

Mississippi Oral History Program

World War II Veterans
National WWII Museum/103rd Infantry
Oral History Project

An Oral History

with

Calvin A. “Buck” Landau Jr.

Interviewer: Stephanie Scull-DeArney

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An Oral History with Calvin A. "Buck" Landau Jr., Volume 1272, Part 4

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AN ORAL HISTORY

with

CALVIN A. "BUCK" LANDAU JR.

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi, National WWII Museum/103rd Infantry Project. The interview is with Calvin A. "Buck" Landau Jr. and is taking place on October 8, 2015. The interviewer is Stephanie Scull-DeArmey. Time stamps are recorded in the manuscript and the recording log using Express Scribe.

Editor's note: A short portion of the recording at the beginning, which does not relate to the interview, has not been transcribed.

Scull-DeArmey: This is an interview for the University of Southern Mississippi Oral History Program. The interview is with Cal "Buck" Landau and is taking place on October 8, 2015. The interviewer is Stephanie Scull-DeArmey. First I'd like to thank you for being here today and giving us the interview. And for the record, I'd like to ask you to state your name.

Landau: I'll give you the full name, Calvin A. Landau Jr.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. And just—

Landau: And in parenthesis "Buck."

Scull-DeArmey: OK. Just for the record, can you spell that for me?

Landau: C-A-L-V-I-N, A, Landau, L-A-N-D-A-U, Jr., Buck.

Scull-DeArmey: B-U-C-K.

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: All right, terrific. Where were you born?

Landau: Pittsburgh. 0:02:15.5

Scull-DeArmey: OK. And when?

Landau: January the eighth, 1923.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. This guy [referring to photograph of interviewer's uncle, who was also in the 103rd] was born in [1910]; he was born in 1910.

Landau: Oh, yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. That's right. Yeah, somewhere around there.

Landau: Well, he was unlucky.

Scull-DeArmey: He was drafted when he was—

Landau: He'd have been thirty-three or thirty-four.

Scull-DeArmey: —older. Right. He was in his thirties.

Landau: Was he just under the final—

Scull-DeArmey: It was toward the end, I think. Yeah. They had no children.

Landau: I didn't think they drafted anybody over thirty-five, so he was close to that.

Scull-DeArmey: He must have been, but they had not had any children, so I guess that's one of the reasons.

Landau: That's the end of the line.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. He got called up. Yeah. But he did get to come home.

Landau: And he is what to you?

Scull-DeArmey: My uncle, my mother's sister married him. And he was just, he's really the nicest man I ever met in my life. He was just great. He was great. You can tell from his expression.

Landau: Yeah. I'm pretty sure he's the kind of guy who would have been in my gang.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. Yeah.

Landau: OK.

Scull-DeArmey: What were you doing before you entered the service?

Landau: I was in the University of Pittsburgh.

Scull-DeArmey: What were you studying? 0:03:43.0

Landau: Civil engineering.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you get to go back and finish?

Landau: Yes.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. What degree did you get?

Landau: Bachelor's.

Scull-DeArmey: In engineering, was it a BS in engineering?

Landau: BSCE.

Scull-DeArmey: CE.

Landau: Civil engineering.

Scull-DeArmey: Oh. And was that the only degree you got? Did you get anymore?

Landau: That's all.

Scull-DeArmey: Me, too. I stopped at the bachelor's, no more homework. Which branch of the military did you serve? 0:04:12.4

Landau: Army.

Scull-DeArmey: Army, OK. Did you enlist? Were you drafted?

Landau: I think I enlisted. Yeah. I did because my serial number is 1318. But the Army came around and made offers to engineering students at that time. It really wasn't the bona fide offer, but we did get recognized as being enlisted instead of drafted.

Scull-DeArmey: What was the offer?

Landau: The offer was to let us finish school. No. We would sign up in the military, commit. OK? They'd let us stay in school till we got our degree. Then we'll get a commission and go out and do whatever they wanted. At that time they thought they needed engineers.

Scull-DeArmey: What exactly is a commission?

Landau: Oh, wait. I didn't finish that story. The commission would be a second lieutenant.

Scull-DeArmey: An officer.

Landau: Yeah. So I took that, as did almost everybody else because it's the only deal around. Three months later or thereabouts, the Army came around, again, and says, "We're going to change things. We're going to send you to Texas A & M to finish your work. Of course they're going to call me into the Army, give me basic training, send me to Texas A & M where I'm going to finish out my college work, get my commission, and that's it. Four and a half months later, they don't need engineers anymore. They need infantrymen. And that's why you might have heard Chad say, here, sometime today—he's probably repeated—that division was the smartest division in the whole (laughter) Army because of the college work that they were all doing. OK. That's it. They called me up June 23, 1943.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. Infantry, that's a big difference than being a second lieutenant and engineer, to go into the infantry. Right?

Landau: What was the first thing you said?

Scull-DeArmey: There's a big difference in being an engineer as a second lieutenant and going into the infantry.

Landau: Oh, absolutely.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you go in as an officer?

Landau: No.

Scull-DeArmey: No. Wow. How did you feel about that?

Landau: Not so good, but that's what—everybody that I was with was under the same circumstances. You can't do anything about it. So they sent us to the 103rd Division.

Scull-DeArmey: So what happened when you left for training camp, and what was your early training like? 0:07:41.7

Landau: This was when I first was called up; we went to Camp Fannin, F-A-N-N-I-N, Texas, and trained for basic training there. They called that—wait a minute—the Branch Immaterial Replacement Training Center. Now, does that tell you how loose it was? (laughter) The Branch Immaterial Replacement Training Center.

Scull-DeArmey: What was is like there? What was a typical day like?

Landau: It was strictly Army training, shooting, hiking, close-order drill, the whole nine yards.

Scull-DeArmey: What order drill?

Landau: Close.

Scull-DeArmey: Close-order drill. What does that look like?

Landau: That's marching in small area as opposed to long-distance walking.

Scull-DeArmey: Hiking?

Landau: This is where you do the fancy gun stuff and stuff like that.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. So part of those drills was carrying your weapon?

Landau: Um-hm, that's a close-order drill.

Scull-DeArmey: What did you do with the weapon?

Landau: I'm not sure I understand your question.

Scull-DeArmey: You said it was fancy stuff. Did you—

Landau: Well, it's fancy. You had to do it precisely, where you got your rifle down here at order arms, they call it; bring it up to present arms, and everything precise.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. I know this probably—

Landau: And by the way, a couple of weeks ago I was—and I want to talk to you about this—at what they call the Honor Flight. You ever heard of the Honor Flight?

Scull-DeArmey: No.

Landau: Well, they put us on an airplane, took us down to Washington, and wandered around the monuments. One of the things they had us do is we watched the change of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Scull-DeArmey: Is he from World War II?

Landau: That's World War I.

Scull-DeArmey: He's World War I, OK.

Landau: Now, I—never mind.

Scull-DeArmey: I know that to you a lot of this stuff seems very ordinary, but we're assuming that we're going to put it on the record for people, who 100 or 150 years from now won't have any idea about any of this stuff. So when you were hiking, what was that like in basic training? Where did you hike exactly?

Landau: The military reservation there was quite large, thousands of acres. And there was a lot of room to walk.

Scull-DeArmey: So you did a lot of walking.

Landau: Oh, yeah. It was part of the act. There was nothing else for us to do but walk.

Scull-DeArmey: How did you feel about it when it was happening? Did it make sense? Did it—

Landau: Well, yes and no. It was ugly to have to have happen, but it had to happen. So it did; we walked. We ran sometimes, all physical conditioning.

Scull-DeArmey: What was food like?

Landau: Oh, I'm ashamed to mention that. When I was in basic training, the food was not so good. Basic. OK? Went to Texas A & M, the food was the best you can get. (laughter) They raised all their own food, and they served you everything that would come off an animal.

Scull-DeArmey: They didn't waste.

Landau: It was fancy food. Well, I shouldn't say fancy, plentiful and first-class.

Scull-DeArmey: Tell me what a typical meal was at basic training.

Landau: It always included some meat, always included some potatoes, always included some sort of a green, except sometimes it'd be corn instead of a green. And it was edible; it was edible.

Scull-DeArmey: Had you ever—

Landau: Wait, wait. I got to interject: in the Army they always give you a fruit cocktail. At the end of the meal is a fruit cocktail.

Scull-DeArmey: How do you like fruit cocktail today?

Landau: I eat one kind of fruit at a time. (laughter) Pineapple, apples.

Scull-DeArmey: But not all mixed up.

Landau: No. It's a different taste altogether.

Scull-DeArmey: Had you handled guns at all before you went to basic training?

Landau: Handled what?

Scull-DeArmey: Guns?

Landau: Oh, yes. I grew up with guns. My father had six or eight guns that I had played with long before I should have. 0:13:46.0

Scull-DeArmey: Did he know, your father?

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: So he was supervising.

Landau: Well, he didn't supervise. He thought I would take care of myself.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you have bullets?

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: How old were you?

Landau: Started about eleven or twelve.

Scull-DeArmey: Were the guns in the military anything like what you had used before?

Landau: Some were.

Scull-DeArmey: Tell me about those. Tell me about shooting and weapons and ammunition.

Landau: With respect to the military?

Scull-DeArmey: Basic training.

Landau: Basic training was a rifle they called the M1 rifle, 0:14:33.2, which was put in the service right before World War II, a very good rifle if it wasn't worn out. If it was worn out, it was not good. But when we went overseas we took good rifles with us. That was OK. And you wanted to know what else? Oh, the rifles in the military. That was the basic training weapon. At some point—and I should bring up that point.

This is basic training before I went to ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program], or to the Texas A & M. Then I went back into Camp Howze, H-O-W-Z-E, where we were trained to use some of the other weapons like the Browning Automatic Rifle, BAR, 0:15:43.5, the rifle-grenade, carbine and a little bit of mortar and machine gun.

Scull-DeArmey: What is a rifle-grenade? How does it work? 0:16:10.7

Landau: The device that goes on the end of the rifle, the M1 rifle; they call that a launcher. Then the rifle-grenade has an explosive in the front and a tube as a guide. You set that tube down there with the launcher; it's attached to the rifle, put a special cartridge in the chamber; fire that, and it shoots the rifle-grenade, and it's intended for antitank war.

Scull-DeArmey: Anti-tank, OK. So a hand grenade is different?

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: A hand grenade, I guess, just as far as you could throw it.

Landau: Yeah. You can't throw it very far. There's a technique to throwing it. You got to watch; you'll hurt yourself.

Scull-DeArmey: So the grenade launcher probably went further?

Landau: Yes. It did, um-hm, but it was not accurate. There were no sights on it. You just guessed at where you were aiming and fired, and if you hit, OK. The idea is you get up close to a tank where you can't miss.

Scull-DeArmey: That sounds pretty intimidating.

Landau: It ain't good! OK.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you ever learn to drive a tank?

Landau: No. I was never inside a tank. We were strictly foot soldiers.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. Tell me a little bit about the carbine. 0:17:44.1

Landau: The carbine is a smaller rifle than the M1. It operates pretty much the same. It's what they call a gas-operated, semiautomatic.

Scull-DeArmey: Why would you need two different kinds of guns?

Landau: Well, the M1 is too big to use effectively or handily inside a tank, for instance or in a truck or a Jeep or wherever. Wherever the M1's going to be too big,

that was the rifle to use. Now, if that didn't work, you would use a pistol, which wasn't very warlike really.

Scull-DeArmey: What caliber?

Landau: The rifle was .30 caliber; the carbine was .30 caliber as well.

Scull-DeArmey: Pistol?

Landau: The pistol was .45.

Scull-DeArmey: And tell me about mortar. What is mortar?

Landau: Mortar is a basic cannon; it's just a tube that you set down on a plate that sets on the ground; has two feet out in front like this, and you can adjust it sightwise and repeat the shot; you know, go back and do another one. 0:19:21.4 And it stands about two and a half feet high.

Scull-DeArmey: When you were on the ground in Europe, which weapons did you find you were carrying and using the most?

Landau: The rifle squad has twelve men. They're all carrying M1 carbine except some officers carried the carbine. 0:19:55.8 Within each squad is a BAR, Browning Automatic Rifle capability. Each squad has one rifle, one BAR. When we went into action, I was the rifle grenadier, and I was also the ammunition-bearer for the BAR. The BAR was manned by a BAR-man, an assistant BAR-man, and ammunition-bearer. Our first day in action I was a rifle grenadier, and that evening a shell came in and wounded the BAR-man and the assistant. So I became the BAR-man, and I carried that gun for one month and one day, and I turned it over to another guy at that time. It was a monster to carry; it weighed twenty pounds, and you carried twenty pounds of ammunition with it. And really it was not a good gun for what kind of war we were fighting. We'd have done better with the lighter, smaller-caliber, high-velocity cartridge.

Scull-DeArmey: Were those available then?

Landau: No. No. When we got back, I did a lot of thinking about this; did some talking about it. I thought they ought to go down to .25 caliber instead of .30. Well, it wasn't but a couple of years till they decided, "Yeah. We'll just go down and make it .22 caliber." And that's what they're using now, .22 caliber.

Scull-DeArmey: Seems to work.

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. Do you remember your instructors in training? What were they like, the instructors at basic training? 0:22:20.7

Landau: There were all different kinds; you name it, and you could pick them out of any division. There were good guys; there were guys that were pretty rough, guys that were blow-hards. There were some of every kind. In a rifle company you would find every kind of personality you want among the officers [and] the men.

Scull-DeArmey: Was there anybody who really stands out, who helped you?

Landau: Well, I don't remember many of those names. I can remember a couple of names that they were noncoms when we joined, and they were noncoms when we went into battle, but after some people were wounded, these guys moved up and got commissions. And I talked to the daughter of one yesterday. Her father was not well enough to come here and can't hear. Well, I can hardly hear, too, but since it's quiet in here, and you have a strong voice. So is that it?

Scull-DeArmey: Any of your instructors who stand out?

Landau: Oh, yeah. I'm trying to think of one from Camp Fannin. 0:24:02.8 I can't bring up any names at this time.

Scull-DeArmey: Well, just tell me about him, if you can't think of the name.

Landau: Man, I almost had it; I can picture the guy. He was quite agreeable. He had apparently [been] instructed to take care of us, and treat us well and so on, and he did. Chenowath? Chenowath's close enough.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. (laughter) OK.

Landau: C-H-E-N-O-W-A-T-H, I'm pretty sure that's it. He bunked with us, with our platoon, in the bunkhouse.

Scull-DeArmey: Tell me about the bunkhouse. What did it look like?

Landau: Very rough architecturally. 0:25:06.8 Tar-paper sides and roof, wood floor, no finish on the walls or ceilings, just bare wood, and a lot of windows usually, and a wood-burning or coal-burning stove. And I don't remember if there was one or two stoves. I know I was near a stove.

Scull-DeArmey: What was the temperature like?

Landau: Well, it got down into the thirties. It snowed in Texas that year.

Scull-DeArmey: So were you there just during the colder season?

Landau: No. We were there through two summers. And that was hot. Texas, 110 degrees we had, and marching in 110 degrees is pretty tough.

Scull-DeArmey: I don't know how you did it. You must have had people falling out.

Landau: We had one bad day where almost 25 percent of the guys passed out, who had lost their capabilities.

Scull-DeArmey: Was it heat stroke?

Landau: Most cases were probably pretty close to heat stroke, yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: Did they get better?

Landau: Yeah, um-hm. This was all in the training. You got to train for the worst, and that was the worst.

Scull-DeArmey: What did you sleep on?

Landau: Wood bunks with a mattress. Wood bunk, about a four-inch mattress with a mattress cover, a sheet, and a blanket, just like I do today. (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: What was your clothing like?

Landau: Military, fatigues, rough clothing, all through basic training.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you receive specialized training?

Landau: Yeah. 0:27:30.0

Scull-DeArmey: Tell me about that.

Landau: I went to ranger school.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. What did you do in ranger school?

Landau: Learned some of the tricks of camouflage, hiding, and an upgrade of what I'd already learned.

Scull-DeArmey: Tell me about what you learned about camouflage and hiding. How would I hide myself? Was it in the woods?

Landau: If you're in the woods, you can hide behind a tree. If you have time, you might dig a hole and protect yourself from shell bursts and stuff like that.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you ever have to do that in Europe?

Landau: Oh, yeah. Any time we stopped, we'd dig a hole. We moved a lot.

Scull-DeArmey: So you had to tote a shovel around, too, right?

Landau: We had what they called an entrenching tool. 0:28:37.3 Now, up until we equipped (inaudible), they had for each pair of men; they'd pair men up. Each had a shelter half. If you put two shelter halves together, you got a tent. OK? You had a shovel, just a little shovel about that long, and a little pick. OK? And that's how you dug your hole. But then they issued what they called an entrenching tool. The entrenching tool had a spade on the end, and it was hinged so it could be out straight or could be right-angled, and you could use it like a pick, or you could use it like a shovel; pretty good deal.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you feel like you were protected after you dug holes?

Landau: Well, unless you were in the woods, you were in relatively good protection. If you were in the woods, you could have tree-bursts, where the trees, triggered when the bomb or the shell, whatever it is, and that's an air-burst, and that can get you even in a hole.

Scull-DeArmey: So somebody lobs some kind of bomb or grenade at you, and it goes off in the air?

Landau: The one we used didn't explode in the air, unless it hit something to trip the firing pin.

Scull-DeArmey: So was that a lot worse if it exploded in the air than if it was down near the ground?

Landau: Yeah, um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: Hm, I guess there's no predicting where those pieces are going to go. Yeah.

Landau: [Yes, you are correct.]

Scull-DeArmey: Wow. How do you think you adapted to military life? The physical regimen and the barracks, the food, and the social life, how do you think you adapted to that? 0:30:58.2

Landau: I think well, um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: Well, tell me about where you served. 0:31:04.7

Landau: I first went to—I can't think of what they called it, where they gather people.

Scull-DeArme y: Is it called the staging—

Landau: In Pennsylvania, Valley Forge.

Scull-DeArme y: Before you're deployed, you go [there].

Landau: Yeah. You go there; you get your uniform. You get your shots and all that kind of stuff. Then you're put on a train and sent to a camp someplace. And I was sent to Texas to Camp Fannin, which had just been completed; went through basic training, [then to] ASTP at Texas A & M, [then] to Camp Howze, to the 103rd Division. That division had been fully trained, and prior to us joining, they had taken a lot of men out. They had sent them over as replacements. The ones that remained became a cadre to finish the training and fill out the organization that brought the 103rd up to strength. That's how we managed to get everybody in the unit and get fully equipped.

Scull-DeArme y: How did you get overseas?

Landau: [On the troop ship *Monticello*.]

Scull-DeArme y: Where did you go first?

Landau: We landed in Marseilles.

Scull-DeArme y: Can you just kind of paint a picture of that for me? Tell me—

Landau: OK. The night we landed, they took us off the ship, carrying everything we owned except for a rifle, an extra pair of socks, an extra suit of clothes, an overcoat, steel helmet. It seems to me we had an extra pair of shoes. I don't know about that. Anyhow we were fully prepared to fight; all we needed was a rifle and ammunition. I keep losing the train of what you're asking me.

Scull-DeArme y: So when you landed in Marseilles—

Landau: Oh, OK. With all that load, they marched us eighteen miles up the mountain to the plateau above Marseilles. There we pitched our tents, pup tents in rows; had a monstrous, big field of tents; had a hard rain that washed some of the tents out. Those guys had a bad time. Some of us were sent down to Marseilles to work in the bombed-out waterfront—it was really a mess—assembling Jeeps. 0:34:55.0 The Jeeps were sent over from the United States in wooden crates with the wheels off, the steering wheel off. 0:35:12.2 Anything that projected out of the Jeep was taken off and packed separately, and we put them all back together; spent almost two weeks doing that.

Scull-DeArme y: Were you living in tents?

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: During that time?

Landau: Well, no, at that time we [were] living right on the waterfront. We took some of those pieces of carton, wooden carton the Jeeps came in and laid them down to make a bed.

Scull-DeArmey: Were you in bombed-out buildings?

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: What was going on with the—how were you in relation to the front lines and the battles? Were you way behind?

Landau: We were way south of where the action was in our sector. We spent two weeks getting ready to go. They put us on a train from Marseilles to Epinal, E-P-I-N-A-L. Sounds like a nice ride, huh? (laughter) The cars we rode in were the forty-and-eight cars from World War I. You know what the forty-and-eight looked like?
0:36:34.5

Scull-DeArmey: Sort of like cattle cars?

Landau: Uh-huh. That's what they were.

Scull-DeArmey: They were cattle cars.

Landau: But the Germans and the French, had those in use for 100 years maybe, same thing. But we had the same equipment.

Scull-DeArmey: What was that like, going on that train trip? I'm afraid this is going to come out on the—(referring to hammering noise)

Landau: It would.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. (laughter) What was that like? Were you just packed in there really tight? What was it like?

Landau: Painted on the side of these cars were, "Forty hommes, men; eight chevaux, eight horses." So those cars would hold either forty men or eight horses, and that should describe what they were like, huh?

Scull-DeArmey: So how many men were in there?

Landau: We had twenty-some men, usually, but we had a lot of gear and baggage with us. That was all stowed in a warehouse when we got up to the area of the fighting.

Scull-DeArmey: So what happened when you got to Epinal?

Landau: We got off the train.

Scull-DeArmey: What was going on there?

Landau: What did we do?

Scull-DeArmey: Was that where the line was?

Landau: Well, we still had some work to do. 0:38:06.0 We had to—officially the officers had some work to do rounding out the organization because the Table of Organization does not include anything from graves registration, KP [kitchen patrol], several other things like that. So they took men out of the rifle companies and put them in these other jobs. That was one of the things that was done. Prisoner-of-war detail was one of those.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. So for people who don't know anything about the military, tell us what KP is.

Landau: KP is kitchen police.

Scull-DeArmey: What did they do?

Landau: They did all the rough work in the kitchen and supported the cook and his permanent staff, which meant cleaning up the pots and pans and stuff like that.

Scull-DeArmey: Peeling potatoes?

Landau: Burlap bags of potatoes, you sat down and spent the day doing that.

Scull-DeArmey: What did you think about the food that came out of the KP and cooks' kitchen?

Landau: It was basically good.

Scull-DeArmey: Typical meal? What was the typical meal?

Landau: Well, I think I described earlier a typical meal would be some meat and potatoes, some kind of vegetable, the usual thing that most people used to eat, but nowadays younger people get exotic foods.

Scull-DeArmeY: So and then tell me about POW [prisoner-of-war] detail. 0:40:16.7

Landau: Well, if you captured anybody, you got to take care of them, make sure he agreed to be captured. And they guard them until somebody comes to get them or till they march out to someplace where they can be picked up. And where they go from there you don't care.

Scull-DeArmeY: Did you do that?

Landau: No. I was never on prisoner-of-war detail. I was on KP in training; in action we didn't do KP except those guys that were assigned to it. It so happened in our outfit there was some Mexicans, and it was generally agreed that Mexicans weren't such good fighters, so they put them on kitchen detail. It wasn't fair, but that's the way it happened. 0:41:17.1

Scull-DeArmeY: What are some of the memories that come to your mind when you think back to your service abroad? Do you have any memories that stand out?

Landau: Oh, many.

Scull-DeArmeY: Tell me some of those.

Landau: Well, our first day in action, 0:41:47.0 that's a permanent one.

Scull-DeArmeY: Can you describe that to me some?

Landau: Yeah. We had been up on a mountain, and we had come down from the mountain to level ground and farmland. We got there about dark. We were told we could sleep that night. So what we had to work with was two raincoats. We put a raincoat down and lay on it; my buddy and I slept under the other raincoat. We'd been told that at nine o'clock in the morning there would be an artillery barrage where the enemy is, and that's for fifteen minutes, after which we would attack, which we did. And we were successful.

Scull-DeArmeY: Were you fighting Germans?

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmeY: What was the—

Landau: We had a lot of guys hurt; half the company was disabled or dead. That was our biggest fight.

Scull-DeArmeY: The first one?

Landau: In the whole war, yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: The first one.

Landau: But we were at such a point of training that we would have beat anybody.
0:43:36.6 (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: You were good?

Landau: We were good; we were well trained, and we weren't into being hurt. In other words that didn't bother us because we'd been training a long time and never got hurt. Well, it doesn't work that way in combat; you do get hurt. And as I mentioned it was that night that I acquired the BAR, which I carried for a month and a day and turned it over to Floyd Cashmore. 0:43:54.5 Floyd carried it for a month and turned it over to one of the new men that came into the organization, and I don't remember his name. The next guy, I don't remember his name either, and he must have been a replacement because I remember all the guys that went over with us.

Scull-DeArmey: So the outcome of that battle, did you guys take prisoners?

Landau: We took a few prisoners there, yeah. Um-hm, yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: What was your—

Landau: There was something else I wanted to say about that. [My buddy was killed that morning, Robert Sinclair.]

Scull-DeArmey: OK.

Landau: But—OK. Well, that was it.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. What was your emotional state like then, after that battle? Was that the first time you'd seen casualties? 0:45:04.6

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah, uh-huh. How were you doing after that?

Landau: I didn't have any trouble, and I don't think the other guys had much trouble either because we knew it was going to come. And that's, of course as I say, that's when I became the BAR-man, and I was trying to think of something else related there, and I can't.

Scull-DeArmey: It might come back to you. Are there other things that stand out in your memory about your time abroad?

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmev: Tell me about some other ones. What else do you remember?

Landau: Well, there's a number of them that are indelible. I think I mentioned, or was I talking to somebody else, about some patrols I was on. 0:46:07.6 These are out of order, now. OK?

Scull-DeArmev: That's OK.

Landau: We had some loss; we didn't have any commissioned officers in our platoons. OK? They took some of our regular noncoms, noncommissioned officers and gave them battlefield commissions. 0:46:50.5 Then they either sent them back to the same outfit or for another outfit that needed them worse than you did. Well, we were up on a mountain, near the top, and they called me over to join another bunch of soldiers that were there to bring a platoon up to strength. OK? They don't send patrols out on an under-strength unit if they can help it. So they brought it up by putting some of us into this other platoon. During the night there was some replacement came in, including a couple of officers, second lieutenants, brand-new; sent out on patrol; went down to mountain to a little stream, up the other side just a little ways and stopped there. Now, I think the lieutenant was ordered to do certain things: get to that point, pick somebody to go with you, and go up and check where the enemy is. So he picked a sergeant and myself to go with him, this lieutenant. We walked up, and we found a tank trap, which was part of the German fortifications. 0:48:23.1 A big trench is what it was along the side of the hill. And we found a ladder to get up onto the high ground; went up the ladder, and the lieutenant went up first, the first to step forward. The sergeant went up second and stepped to the left of the lieutenant. I went up and stepped to the right of the lieutenant. At that time there was a shot, and the lieutenant went back into the hole. 0:49:04.4 The sergeant and I, of course, almost beat him to the ground. We got down fast (inaudible). One of the reasons this guy got shot—I'm pretty sure—is he just came from a school where he was trained to be a second lieutenant, and he had a nice, bright uniform on, so the Germans had no choice but to shoot the officer, not the noncoms.

Scull-DeArmev: They would be the target first?

Landau: Yeah. So we went down and looked at him; we saw a hole in the front of his uniform; opened up the shirt, and we didn't realize he was dead at that time. We put a bandage on that wound, turned him over to look on the back, and there was hole, exit hole in the back. And that's when we realized we were not going to be successful here. But we'd have had a hard time getting him out of that tank track and back down to where the unit was. They were still waiting down there, under the command of the second, whoever it was second-in-command, probably a noncom. So we decided we'd go back and get the whole platoon, come and get him out of the hole, and do whatever we needed to do with him. But the guy in command of that platoon decided he should go back to where the company was. So we left him there, and we went on to wherever we went after that, and I don't remember where we went immediately. But that's only

part of the story. About fifteen years ago I was talking to a guy, who was a real good soldier and a French-Canadian, about what he'd done then. And he told me a story about being assigned, by a lieutenant, to come out of a platoon and go and climb into a tank track and see what happened. He told the lieutenant, "Don't go up there. Don't go up there, lieutenant. Don't go up there." The lieutenant did; one shot, and he's done. So the two stories are so close in results that it was always amazing to me. So that's one of the things that I do remember. Most of the things that I remember are the things that were unusual or truly scary. 0:52:00.9 And a scary one was: the whole day was a bundle of nervous things. But we were in a little village, and the area was flooded. The Germans and the French had—they knew this area would flood certain times of the year for defense. This was a defensive thing; they flooded the whole area. The roads were all raised so that you could travel the roads, but you couldn't go off to the sides. We woke up that morning and found that we had a new, or a couple of new replacements. One of them was a kid that was very scared, 0:52:53.7 crying, not so good. Well, one of our guys looked out the window, looked across all this water, and a little bridge over where a creek would be if the water wasn't so high, and there was something in a foxhole over there that looked like a man. So we thought we better get rid of him. So they called me, and this happened to me several times. I was the BAR-man at that time, and they thought that the BAR-man ought to do that. So I fired one shot, and there was no movement out there, so we figured I got him. That shot set that kid off. No. There was something else happened. After that shot, the Germans dropped one mortar shell on our roof. That mortar had a very sensitive trigger, and this one exploded up in the roof, and that set the kid off to where he was wild. It was kind of scary. OK? So we left there and went around the town and come back out that road where the bridge was and where that body was, we thought. And the body wasn't there, so either he got up and walked away, or they picked him up and took him out, which I think was the case. And when we were going down there, I got stopped there. There was a firefight ahead. 0:54:33.2 I got stopped right there at that bridge, and before long there was a shell dropped right near me. Pretty soon I heard a cannon go off, and I had a shell come in by me. At least a half a dozen shells that I heard the gun go off; I knew it was coming. (laughter) Jeez! I was worried.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah.

Landau: So I yelled out to the guys ahead to move ahead, to get away from this bridge because the Germans were obviously zeroed in on that bridge. I couldn't move, but finally the shelling stopped, and everything was OK. We moved ahead a little bit, into a little woods, and dug in for the night. And about dark—no, it was still daylight. There was a wounded German a few yards ahead of us. 0:55:42.6 He was calling for a medic, and this term the Germans called "sani-tair." That was a medic. He kept calling and getting weaker, and about dawn he died. But having that "sani-tair" all night long didn't help. So that was a busy day.

Scull-DeArmey: What happened to the kid? Did he ever get OK?

Landau: I have no idea. They took him out.

Scull-DeArmey: Took him out.

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. Hm, he just wasn't cut out for it, I guess.

Landau: I guess, but that's the only time it happened. Oh, no. One other time I got involved with a guy that lost his rocker. That's another story, too.

Scull-DeArmey: Do you want to talk about that one?

Landau: If you want me to.

Scull-DeArmey: Sure, if you want to.

Landau: OK. We were near the German border. I should give you some background. On this particular day, we did cross into Germany; we were the first unit in the 7th Army to go into the German—to cross the German [border]. 0:57:11.1 There'd been a big fight the day before. And associated with us was an antitank unit, kind of a powerful unit that had gotten beat up pretty bad that day before. Now, these guys were blacks, and there was no mingling. They had their own unit, 0:57:37.9 and they really fought hard there, and they got all kinds of awards for how they did. But then we moved out of that little village, up a little rise in the ground, and over here's a guardhouse for controlling the border, with a big bike and so on. And this guardhouse is poured concrete, real well built, right close to the road. We walked down a slope towards a little forest ahead of us, and there was a fellow on the right side, who was a little ahead of me, and on back here, about even with that building. This guy got scared, and got up, and ran back to the building, and they shot him. 0:58:42.8 He shouldn't have moved. But now I'm sitting over here with mortar shells falling around me. Do I stay there, or do I run, also? Since I was right close to the building, and I was at right angles to the line of sight instead of straight on like the other guy was, I had a chance, and I made it.

Scull-DeArmey: You made a run for it?

Landau: Yeah, uh-huh. While I was in this building with a lot of other guys, maybe fifteen or twenty men, either in the basement or—there were a lot of guys there, and one of them lost his cool. In among all these guys, you got this guy screaming and yelling and so on; that wasn't so good. 0:59:31.3

Scull-DeArmey: What did you do with him?

Landau: They sent him back.

Scull-DeArmey: But I mean exactly how do you handle it when it starts happening? Do you try to talk to him?

Landau: No. You can't do anything with him. They had to get him out of there, which we did. He was happy to leave.

Scull-DeArmey: So you guys were the first 7th Army Unit to cross—

Landau: —[into Germany.]

Scull-DeArmey: How long did you stay there? Do you remember?

Landau: Not very long at all. There's more to that story. We thought everything was (inaudible). Some of the guys had seen Germans leave the position we were looking for. Well, maybe the Germans were all around, but we left the building. We were standing out in front of the building when somebody spotted some Germans coming out of a house down there, and they said, "Hey, Buck, shoot at them; shoot him." This is—oh, I got ahead of me on something. Anyhow, before I could get a gun up, these [Germans] were gone. But the point there is, if you're carrying a BAR, people expect you to use it. All these guys were standing around with loaded rifles; they weren't going to shoot it. They called for the BAR to handle it. That happened to me on three occasions. 1:01:10.2 OK. Back to that one. We left then; we were in Germany, and at some point we had to back out. I think when the Battle of the Bulge occurred, we weren't in that battle proper, but we were shifted around to make a balance of power 1:01:35.2 to cover some other situations. Where was I going with that one?

Scull-DeArmey: I have a list of questions here, so when you kind of—

Landau: Oh, I've got a couple of hours yet, but let's get to the questions, huh? (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: But I love your stories, so when you think of a story to tell, you just go ahead and tell it. Anything else that stands out?

Landau: Let me tell you one other time that I was told to use my BAR. It's the same cartridge, OK? It's the same power; it's just that the BAR is a semiautomatic, or an automatic. It'll keep firing like a machine gun, or you can fire it single shot. 1:02:28.7 Well, this was about Christmastime. We were in the little village and were sent out on patrol to go down, and behind the houses was a railroad track and a little creek. We went down to a little bridge, crossed the creek, come back up till we were about behind there across from where we had the whole unit. There were some foxholes there that the Germans had dug. One of the guys looked up on the hill behind us, and there was a camouflage tarp there that was moving up the hill. OK? And they don't do that normally.

Scull-DeArmey: Not your guys.

Landau: No. There was a German under that tarp. OK? So everybody says, “Buck, shoot him.” So I fired off two shots, one of which I don’t know what it did. The second shot, because of something else I had done earlier, went way high. And so I either got him on the first shot, or I didn’t get him. One of the other guys now, with his rifle, shot also. Then this German decided he better come out from underneath that, which he did, and we’d hit him in the arm. We don’t know who hit him, but he had a wound in the arm, and we patched him up and took him as a prisoner. 1:04:07.6 But that was the third incident where I was told do the shooting when other guys could have shot easier and faster than I could. OK. That’s so much for the BAR thing.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. All right. How were you staying in touch with your family and your friends back home?

Landau: Tell you what about the friends back home?

Scull-DeArmey: How did you stay in touch?

Landau: By mail, and I have all that mail. 1:04:42.2

Scull-DeArmey: Wow! Who did you write it to?

Landau: My mother, my girlfriend, and a couple of other friends.

Scull-DeArmey: So they saved them?

Landau: My mother saved all those, and I have hers. The other people I have no idea what they did with my letters.

Scull-DeArmey: Right.

Landau: But I have all theirs.

Scull-DeArmey: Um-hm. What do you think you’ll do with them?

Landau: What should I do with them? (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: Well, you know, different museums archive stuff like that. If you think your kids want them, they could have them.

Landau: I brought a lot of stuff with me, but I didn’t bring any of that correspondence because it’s so voluminous. I have hundreds of letters. But that’s how I communicated with home. My mother must have written me 100 letters. My dad wrote me two. (laughter) He said in both letters, “Your mother tells you everything, so I won’t bother you.” (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: What did your letters look like when you got them? Had they been censored?

Landau: They were censored before they left the company area. Yep. As a matter of fact, I looked at one night before last; they had the second lieutenant's initials on it.

Scull-DeArmey: Were there holes in it? No? (phone rings) Oh, that's my phone. I should have turned it off. OK. We'll just ignore it.

Landau: Mine rang, also.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. I don't even know where my cellphone is right now. I'll just put it under here.

Landau: OK.

Scull-DeArmey: So it wasn't like today with computers and cellphones and all that stuff.

Landau: No. It was strictly mail, strictly mail. They had two classes of mail. One is regular mail; the other is what they call V-mail [Victory Mail], which was cheaper. They limited the amount of words you could put it; it was limited, how much you could use.

Scull-DeArmey: Which did you find that you used more?

Landau: The regular mail. I don't have all but just a very few V-mails. I had two or three telegrams. (crying)

Scull-DeArmey: Do you need to take a break. I don't have any Kleenex.

Landau: I'll be all right.

Scull-DeArmey: You OK? Yeah. So the telegrams probably were not good news. No. Do you want to talk about that?

Landau: I guess I'm going to have to. (crying)

Scull-DeArmey: You don't have to, but you can.

Landau: Someday I've got to.

Scull-DeArmey: Um-hm, yeah.

Landau: My brother.

Scull-DeArmey: Your brother.

Landau: And an uncle. That's it.

Scull-DeArmey: Where were they?

Landau: My brother was in France; both were in France. OK.

Scull-DeArmey: So both in combat? Yeah.

Landau: Yep.

Scull-DeArmey: I'm so sorry that that happened to you.

Landau: So what are we going to do next?

Scull-DeArmey: What do we want to do next? Well, the next question does not fit the mood at all, but I'll read it because it's the next one.

Landau: Sure.

Scull-DeArmey: What did you do for recreation when you were off duty? 1:09:06.2

Landau: Didn't have many situations like that, but down in Texas, I met a young lady who was interesting to be with, and when I could get down to Dallas, that's where I went. Other than that, just like all the other soldiers down there, we got booze.

Scull-DeArmey: When you were overseas, was there ever time when you felt you could relax?

Landau: Yeah, there were.

Scull-DeArmey: Out in the field?

Landau: In fact I had one situation where the whole division and other divisions, too, I think, would pick certain men, a small number of men and send them to Nancy, France, in the case of my work, for three days of rest, good meals, good brandy. It was fun.

Scull-DeArmey: Well, was there anything to do there? Did you play cards? What did you do when you were there?

Landau: Played pinochle, cribbage; that's about what we did when we were laying around, doing nothing.

Scull-DeArmeY: Was it a place where you felt safe?

Landau: Well, we were in places where we were safe, yeah. From time to time, they rotate the units in a situation like that so that two units are online. There are three units. OK? Two online, and one in reserve, and then they rotate those.

Scull-DeArmeY: OK. What were the times like when you were in reserve?

Landau: Usually we didn't do anything, just stood around, sat around, talked. When we were actually in action, we had no games with us.

Scull-DeArmeY: So when you were out in the field actually, you'd gotten away from KP at boot camp, and you were really out, doing these battles. What was food like when you were out there? Did you have rations? Did you ever carry rations with you for food?

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmeY: Tell me about those.

Landau: We had two types of rations; one was the K-ration; the other one was the C-ration. 1:12:11.0 C-rations we very seldom saw; they were canned stuff that you could heat up when there was permission for heating it, and it gave you a pretty good meal. The other was K-rations, which was more like hors d'oeuvres: (laughter) the cheese in a little can or potted meat of some kind, beef of some kind, and it was in a box about so long, so high, and so wide, enough there for a sustaining meal. It would keep you alive, but it certainly wasn't going to fatten you.

Scull-DeArmeY: How did you get those?

Landau: Every company had two Jeeps, and they used them to deliver mail, deliver food, 1:13:05.2 whatever was necessary. And we usually carried at least one more K-ration than we needed; always kept a reserve because there were times when there'd be a couple of days before we did get anything to eat.

Scull-DeArmeY: Did you go hungry sometimes?

Landau: [Yes.]

Scull-DeArmeY: Yeah. What do you think is the most that you ever went without food?

Landau: It was no more than a couple of days.

Scull-DeArmeY: A couple of days. What about drinking water? 1:13:42.0

Landau: I don't know what we did for drinking water in action. I don't know. But I think it was brought to us in water cans, GI water cans, if you know what they look like?

Scull-DeArmey: About how big are those?

Landau: They'd hold five gallons, and they had cans for fuel and cans for water, and the water was brought up to us in those cans.

Scull-DeArmey: You didn't rely on the local water at all?

Landau: No.

Scull-DeArmey: Didn't trust it?

Landau: No. I relied on a local woman for some potato soup, and I was so sick I couldn't continue with the unit. Me and everybody else that ate the soup got sick.

Scull-DeArmey: Do you think she did it on purpose?

Landau: No. We should have known better, not to do that because foreign people like that have different bugs than we have, and that was tough. So we were told to stay in the farmhouse, right near there. We took over that farmhouse and stayed there. "We'll send somebody for you." Well, I guess it was two days that nobody came for us, so this one fellow, Colbert and myself decided, "We'd better get out of here and go find the unit," which we did. And that's the little trip that I was on when I told you that we had feather comforters and so on. OK? We walked by this house, and we were greeted by occupants. They not only put us up for the night; they fed us. There was a man and two women there. The man left late in the afternoon; it was on the top of a mountain near Strasbourg. He was a wine merchant in Strasbourg. He disappeared, and then he come back, and he had a package in his hand in which he had two beautiful pork chops and three other pork chops that looked like they were pressed out of a machine or something, ugly-looking, mean. (laughter) So they gave us the good pork chops, and they must have paid through the nose to get those pork chops. 1:16:25.2 (Inaudible) OK. So we keep heading on the next morning, and by the middle of the afternoon we had found the outfit; back to work.

Scull-DeArmey: So you were feeling better.

Landau: It was over.

Scull-DeArmey: It was over, yeah. Send somebody back for the other guys?

Landau: I have no idea; don't know what they did.

Scull-DeArmey: How did you—

Landau: But—

Scull-DeArmey: Um-hm, go ahead.

Landau: Well, that's it.

Scull-DeArmey: How did you find the people, the civilians who were around? Did you have very many encounters with civilians? 1:17:04.9

Landau: Not too much. Of course when we got into Germany it wasn't legal. "Do not fraternize with the enemy." When we were in Alsace and Lorraine, the people were friendly, but they almost always vacated where a battle was going to be. They were smart enough to get out.

Scull-DeArmey: So when they saw either military, either side, coming in, they went somewhere else.

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. How did you know where to go? I know you got—

Landau: I don't know, but we did ask a couple of natives if they saw such and such a sign of movement, and that helped us. But generally I don't know how. We found them with no trouble. (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: Did you guys have, like, compasses with you, you know to tell the direction? A compass?

Landau: No, we didn't.

Scull-DeArmey: Nobody? I guess somebody carried one, but not everybody.

Landau: The officers. The officers carried a compass, yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah.

Landau: But none of the noncoms that I know of carried a compass.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you feel like you kind of knew your way around once you got somewhere, like if you'd been separated, you'd feel like you could have found your way somewhere? Or did you just feel completely lost? 1:18:44.6

Landau: You talking about while I'm on this—

Scull-DeArmey: Just when you were traveling in general, like—

Landau: When we were traveling in general, we were in a big group. OK?

Scull-DeArmey: But did you feel like, “If I got separated, I’d kind of know where I am”?

Landau: The question, I don’t think, ever came up in my mind, (laughter) which means I wasn’t worried about it.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. That’s right. That was probably the least of your worries.

Landau: Yes.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. So you never got separated except that one time?

Landau: Yeah, I did get separated one other time. 1:19:30.4

Scull-DeArmey: What happened? Tell me about that?

Landau: I had trouble with my feet, and we were making a long march, and I couldn’t keep up. I fell back. And after several hours there was a firefight ahead, and I was heading for that firefight because I figured that’s where my guys are. There was some machine gun and some cannon fire that told me I’d better get into a hole, and there were some holes there, which I got into. And when things quieted down, I come out and went and found my unit.

Scull-DeArmey: So you were right. The firefight was your guys?

Landau: Yes, um-hm. Yeah. They took a beating. It was one of the worst days we had.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. What was going on with your feet? 1:20:43.3

Landau: I had plantar fasciitis. Very painful.

Scull-DeArmey: Very painful, wow, hm.

Landau: And towards the end of the war, we finished the firefight, and we were starting to accumulate; getting ready to continue south. We were really heading south at that time. I started downhill, and walking downhill with plantar fasciitis is the worst pain. So I told an officer I was having that trouble, and he said, “Well, get in that ambulance there.” And there were several ambulances there because there were some guys wounded in the firefight. So they took me to a field hospital and put me to bed, and I stayed there for something over a week, and it healed.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you ever have trouble with it again?

Landau: Not the plantar fascia, but I had something to happen that I'm not sure what it was, but it cleared up so that I didn't bother to get any help with it. My feet started to ooze a sticky substance, and that might have been just a leftover from the plantar stuff, or I might have had a little trench foot. I don't know what it was, but it went away by itself.

Scull-DeArmey: Um-hm, yeah. Was it painful?

Landau: No.

Scull-DeArmey: Hm.

Landau: But it was ugly. (laughter) My feet had an ugly color. (laughter) OK.

Scull-DeArmey: It might have been the byproduct of bacteria. You know?

Landau: It very well could have been.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah, just pus. Right?

Landau: No. It was clear liquid.

Scull-DeArmey: It wasn't like pus.

Landau: No.

Scull-DeArmey: No. Strange.

Landau: I don't think so, very sticky.

Scull-DeArmey: Wow. That's really weird. That's a weird one. Do you remember where you were when you heard the war ended?

Landau: Oh, yes.

Scull-DeArmey: Where were you? Tell me about hearing about the end of the war.
1:23:12.0

Landau: Well, the first one, I was in the hospital. OK? And I was there through the war being over, and I was in the hospital orderly room, and there was a notice on the wall.

Scull-DeArmey: Do you remember the date?

Landau: Well, it would have been either May the eighth or the ninth or the tenth because May 8 was VE [Victory in Europe] Day. Right? [May 8, 1945]

Scull-DeArmey: I'm sorry; I don't know.

Landau: I think so.

Scull-DeArmey: But we know—

Landau: And it might have been the day before I saw that notice. I'm sure the guys talked about it.

Scull-DeArmey: What was your reaction? Do you remember?

Landau: Oh, happy because VE Day, it wasn't all that great for us because we were scheduled as soon as that happened, to start reorganizing, going into Japan. And I'd rather stay in Europe than stay in Japan. So good, old Harry [Truman], he fixed that.
1:24:40.7

Scull-DeArmey: So what was the year when you got in Europe? What year was that?

Landau: What about what?

Scull-DeArmey: When you arrived in Europe?

Landau: When I was in—

Scull-DeArmey: The year that you put your foot on European soil?

Landau: Oh, that was in October of [19]44.

Scull-DeArmey: And then May, when—

Landau: And then VE-Day was May 8, I think.

Scull-DeArmey: Forty-seven, was it [19]47?

Landau: No, [19]45.

Scull-DeArmey: Forty-five, OK, so yeah, about a year; about a year you were—

Landau: There's something wrong here. We were only in action—we were in Europe from October to September, through September, yeah. OK. (laughter) That's almost a year, but six months of it was in action.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. So how long was it that you thought, “We’re going into Japan”? Tell me about that. 1:25:53.6

Landau: Oh, well, we meandered around, and we worked as army of occupation for a while, and we were in Austria. Our outfit took the Brenner Pass. You know where the Brenner Pass is? Have you heard of the Brenner Pass?

Scull-DeArmey: I’ve heard of the Brenner Pass.

Landau: Yeah. It’s between Italy and Austria. And some of our unit took—where were we?

Scull-DeArmey: You knew the war had ended in Europe, but you thought you were going to have to go to Japan.

Landau: Yes. When we saw that they were serious, when they closed our division out, wiped out the 103rd Division and put everybody in the 45th Division to bring it up to strength, and they put us on a train up to northern France into Le Havre; took us on a ferry over to Portsmouth, England, and headed home. In the meantime we had all new clothes issued, all new insignia, everything new when they transferred from the 103rd to the 45th Division. And that’s where we were, and in that case I was in that little orderly room, in that embarkation camp, when the news on Japan came through, and that was good news. 1:27:49.4

Scull-DeArmey: Had you known anything at all about atomic bombs before that? I guess nobody knew.

Landau: When they first brought the news in, the people giving us the news didn’t know what they were talking about, either.

Scull-DeArmey: What did they tell you?

Landau: What they talked about was this special bomb that was twenty thousand times such and such an amount of TNT [chemical explosive material]. They knew there was a big bomb dropped, but we didn’t know immediately what it was.

Scull-DeArmey: But you knew Japan surrendered?

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. As you think back on your time in battle, is there anything else you want to put on the record, any of your memories that you would like to record here today about being in World War II?

Landau: A little sidelight. On the way across going over to Europe, we were on a ship, the *Monticello*, which was an Italian luxury liner that had been captured; not a

big one, six hundred and some feet, and my company, Company I, was assigned to KP duty for the whole trip; two weeks it took us to cross, which gave us the run of the ship. Anybody who didn't have a job like that went into the hold and got onto their bunk and stayed there for the whole trip. So I was fortunate 1:29:49.9 that when we come in through Gibraltar, I got a look at it at sunset. That was nice. That was a bonus. Well, I feel—I'm tired.

Scull-DeArmey: Today, right now?

Landau: Uh-huh. And I'm not thinking clearly, and I'm not recalling these things that I should be.

Scull-DeArmey: Are you ready to stop?

Landau: No.

Scull-DeArmey: No? You're not?

Landau: Well, how long we—

Scull-DeArmey: It's almost 3:30. We've got another hour, but I don't want to make you tired.

Landau: I would rather just do as much as I can.

Scull-DeArmey: All right. You tell me if you need to stop. OK? Do you want a cup of coffee?

Landau: Oh, that would be fantastic.

Scull-DeArmey: All right. All I have is milk. I don't have any sugar to put in it. Is that OK?

Landau: I'll drink it black.

Scull-DeArmey: You want it black?

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. This is going to make some noise, and all I have is Kahlua flavored; it doesn't have any alcohol in it. Oh, gosh! That's your—I don't want to hurt those. (Sounds of the interviewer making coffee) I hope it doesn't splash.

Landau: How about that?

Scull-DeArmey: It's splashing a little bit. Oh, I hope it doesn't overflow; it is going to overflow. Is it too full? Here. I'm going to put some of it in here. I think it's a little too full. And I don't have any—do you have your handkerchief?

Landau: Uh-huh.

Scull-DeArmey: Because I don't want to—it's going to—

Landau: I'll put it on here. Is that OK?

Scull-DeArmey: Well, I just don't want it to get on your clothes. OK.

Landau: Boy, it smells good. (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: It smells really good.

Landau: Well, do you have some more questions?

Scull-DeArmey: Well, is there anything else that you think about that you want to put down about your time in combat?

Landau: Well, I thought I would try to think of some more while we're doing yours.

Scull-DeArmey: All right.

Landau: OK?

Scull-DeArmey: How did you return home?

Landau: Return home? We spent a couple of weeks in England after we left France and boarded the *Aquitania*. 1:32:43.2 The *Aquitania* is one of the biggest ships up to that time, a sister ship to the *Lusitania*, which the Germans had sunk.

Scull-DeArmey: And did you go—

Landau: I got a funny one on that.

Scull-DeArmey: OK.

Landau: Coming into New York Harbor on this big ship. OK? We have on the one side the State of Liberty. We have on the other side some big yachts with women on them. The guys all went to that side, (laughter) and the captain had to get on the loudspeaker and say, "Men, you have to get on the other side of this ship. I can't go into port looking like this." (laughter) But there was enough guys moved over there to make that ship [list].

Scull-DeArmey: It was listing?

Landau: Make that ship list, about like that. (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: So that's the one that you actually came back to the States on? You came into—

Landau: On the *Aquitania*.

Scull-DeArmey: —New York.

Landau: Into New York. Oh, and when we got in, we were given a thirty-day furlough, which I enjoyed at home.

Scull-DeArmey: You went home?

Landau: I went home on that furlough, back to Texas, first down to a camp in South Texas. Then when my discharge was ready, they sent me up to Camp Fannin, the camp that I'd joined first. I guess that's how they kept the record straight, bringing men back to their starting point. They gave me the money to go home on, and told me to go buy my ticket. That's the parade I got. (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: What was happening to your salary while you were serving?

Landau: I didn't have any salary. I was in school.

Scull-DeArmey: But I mean when you were in battle.

Landau: Yeah. Oh, we got paid.

Scull-DeArmey: So it was sent to you.

Landau: It was given to me in cash.

Scull-DeArmey: What did you do with it?

Landau: The Army paid in cash.

Scull-DeArmey: What did you do with it?

Landau: I converted it all to paper so I could carry it well, and I carried it with me, and I had something over a thousand dollars when I come home, which was a lot of money then.

Scull-DeArmey: Sure. I wouldn't turn it down today! (laughter)

Landau: Right.

Scull-DeArmey: What was your salary? 1:35:40.4

Landau: Sixty-four dollars.

Scull-DeArmey: A month.

Landau: A month. No. It was sixty-four dollars a day, once a month. (laughter)
But when you go overseas, you get a bonus, like 20 percent, on top of that. If you get a raise in grade, you get additional money.

Scull-DeArmey: Did you get a raise in grade while you were there? 1:36:03.3

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: Um-hm. You went in as a private. How'd you come out?

Landau: A sergeant.

Scull-DeArmey: So what kinds of things did you do when you were on leave at home? 1:36:20.8

Landau: Played. No, actually I worked. My dad had a contracting business as his dad did and as his dad did, and as I actually did. I worked on jobs during that time off. I wasn't required to, but I did.

Scull-DeArmey: You're a hard worker.

Landau: Well, some people say I'm dumb for what I did. (laughter) I quit working last year.

Scull-DeArmey: You didn't retire till last year?

Landau: Right.

Scull-DeArmey: You must have enjoyed it?

Landau: It was better than sitting around doing nothing, which is what I'm doing now. (Inaudible)

Scull-DeArmey: Oh, well. I guess you had a happy reunion with your family. 1:37:16.6

Landau: Yes. And my girlfriend.

Scull-DeArmey: Your girlfriend? Yeah?

Landau: My boyfriends. We did a lot of partying then. Boy, that was Party Central.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. Well, you earned it. Right?

Landau: That's what we thought.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. So how did you—

Landau: Well, let me—

Scull-DeArmey: Um-hm?

Landau: Let me think a little bit. I'm going to run through my trip to Europe. OK?

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah.

Landau: See what I can come up with. After we landed in Marseilles and ended up making that trip up the mountain, there was an interesting thing: a horse-drawn kitchen that the German Army had. They had horse-drawn wagons, kitchens. What else? Still in use.

Scull-DeArmey: In the [19]40s.

Landau: Uh-huh. But then I got to thinking about Camp Fannin, where I went for training. It was a new camp. They'd just built it. They were grading the outside, and they were grading it with mules and a scraper. (laughter)

Scull-DeArmey: There were a lot of mules in the South in the 1940s.

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. Wow. Yeah. Have you stayed in contact with your fellow veterans over the years? 1:39:13.2

Landau: Not very well.

Scull-DeArmey: How did you get with this group?

Landau: You mean the 103rd Division?

Scull-DeArmey: Everyone who's here now. Do y'all have a reunion?

Landau: Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah. That's why we're here, for a reunion.

Scull-DeArmey: Have you done that?

Landau: This is only my second one. I was to the reunion in 2000.

Scull-DeArmey: How often do they do it? Yearly?

Landau: Every year.

Scull-DeArmey: Really? OK.

Landau: Up to now. Now the issue is whether they're going to continue at all because they don't have enough people (inaudible) like eleven veterans here right now. They either got to recruit some other people or drop it.

Scull-DeArmey: Well, that would be a shame.

Landau: Yes, it would be. The only way you could keep it going is if you could convince the families of these vets that they should do it.

Scull-DeArmey: Or maybe just include some other units. You know? Maybe not have to be the 103rd, but I'll bet there are other units who are having the same problem.

Landau: Yeah. But it wouldn't be the same, being with another unit's men, even if we're low. I told you they sent us from the 103rd to the 45th Division. We went home as the 45th Division. When the war ended and they sent us our discharge papers, they said 103rd Division. They wiped out the move to the 45th to put us with our old boys.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. Did you make any friends in the 45th? Were you there long enough?

Landau: No. I can't—well, some of my friends went with me from the 103rd, so I had people I knew.

Scull-DeArmey: Are you a member of any veterans' organizations?

Landau: No. I was at one time a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, but they weren't all that great at that time.

Scull-DeArmey: It sounds like you were working too much.

Landau: Well, I went back to school to finish my degree. 1:41:57.2

Scull-DeArmey: Oh, tell me about that.

Landau: Well, I still needed about a quarter or two quarters. They gave me credit for the time in at Texas A & M, so I picked up three months that time. So I got out a little early, out of college, for that reason. But I never had summer vacations, so whether I worked or not was academic. I was in school. The last summer I had a vacation was after my eleventh year in high school. When I graduated from high school, I had to take some additional courses to get into the engineering school, so that killed that summer. Then all the colleges went on a trimester plan, three semesters a year. So that killed all the summers till I got out of school.

Scull-DeArme y: And then so what did you do when you got out of college?

Landau: I went back to work in the family's business. 1:43:15.7

Scull-DeArme y: OK. And how old were you when you took over? Do you remember?

Landau: I should remember that, shouldn't I? (laughter) I didn't really take it over. I still had an uncle; I still had an uncle and a cousin in the business. So I think I was president of the company in the mid to late [19]70s. Then at that time I decided I wanted to live on a farm. 1:44:00.9 My wife at the time, she wanted to, also. So we bought a farm out in the country, which meant I had a lot of traveling to do, and eventually I sold my interest in the family business and started my own company.

Scull-DeArme y: And did you keep farming? Did you continue to farm?

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArme y: What did you do? Tell me about the farm.

Landau: Well, I raised cattle, and I raised the hay to feed them, and that was it.

Scull-DeArme y: Could you make money?

Landau: I had to make money. Every two out of five years, I think, I had to make money in order to have a legitimate business; otherwise it's a hobby. (laughter)

Scull-DeArme y: Well, was it a hobby, or was it a—

Landau: Yeah.

Scull-DeArme y: —legitimate business?

Landau: I tried to make money. I tried to operate to make money, and I think it did.

Scull-DeArme y: I think it's harder now. What year was that when you got the farm?

Landau: About 1975.

Scull-DeArme y: It was getting harder to make money on a farm by then.

Landau: Yes.

Scull-DeArme y: Yeah. Everything was getting costly; fuel was going up. So did you at least break even? Did you break even enough to enjoy having a hobby.

Landau: Two years out of five made a profit.

Scull-DeArme y: And then the others, did you break even?

Landau: No. (laughter) No. They were tax advantages.

Scull-DeArme y: Yeah. So what happened to the farm?

Landau: I sold it, and earlier this year, my number two son and I made a trip up to Washington DC, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, where I have family, and we went on and drove around the place out in the country, and the whole area is depressed. It was all nice pastureland when we left, and it just turned out to be not nice. The barn's falling apart.

Scull-DeArme y: Did you ever think about trees?

Landau: Trees?

Scull-DeArme y: Um-hm.

Landau: You mean raising trees?

Scull-DeArme y: Farming trees?

Landau: As a matter of fact, I did, and I actually was doing that because I had some trees on the property that were growing. But I wouldn't have gone into the Christmas tree business, for instance.

Scull-DeArme y: Oh. Were they Christmas trees?

Landau: No. I didn't have—I say I wouldn't go into Christmas trees.

Scull-DeArme y: Longleaf pine is one of the natives in Pennsylvania, isn't it? Longleaf pine?

Landau: They don't call it longleaf pine; they call it white pine. But I think it's the same tree.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. But it takes a while; I think it takes forty-five years.

Landau: Where'd you learn this?

Scull-DeArmey: Another project we're working on, yeah.

Landau: OK.

Scull-DeArmey: So it takes a while to be able to harvest.

Landau: One of the guys that I checked on yesterday, who was a lieutenant, battlefield commission, his dad was a logger from Michigan. Pardon me.

Scull-DeArmey: Oh, bless you.

Landau: OK. Where we going to go now? There's got to be another couple of hours available, (laughter) but I can't bring them up today.

Scull-DeArmey: I think we've covered what you've done since you left the military, but just reflecting back over your life—well, first let me ask you about your family. You have children, so I assume you got married.

Landau: Um-hm.

Scull-DeArmey: OK. When did you marry? 1:48:26.2

Landau: Nineteen forty-eight.

Scull-DeArmey: And how many children?

Landau: Five.

Scull-DeArmey: You have *five* children; that's a lot.

Landau: They're all here.

Scull-DeArmey: Oh, that's wonderful. That's wonderful. And is your wife still with you?

Landau: No. I divorced; would've been seventy-eight, I guess, 1978, and married another girl within a year, and she died about three years ago.

Scull-DeArmey: Oh. Was that a happy marriage?

Landau: It was OK, yeah.

Scull-DeArmey: Good.

Landau: We had a lot of fun together. The first one was sometimes happy, too, but not always.

Scull-DeArmey: No. Well, probably spent a lot of time raising kids.

Landau: She did a good job with the kids. If you would know the kids, you'd know that she did a good job.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. Looking back over your life, can you think of how your wartime experiences affected your life? 1:49:34.5

Landau: It has and to the good. And it's always something to talk about. You can BS with anybody if he's a veteran. So that was easy, and there's lots of benefits, both VA [Veterans' Administration] benefits and so on, that are very worthwhile that you get as a result of being a veteran, and it paid for my last year and a half of school. I got all my tools, my slide rules and all that kind of stuff paid for. My hearing aids, I get that for nothing, and they're worth \$2000 apiece.

Scull-DeArmey: That's terrific, yeah. What about lessons that you learned in the war? Do you feel like you brought back lessons or wisdom or experience that helped?

Landau: Well, I can't think of anything that's special. I just got myself home. That's the main thing.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah. Do you feel like serving in the military has affected your feelings about the military or war in general?

Landau: Well, we got to have wars; it's where I start from. And let's make them as good a war as we can. 1:51:07.0

Scull-DeArmey: How do you think we can do that? How do we make good wars?

Landau: Make good agreements with other people, especially our friends, and don't get into stuff like Obama's in right now with that Iran deal. I don't know where you are with politics, but that's got to be one of the most foolish things, and I think it's so bad that I think news media is in on the act.

Scull-DeArmey: Do you?

Landau: I think they're allowing things to not be talked about and give you a little misinformation here and there.

Scull-DeArmey: Yeah, they have a lot of power.

Landau: Oh, unbelievable.

Scull-DeArmeY: Yeah.

Landau: Yeah. So I don't know how we can resolve what's going on in the Mideast without a big war. It was a mistake in the first place to go and do what we did to Iraq, Afghanistan, and so on. We wiped out those strong men, and that's the only way you can control those Muslims, with strong men. Now, they want to get rid of [Assad], from Syria.

Scull-DeArmeY: I can't remember any of their names. Yeah.

Landau: Assad [Ashad al-Assad]. Anyhow, how that's going to go I don't know. I'm afraid that if Iran continues the way they are and do what they say they're going to do, they're going to go after Israel, and we are committed to go after anybody that goes after Israel.

Scull-DeArmeY: I feel very afraid for Israel; I do. I feel afraid for them. Yeah.

Landau: Yeah. And that's not going to be resolved quickly. There could be, a thousand years from now, and still not be solved. It's already a couple of thousand years old, 1500 years old now.

Scull-DeArmeY: Yeah. Unfortunately, though, now I think battles that would be fought in the Middle East, you know, because of nuclear weapons, it's going to affect the whole planet. But I don't know what the solution is; I don't know.

Landau: Well, the one thing that runs through my mind that makes me worry is Israel, itself, if they do something foolish. The most foolish thing they could do is drop an atomic bomb, and they have the ability to do that.

Scull-DeArmeY: Yeah. I don't think they will. I don't think they'd do it first.

Landau: I think not. They've got to be ready to dump immediately.

Scull-DeArmeY: But I mean, what else can they do? It's scary.

Landau: It's bad.

Scull-DeArmeY: It's a bad situation, yeah.

Landau: [Benjamin] Netanyahu made a speech last week that I listened to through the whole thing. I wish we had him for president.

Scull-DeArmeY: Really? (phone rings)

Landau: He's good. Boy, what a powerful talk, and the news media made a big fuss over it, which they should.

Scull-DeArme y: Yeah. There is my phone, again.

Landau: Yeah. Is that someone worrying you to finish up here?

Scull-DeArme y: It's my husband, but it's OK. He knows what I'm doing. I'll call him back. Do you have a—oh, go ahead.

Landau: Well, we did have a good time in England on the way home. 1:55:30.6 Well, first we went to Paris for fifteen hours. That was a big deal. Went to England and out to some of their resorts on the coast, and that was fun.

Scull-DeArme y: Good, yeah. How long were you in England, a day, a week?

Landau: About three weeks, I guess, something like that.

Scull-DeArme y: Good. Wow.

Landau: Yeah. Went to London.

Scull-DeArme y: I guess the civilians were pretty good to you.

Landau: It didn't make any difference because we were going to do what we wanted to do, period. And we did.

Scull-DeArme y: Do you have a message that you'd like to leave for future generations who hear the interview?

Landau: Tell me what were the last three words?

Scull-DeArme y: Do you have a message for people, coming in the future, that you want to record today, to leave a legacy?

Landau: I don't think so.

Scull-DeArme y: No? (laughter)

Landau: They're going to do their own thing. (laughter)

Scull-DeArme y: Well, is there anything you feel that we haven't discussed that you'd like—

Landau: Well, that's why I try—I'm pretty sure I have a lot of stuff I've missed, and I wasn't prepared for the way I feel.

Scull-DeArmeY: Well, you know, these little recorders right here are about \$80. And they're easy to use, and if you think of anything that you—you know, you should buy one, and you should start recording things when you think about them. We would love to have anything else that you would add. And Tommy Loftin, who came over from New Orleans, I know he would love to have anything if you just get your own machine and record it. You can send it to us.

Landau: Where does Tommy Loftin fit into this?

Scull-DeArmeY: He works at the World War II Museum in New Orleans, and these interviews are staying here at the university, and they're going over there.

Landau: OK.

Scull-DeArmeY: Yeah. So that's all I've got.

Landau: OK. If I think of anything good, I'll think about it. And something else just struck my mind. Last week I was at—and Cal belongs to a yacht club; that's my oldest son. And I was going to meet him up there and meet a third person for a specific purpose. The other guy didn't show up, and Cal didn't show up, but there was another guy at the bar that I introduced myself to, and we struck up a conversation. He used to be a teacher at Southern Mississippi University. (laughter) And here we are at West Palm Beach at a yacht club bar and run into somebody like that.

Scull-DeArmeY: Do you remember his name?

Landau: I only know his first name, David.

Scull-DeArmeY: Oh, David.

Landau: I thought that was an unusual coincidence.

Scull-DeArmeY: It is, yeah. You never know. Well, I'm going to go ahead and say thank you.

Landau: Well, now, I am happy I did it.

Scull-DeArmeY: Good.

Landau: I'm sorry I did such a poor job in it, but—

Scull-DeArmeY: You did a great job.

Landau: Well.

Scull-DeArmeY: Yeah, you did; you did. So I'm going to go ahead and turn this off.

Landau: OK.

(end of interview)

Information supplemental to that included in the oral interview of Calvin A. (Buck) Landau Jr. by Stephanie Scull-DeArmeY on 10/8/15 at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Episode 1

To set the stage for our first attack on 11/16/1944:

We were near St. Die and had been shifted around on trucks for a few days. One of our stops was a farmhouse where the Company staff had assembled a supply of all the types and sizes of ammo we would want. We had not planned for this and had no advice as to why we needed a certain type. The result was that we picked an oversupply of all the ammo we might need. We were probably carrying twenty or more pounds more than necessary.

Here is an inventory of what I carried into our first battle:

M1 rifle with ammo belt w/10 8 shot clips

Bandolier with about 10 clips of M1 ammo

Canvas bag with 5-10 shot magazines of ammo for the BAR (required because I was ammo bearer for BAR detail)

Three rifle grenades and launcher for same. (I was the rifle grenadier.)

Three hand grenades carried in side pocket of jacket.

We were carrying our full field packs and probably a K-ration or two, and gas masks

On the night before our first day in action, we did not use our sleeping bags. (We might have to move fast if counter-attacked.)

Bob Sinclair, my buddy since Camp Howze, Texas, and I spread a raincoat on the ground and a raincoat to cover us, and we got a little sleep.

We were up early and waiting for the artillery barrage that was scheduled at 0900. Our barrage did occur, and the Germans threw some artillery and mortar at us as well.

We jumped off promptly at 0915 hours and crossed an open field of about 400 yards. I passed one of our young guys who was wounded in the body, but all I could do was stick his bayoneted rifle in the ground so he would be found. This delay caused me to lose contact with our people. I came to the Meurth River (a big creek) and found a company of men milling about, but they were mostly not our men. They did advise me that my buddy Bob Sinclair had been hit and killed by a ricochet. While this was going on, the Germans continued their cannon, mortar, and machine-gun fire.

The forward elements of I Company got so far ahead that Battalion lost contact with them for about two hours.

Our total casualties in I Company were between 40 percent or 50 percent for that day. The fighting peters out about dusk, and we secured the German foxhole positions for the night.

Just as we were about asleep a shell landed among us. This could have been our own artillery's mistake—this is where their shells were landing that morning—or a German shell. This shell landed near the BAR men, Kelly Schmidt and Bradley Hawley, and wounded them seriously. Cashmore and I were in the next hole but suffered no harm.

The result for me was that I was now the number one BAR man. I gave my M1 stuff to Floyd Cashmore and proceeded to switch weapons. Floyd became the assistant BAR man.

While Floyd and I were occupied there, several men took it upon themselves to massage and comfort the two wounded men so they wouldn't suffer frostbite. The weather was about freezing.

Episode 2

When we moved short distances, we walked. Long distance moves were by six-by-six trucks.

In daytime truck-moves we had to set up an Air Guard by rolling back the tarp enough to get a BAR and a rifleman up through the top of the canvas cover. In 20 degree weather and twenty-miles-per-hour speed, this was torture. Everybody pitched in on this activity.

Episode 3

We made one attack under cover of smoke. Very successful, as I remember. Spooky.

Episode 4

It was midwinter, and the nights were dark with heavy overcast when our antiaircraft people provided some light. They shined those big searchlights on the clouds and lit up our area very nicely. This happened more than once, I believe.

General

The following was provided by Duane Cull in his letter of June 24, 1997:

Of the forty or so men who went overseas in our platoon, only the following men were still active at the end of the war: Brackett, Hoddinott, Paliszewski, Porter, Waldo, Landau, Hurlow, Sack, and Mills. Several of them had been wounded and returned to active duty.

Of these nine men, seven were sergeant or above.

Of these nine men, six were from the Army Specialized Training Program.

(End of Cull information)

Platoon strength at the end of the war was about twenty-four men. When we were still in Europe, I made a count from memory of the men that I could identify as having been in the 3rd Platoon during wartime.

There were ninety-five men total in 3rd Platoon.

Calvin A. (Buck) Landau Jr.