right. You got home on a bus when you came back to Burnet.
452 Alderson	Burnet, Texas. Got out on the west side of the square.
453 Myers	She was there to meet you, I bet. [referring to wife, Nila]
453 Alderson Crowd at the square	She was there, my dad and my momma, they was several of them there to meet me. Even the sheriff, Wallace Riddell, he was there.
456 Myers	Wow. Now that was nice...
456 Alderson Sheriff Riddell	He met them all. Wallace did. When that bus, he knew when that bus was scheduled to come in – didn't know if there was any soldiers on it or not – but he knew he was going to be there, if he possibly could. And most of the time they were soldiers on it, coming home to live or be around Burnet.
460 Myers	Now is really a....
461 Alderson	Oh, he, yeah, Wallace was a good man basically. He really was.
462 Myers	He sure was sheriff for a long time.
463 Alderson	Yeah, he was. Even got a statue out there. [in front of courthouse in Burnet]
464 Myers	Were there any other soldiers on the bus when you came in?
464 Alderson	No, I thing I was the only one that came in that particular time. But he greeted me, just - not quite as well as she did [referring to wife, Nila].
467	But, he greeted you like....

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
Myers	
468 Alderson	Oh, yeah, yeah. He knew me, but I left outta here, you know.
469 Myers	Didn't that make you feel good...
470 Alderson	Sure, it did!
470 Myers	Did anyone take pictures of you coming in?
470 Alderson	I don't... they didn't take pictures back in them days, you know. Even when I left out... I got some pictures of me somewhere... [rummages through pictures on table]
474 Myers	Oh, yeah, those are good pictures. We'll get to that in just a minute. I just thought, since everybody was there at the square, maybe someone had a brownie camera. So, you stayed in Burnet all the rest of the time...
478 Alderson	I stayed in Burnet there for a good while. First went to work at a grocery store.
481 Nila Graphite Mine	You went to work at graphite mine first.
481 Alderson	Oh, I did... graphite mine, Southwestern Graphite. Yeah, I went to work out there and I was there about five years, watn't it?
484 Myers	Were y'all living in town? Did you have a house in town?
484 Alderson	I built a house under the G.I. Bill after that, and my medals, I had quite a few medals, sharpshooter, and of course, the Third Army and Fifth Army, I was in long enough to get one of them.  Had some, had several different medals and we built a house and had a garage back behind. So, we, I went to work for , after the graphite, went to work for

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
	<p>[can't understand] Gravel Company.</p> <p>So, we stored everything I had in this garage, and rented the house. And when we got back, well, my garage had been broken into and they had [can't understand] I've got some crystals that I sent her from Germany...</p>
498 Nila	Crystal glasses.
498 Alderson	That I sent her, after the war was over, I shipped them to her. But, all my pins and...
501 Myers	That was stolen too?
501 Nila	Yeah, That was all in there.
502 Alderson	All stolen from me.
503 Myers	You know, that really is pretty low to steal that kind of stuff.
504 Alderson	I had some...
504 Nila	Have an idea it was mostly kids...
504 Alderson	... I had some German money, which wasn't no good here, but then I had some old coins I'd collected from over there when I'd find them. I sent all that stuff back, but it all disappeared.
508 Myers	Well, you got your flag.
509 Alderson German Flag	I got that flag. She kept it, but that's not the whole flag. [referring to a Nazi flag that Joe got from the plaza where Hitler gave his speeches in Berlin]

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
510 Myers	Oh, it isn't?
510 Alderson	Nah! She destroyed a very important piece of stuff right here. She cut the ends off it and made a lining for a quilt.
513 Nila	It was just <i>yards</i> of material.
513 Teresa	Here's the rest of it. [referring to the finished quilt]
514 Myers	[laughs] Oh, my gosh!
513 Alderson	And, I could still beat her up for that!
516 Myers	We'll have to take a picture of that too! [laughing]
517 Nila	I probably didn't have any money, so...
518 Myers	You used that.
518 Nila	I just thought, that'd make a good lining.
519 Alderson	And, here I was, risking my life for that cotton pickin' thing and then she cut it up for a quilt linin'!
522 Nila	I didn't know... of course, I's just a <i>kid</i> !
523 Myers	Well, that's all the questions I had, we went through all these pretty good. Had a lot of memories there that you went through. Anything else you remember that you'd like to...

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Tape Counter/ Speaker	Narrative
525 Alderson	Not, that's that important, really.
526 Myers	Well, anything that you remember that we didn't cover.
528 Alderson	Like I said, there was a lot of things I didn't want to remember. I did tell you the worst part of it, that's covering up them Jews, and I didn't like that...
530 Myers	That was horrible.
531 Alderson	That was awful.
531 Teresa	Was that in Munich, near Munich?
532 Alderson	It was just the outskirts of Munich.
533 Myers	I think it was probably Dachau, 'cause we visited that when we were over there and it's real close to Munich. Think that's probably where...
535 Alderson	Outskirts of Munich, where it was.
535 Myers	Well, then if you don't have anything else, I thank you again for the interview and we'll close it off, and thank you for your service to our country.
538 Alderson	Thank you.