

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
ADOLPH BACH
Intelligence, Army, World War II
2003

OH
265

Bach, Adolph, (1920-). Oral History Interview, 2003.

User Copy: 2 audio cassettes (ca. 80 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 2 audio cassettes (ca. 80 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Abstract:

Adolph “Al” Bach, a long-time Fitchburg, Wisconsin resident, discusses his World War II service in an Intelligence Platoon in the Headquarters of the 314th Battalion of the 79th Division of the U.S. Army in France, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Born in Switzerland in 1920, Bach and his family immigrated in 1923 to Klevenville, Wisconsin. Bach describes his comfortable childhood on his family’s farm and his desire to leave after the Depression. He reflects marrying his wife the day before Pearl Harbor and discovering when the draft was instated that he was not an American citizen, but instead a neutral alien.

Bach outlines his trajectory from enlisting in the Army in Iowa County in 1944, being sent to Fort Sheridan (Illinois), Camp Blanding (Florida) and finally Camp Kilmer (New Jersey) before taking an old cruise ship to La Havre (France). Bach explains the chaos upon landing in France shortly after the Battle of the Bulge and the many shortages the troops encountered in route to Haguenau (France) where they served as reserves. He describes his feelings of relief at being selected to work in Intelligence at the Headquarters when it was discovered that he had a working knowledge of Swiss German. Bach also describes his experience of crossing the Rhine on March 24, 1945 and witnessing major air raids. He reflects on his interactions with German citizens and his feelings of dismay at their state of poverty.

Bach also details his stay in Europe after the end of the war as a driver for a major, where the two stayed in world class hotels and dined frequently. He describes receiving his American citizenship in Paris, only to come down with the mumps for several weeks before returning to Wisconsin. He also expresses frustration with the state of Wisconsin for not offering a Veterans bonus, and his difficulty saving money after such low pay in the Army. He comments on his feelings of not being a military-type, but reflects on how well his three children performed in other branches of the military.

Biographical Sketch:

Bach (1920-) was born in Switzerland and immigrated to the United States at the age of three, where the family settled on a small farm in Klevenville (Wisconsin). Prior to the war, Bach ran a cheese factory for several farmers in Wisconsin. Bach enlisted in the Army in Iowa County (Wisconsin) in 1944 and entered World War II shortly after the Battle of the Bulge. He served in the Intelligence Platoon in the Headquarters of the 314th Battalion of the 79th Division of the U.S. Army, providing translation, interrogation and also served as a driver in the motor pool. In Europe, Bach served in France, Germany and spent several weeks in Czechoslovakia at the end of the war. Bach

spent his later years in Fitchburg (Wisconsin) with his wife and three children, each of whom spent time in the military.

Interviewed by Aaron Krebs, 2003.
Transcribed by Joshua Goldstein, 2013.
Abstract written by Mary Kate Kwasnik, 2014.

Interview Transcript:

Krebs: Okay, today's date is the seventh of March, 2003. This is an interview with Adolph Bach or Al as he would like to be called. My name is Aaron Krebs, and I am conducting this oral history interview at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. Thank you very much, sir, for taking the time to come here today.

Bach: Well, I'm quite pleased that I'm able to put down a few words of my time in the service.

Krebs: I see. Outstanding. Well, let's start off at the beginning. Tell me a little bit about yourself prior to your service like what year were you born, sir?

Bach: Well, I was born November 30, 1920 in Switzerland, and my parents decided they that wanted to come to a land with all the possibilities to come over here. My mother was an orphan so she had no immediate family. Dad had his reasons for coming over, and this is 1923. Then to make a long story short, why, they worked for a couple of farmers, and then got the bright idea to buy their own farm. I always look back on it as kind a hardscrabble farm. It was only ninety-seven acres of hills and the creek and the railroad and the rocks and the hills. I could hardly wait to get off of this farm because we hit the Depression. Before the Depression we lived, you might say the old term high off the hog, but dad insisted on having electricity. We were seven poles short of getting the 110 voltage, but then we did with a thirty-two volt light plant. So we had electricity. I got some fairly nice toys and things, Flexible Flyer Sled, and so I felt myself very lucky. And then of course the Depression came along, and it was kind of hard to take after you – you know, once you're up it's hard to go down.

Krebs: Certainly. Was that here in Wisconsin?

Bach: That was here in Wisconsin about seventeen miles west of Madison here, a little town called Klevenville which at one time was a nice little town. Now it is just a little ghost town. Nobody even knows where Klevenville is, but it's on the map now and then. It had a lot of things you went in for.

Krebs: Do you remember what happened on December 7th, 1941? What were your experiences? Where were you at the time?

Bach: Well, again coming back, why, I was married the day before Pearl Harbor so it [laughs] was a double whammy, you know. Here I was just six days past twenty-one. My folks kind of frowned on this marriage. And I knew there was gonna be a -- the lady I was going to live with, and she's still

with me, and it's been a wonderful – it's been a honeymoon for all these years [laughs]. The next morning here we wake up, and here we're in wartime, and that kind of clouded things from then on because, well, it was a war footing at the time, you know.

Krebs: Did you feel as though you might be brought into the war at that time?

Bach: Well, it didn't look good because everybody was going in and then mobilizing, and we had the rationing, and we had shortages. We just had to do without a lot of things. It was a wartime thing right from scratch. And we knew this was going to get worse before it got better.

Krebs: I see.

Bach: Yeah.

Krebs: Describe for me your entry into military service. What day were you --

Bach: Well, of course then as time the draft was instigated. I forget just when, but anyway when I went to get drafted, to put my name in, they looked up the records, and "Where'd you come from? You're not an American Citizen." Because my parents had taken out their naturalization papers as soon as they could. They learned English as soon as they could. They learned to read and write and whatever, you know. And I had thought I was a citizen due to their being naturalized. No such thing. Somewhere between 1924 since then, why, the law was changed, and I was a neutral alien of all things. I had to go to the Post Office and register that I was a neutral alien of which I did for like about a year or two. I forget now. Being that I had married the day before Pearl Harbor so it wasn't a marriage of convenience. And my neutral alienness kept me out for a certain amount of time. And also having a daughter, married with a child, and I had run my own business. I had run this cheese factory for twelve farmers. Bought the equipment, borrowed the money, bought the equipment. I didn't think they were going to have to use me because I thought this war would be over sooner, but it wasn't. So then finally I was out in Iowa County, and they had so many farm boys that were deferred and so few people that they really breathing' down my neck. And they called me in and wanted me to either sign in or -- and I wouldn't had to go. I have two friends that had the same situation. They were born in Switzerland, and they had caught in the same situation. They refused to go. But I thought I was an American, and that was my duty. So I signed in, and I left from Iowa County, July 14, 1944.

Krebs: I see. Where did they initially send you?

Bach: They sent me right down to Fort Sheridan, Chicago, real close to Chicago and things were not great in those days in '44. The Germans were really not giving up as fast as they thought this was going to be a pushover, and it wasn't. So then they sent me down to Camp Blanding, Florida, and that was a heavy weapons infantry outfit. And I found out since that Camp Blanding was also a Marine training camp. The Marines got thirteen weeks and for some reason I'll never know I had seventeen weeks. Which [laughs] -- all I can say is that I was well trained. It was horrible, the heat down there. I had a terrible time getting through the basic. I was twenty-four years old. I was one of the older guys. The rest of the guys were all New Yorkers from the Bronx and Brooklyn, and I had nothing in common with them. I was the only Wisconsin guy. It was a horrible experience, but I survived. I made sharpshooter which somebody said "Hey, you're going to make a good a sniper," and so I refused the medal [both laugh]. Sure, I was a good shot because, you know, I was on the farm. I had my hunting license and used my rifle and had my own revolver when I was thirteen and, you know, trapline. The Army wasn't all that bad for me. I could go with the best of them, but my age was already pushing me.

Krebs: I see, and the majority of your other fellow soldiers at Camp Blanding were younger than you?

Bach: Oh yeah, they were all -- all of them were younger than I was.

Krebs: Probably mostly just right out of high school?

Bach: They were eighteen, nineteen, twenty, you know, right in there. And I was four years up. I was "Pop," you know.

Krebs: That was my next question. Where there practical jokes because of your age?

Bach: Oh yeah, oh sure, everytime they needed somebody to take a group out, why, old Bach was the oldest one and the tallest one so I got to be—I thought I was going to a sergeant before I got out of there [both laugh].

Krebs: So after Camp Blanding, where did you go from there?

Bach: After Camp Blanding this got to be December then, and by that time the Germans were pushing that Battle of the Bulge. I had heard about that, and so they really hurried us up to New York. I had a two week, three week at home yet. And they sent me to Camp Kilmer, I believe, in New Jersey, and then they put me on a ship. It was a Caribbean cruise ship that they converted into a troopship. Six thousand of us jammed into this ship like sardines. And they zigzagged across the Atlantic because the subs were

after us, and then we hit an awful storm, and everybody got seasick except me so [laugh]. I made that one okay.

Krebs: Why didn't you get seasick?

Bach: I don't know, I just had an attitude I wasn't going to get seasick. There were guys that they hauled them on already seasick before they were on the ship [both laugh]. They were already vomiting on the dock.

Krebs: Oh my goodness.

Bach: Oh yeah, it was really amazing.

Krebs: How long was the trip?

Bach: Oh, it took doggone near two weeks to get over there because of the zigzagging and all. We put in twice the mileage to get over there.

Krebs: What kind of activities did you do on the ship?

Bach: Well, there wasn't a whole heck of a lot to do. I just tried to keep busy exercising and running up and down the ladders and getting out on the deck. And just had an attitude that I wasn't about to get seasick, cause I had across -- I kept on saying, "Heck I came over here when I was three years old. I know all about this, all baloney." [Both laugh]

Krebs: Positive attitude.

Bach: Positive attitude, absolutely.

Krebs: So left New York December '44.

Bach: It was right about the 29th of December or so. No, I spent New Year's yet in Baltimore. So it would be like the second or third of January because I didn't get over there till about the 15th or 16th into Le Havre.

Krebs: Okay, so right into France then?

Bach: Yeah, right into France and kept complaining "I'd say, I'm not a citizen". They said, "Keep your mouth shut!" [both laugh]

Krebs: That's interesting.

Bach: Yeah, I said if I was captured, you know, and here I am not an American citizen, what are they going to do to me? They said "Keep your mouth shut. Nobody will know the difference."

Krebs: Take you back a few weeks; you mentioned that you had about two or three weeks of leave to go back. I take it to Wisconsin?

Bach: At home, yeah, in Madison here at 618 Cedar Street where I bought a house in '43. I was able to say goodbye to my wife and daughter. And I know it would be hard if I'd ever see them again. It was just that doggone serious [laughs].

Krebs: Was there overall support from your family?

Bach: Oh, yeah, definitely. They knew that all the rest of the guys were going. In fact, we had already lost some people that I knew. Some friends of mine had been lost on D-Day. My in-laws had lost people already, and they had come back wounded. It was just a—we knew it had to be done. We knew we had to go over there and get rid of this thing that we had going over there.

Krebs: Outstanding, again positive attitude.

Bach: Positive attitude.

Krebs: That's outstanding, sir. Okay, take the ship, you land; describe when the ship pulls in to Le Havre.

Bach: Well, let me tell you when you landed in Le Havre things were really confused because of the Bulge, you know. They put us on a train in what they called these boxcars, these Forty and Eights. And they started moving us down through France. We finally ended up in Haguenau, France at what they called a repple depple where they -- replacement people. Really, it was a confusing situation. They were short of trains. They were short of gasoline. They were short of food. They were short of everything because things just weren't working too well. I mean, it was a confused situation. So we finally made it to Haguenau, and then we were up for grabs, whoever needed replacements, and the 79th that I ended up in had been completely decimated in the Battle of the Bulge at Recklinghausen. Of course I wasn't there, but there were only about six guys that I personally knew that had come from the front and Lieutenant Cravens, and these guys were all shook up. I mean, they were shook. You give them a drink of booze, and they just went nuts. And I could hear the cannon. We were that close to the front. I mean, we could hear the artillery from both sides. They put us in to what they called a Hitler Jugend camp, a German camp where they would train the young people, the adolescents, beautiful little camp. I had to learn to use the 88 millimeter mortar, the big mortar. And the water cooled Browning machine gun. Being the biggest, the oldest and whatever, I was going to be a sergeant of a machine gun squad. And I

knew that, but then I came down with the darndest cold, and I was right down in bed. They couldn't even get me out of bed. No hospital anywhere, and they looked back at my records and put down that I can understand German. My German was what they called a Swiss Dialect German. I can understand German; to speak it is another story, quite broken, but then like they said, "The heck with these prisoners. If you have to interrogate, em, if you can understand them, they don't have to understand you." [laughs]

Krebs: That's true.

Bach: So they put me in what they called the intelligence squad, the intelligence and reconnaissance, a lieutenant, we had a jeep and a driver. And there was a Jewish fella, Milton Lipschitz, he could understand Yiddish which was a sub-form of German. And a John Leiberdowski that was a Polish kid that could understand seven languages because he'd been back and forth, Untied States to Poland. And he could understand Russian, German, God knows what all. He had French and whatever. And so the three of us put our heads together, "So let's bluff our way through this." [both laugh] Better to be in headquarters than up carrying that machine gun.

Krebs: Certainly.

Bach: And so that – lucky, lucky, lucky, lucky Al again [laughs].

Krebs: Yes, yes. So describe for me some of those situations.

Bach: Well, that meant a lot of difference then, being at headquarters. We were supposed to guard the command post, the CP. We were in charge of the maps. We made overlays what they call on the map, where we were so we could bring the sergeants and the squad leaders in to show them which way we were going to go. And we even had sand tables. The Germans had built sand tables, and we could make little rivers and stuff to bring these group leaders in to show them where they were supposed to go and when. And it was really a—I knew then that I was just really lucky to be at headquarters right up there with the big shots [both laugh], the big brass.

Krebs: So what unit was this for again?

Bach: This would have been the 79th. I should have brought that paper along. Well, it's is all down on my thing there, Headquarters, 314th Battalion, 79th Division. Also then because of we were all green except just a few of the fellas that came through without being wounded or shell-shocked. They kept us back as a reserve division, thank God. So then all the way back up to Holland and before we crossed the Rhine we had been as a reserve division depending on how far the Germans are going to come with this Bulge yet. Why, we would have been on the front. We were that close, but we were never really needed until we crossed the Rhine, the 24th of March.

That was my big day, that's the day we brought all the artillery and everything up to the Rhine. We saw the thousand plane raids. The bombers in layers they were up there, and they would drop their bombs, and we could hear it, and we could feel the ground shaking, you know. They were really giving those Germans the what for on their side of the Rhine for a change, and then I went across on a British amphibious because the British were right next to our 79th and anything where we could get to get across that river short of swimming. I was on this British amphibious tank and landed on the other shore and then went back to 79th and the Brits went their way. And at that time the Germans were using their antiaircraft 88s as rifles, as horizontal rifles, and they had every bridgehead, every intersection of a road zeroed in, and they were good. I was down in a shell hole, and the shrapnel was whizzing every which way, you know, but then as we went in there and we pushed them back and we shut that 88 down wherever it was. It could have been eight, ten, fifteen miles up the, you know—so again I survived the crossing, and I saw a few GIs that didn't make it.

Krebs: I see.

Bach: Yeah.

Krebs: Was there much contact between—you had mentioned those that had made it through the Battle of the Bulge, those six including Lieutenant Cravens I believe.

Bach: Yeah.

Krebs: Was there much contact between them and you, and what kind of contact was that?

Bach: Well, Lieutenant Cravens was our leader then. He was our lieutenant of this—he had been in the headquarters in combat, and again that probably saved him because probably he was the first one that knew that he had to withdraw, retreat, and so he was saved. And he was not the same man. I am sure it affected him badly, but he was a nice guy to work with, and he was appreciative of my helping him with the German signs and with the German whatever we needed. I tried real hard to make myself useful because I sure heck didn't want to [laughs] go carry that machine gun.

Krebs: No, I can imagine not.

Bach: No, no -- you know, you had to use your own wits. They said the Germans were so well disciplined that if there wasn't somebody telling them what to do they would be lost. Well I don't quite believe that. On the other hand, us Americans, us GIs that had come over there sorta off the farms, whatever, we kind of use our own initiative sometimes which helped a lot.

Krebs: How about any contact with the locals as you were moving through?

Bach: Yeah, that was kind of a mixed bag. Some of them were just tickled to death that the Germans had finally left that they were going to be left in peace. And they knew it was down to the nitty-gritty. I mean, Germany was in terrible shape, just terrible. And they were almost glad to see us. There might have been a couple of them—I saw one instance where some old guys wanted to come out with their rifles, and we just mowed them down, you know, and it just broke your heart. It seemed like they were almost—they'd had enough, they'd had enough. And so we were treated quite well, and of course we gave them food. We had cigarettes, and we had different things we could kind of—we felt sorry for them. I felt sorry for them.

Krebs: I imagine others did as well?

Bach: Oh yeah, yeah, there were a few hard necks that would kick them, push them, loot them, a lot of looting going on which I didn't appreciate.

Krebs: Was this January through March 24th when you crossed the Rhine –

Bach: Yeah, that a –

Krebs: Was this a steady movement?

Bach: We were, like I said, in reserve. We were not allowed to keep a diary especially in headquarters. We were not allowed to keep a diary. And I tried to forget, and I did forget a lot of it. I just -- it was kind of a haze. I could tell a few stories. I would always try to— well, I didn't want to think about the war all the time and imminent demise and all that stuff, but I knew it could happen anytime. Yeah, I kept an attitude like I kept all the way through, all of my life I've tried to keep a good attitude. I use it sort of as a travel thing. We made friends with people in Holland that we stayed with, and they were appreciative that we were there. And then after we crossed the Rhine of course we got into what they call the Ruhr area where the big munitions were made and the big machinery and the airplanes and stuff, so then they moved us into this Essen-Dortmund area. And they more or less kept us there then to occupy. So I was already occupying when some of the other troops were still fighting Germans, we were occupying.

Krebs: And did you stay there till the end?

Bach: We stayed there, and I was in civil government then for a couple of weeks, again using my German speech. In fact I was going bring along, I have a

little piece of paper that they gave me to broadcast on the radio in Essen that they should capitulate, that the Germans had capitulated, everybody could open up their blinds, turn on the lights. Be civilians again. The Americans are going to help you, everybody is supposed to call this the end of the war. That -- this is May 8th now, we are jumping ahead again, but I was given that job, and with my broken German--I tried to -- I think I read that piece of paper three, four different times. Took me to a radio station and turned me loose to tell the population that Germany had capitulated completely. No more shooting or fighting.

Krebs: Was there much reaction from that?

Bach: They evidently, like I say they were so glad it was over, and we were so glad it was over, that it was really a -- you might almost say a happy time, and why not?

Krebs: And where did you stay when you were in the Essen-Dortmund?

Bach: Yeah, we stayed in Dortmund is where we were headquartered then, and then already we were already sending back the displaced people. We were bringing them out of the factories and feeding them. And then we went around and we asked for all the weapons, and again that was a job that anybody who could understand, speak German was good at. So I had an SS surgeon come to the door when I knocked on the door, and he said, "Do I have to surrender my sword?" And he had a Nazi sword with a Nazi insignia. I said, "You're darn right!" [both laugh] I sent that home, still got it. Beautiful, he was an SS surgeon, and he said "I am going to do my best to help you Americans." And he said, "I got a hospital full of wounded people, both Americans and Germans."

Krebs: And he was speaking in German?

Bach: He could speak English, and of course he spoke German, and I asked him if he could speak English. He was fluent which a lot of them were.

Krebs: Did you run into much trouble?

Bach: No trouble whatsoever. And [End of Tape 1, Side A] -- the civil government thing, we made it a point, or at least our headquarters made it a point or our division, we would get the electric utility going. We would get the streetcars going. We'd get the brewery going and then turn it over to the Germans. You know more about it than we do. And then just kinda keep an eye on them, and it worked out beautiful.

Krebs: How long did you stay in that capacity?

Bach: Only about two weeks. I backed out because I couldn't write the German, and I knew there were better qualified people, and they did come in then from further back. And they went into the offices, and so then about that time they broke up the 79th Division. It was deactivated, and they put me in the 1st Division. And about that time I went into—again they kept me at headquarters and put me driving the battalion commander's jeep.

Krebs: And this is early May? Mid May?

Bach: Yeah, this was about— getting' into – we're talking now June and July.

Krebs: Oh, I see.

Bach: Yeah, we're jumping over to June here, July. Maybe before that we went up to Czechoslovakia, and we were shipping back all the Russians and the Polish and all those people back into their country that had been slave labor. And then again we met--the Czechs were chasing out all of the Sudeten Germans so they were coming the other way. It was really bad, I mean, pitiful, you know, either way it was pitiful.

Krebs: The conditions that people were moving to?

Bach: The conditions that they were being sent out. These Sudeten Germans had been there 300 or so, and the Czechs just wanted them out. It was -- oh, what do they call that? Not genocide but to move one population – there's a word for it, and it escapes me.

Krebs: Some sort of forced migration.

Bach: Yeah, yeah.

Krebs: I see.

Bach: All they could carry is what they could carry with their hands, and some of these people were to be pitied. I didn't think it was right, but that's the way it went.

Krebs: And were they being sent out on trains, cars?

Bach: On trains, in open cars, and the rain—one particular lady had two little children, and she was lugging an accordion. And I happened to catch her with it. And she said, "Could you use it? Could you give me something for it?" Well, I offered her -- I didn't smoke, so I was able to pick up my ration of a carton of cigarettes every week for fifty cents. So I told her, "How would a carton and a half, "I think I gave her two cartons of

cigarettes and she -- "Oh, my God". She went and bought shoes for her children and some clothes for herself because those cigarettes were worth between fifty and a hundred maybe even more than that with her being able to use them as money. And so I brought this accordion home, and she was able to buy herself some stuff. And this is just a little story.

Krebs: That's great, that's a great story [Bach laughs]. I'd heard that cigarettes were basically considered gold.

Bach: Oh yeah, yeah. See, by my not smoking and very little drinking, I think I spared myself. Well, that's why I am physically still as well off as I am. And I would use that as currency then to buy different things. And I used to send some money home. We weren't supposed to do it, but everybody was doing it, black market.

Krebs: I see. How long were you in Czechoslovakia as—

Bach: That was only a short time, about a month or so, and then they brought us back into Bavaria in a little town between Wurzburg and Nuremberg, Neustadt an der Aisch. And I was in a motor pool, and I had to drive the battalion commander's jeep, which meant I didn't do any KP, no guard duty, no close order drill; all I had to do was report down to Sergeant Brown who was in charge of the motor pool. And again, by my knowledge of German, it gave me a leg up on all the rest of the guys, and he knew that I had been driving trucks and stuff in my civilian life. So I was able to take this jeep and this Major Fabianich let me go ahead, and with cigarette money I had enclosed this jeep and whitewall tires, I had extra fenders on there, fender flaps, fog lights. I put a Model-A heater like we had used at home on the farm with our Model-A, what they called a manifold heater. And I turned the heater so he'd be warm. This was in the winter, and so he said "By gosh, Al, I'm going to make a T5 out of you." [both laugh] He gave me a promotion.

Krebs: What rank were you then?

Bach: I was just a PFC.

Krebs: Pfc, okay.

Bach: Yeah. But so I came out as a T5, and also this Major Fabianich was a gourmet. He loved to eat. He had heard of these beautiful restaurants in Bavaria. And he'd hear about them from the other officers. So on a Sunday he'd say, "Bach, let's go out to this town or this town and show me the map. He couldn't get there unless I drove him. So we'd get out there about eleven, and we'd get into this restaurant and everybody would

come running. And he would order the wine and the food, and I'd help him eat it and drink it [both laugh].

Krebs: Not a bad deal.

Bach: Oh, no, it was wonderful. I tell you, this occupation, as far as I was concerned was just a hoot, you know.

Krebs: And still no problems up to this point –

Bach: No.

Krebs: Everyone was very happy?

Bach: Everybody was happy; we were happy; they were happy. I didn't run into any problems what so ever.

Krebs: Well, that's great.

Bach: It was great.

Krebs: How long did you stay as the driver?

Bach: Well, what happened then is that we were able to go on leaves, and another thing that got me a leg up was I had relatives in Switzerland on both my wife's side and my own side being born there. So I got a leave to go, and I visited my wife's relatives, her aunt and so on for a week and got all around Switzerland. Then I came back, and I took some more leaves here and there. It was just—oh yeah, I drove down the Riviera with the two officers that took a week leave down at Cannes in the Riviera, put us up in the Ritz Carlton Hotel. And again I was in the motor pool, I'd take my jeep down to the motor pool and get it serviced, gasoline, oil, and then I came back again and then I didn't want to stay away too long because I was afraid of losing this job [laughs]. Well, then finally at the end of the war, at the end of my term, I didn't have enough points to get home. They finally decided that I should go to Paris and get my citizenship papers. So two officers and myself got a two week pass, and we went to Paris. So we fooled around for two weeks in Paris. Put us up in a nice hotel in the Rue du Haussmann, cognac for breakfast, cognac for dinner, cognac for supper. All on the French Government, they were so tickled with us. Went down to the American legation. I didn't have all my papers—my God! They said “Well, all you can do, you go back to Frankfurt and pick up your papers.” And so I went back, I left the two sergeants in Paris. I got leaves for all three of us again, and I -- this time when I got back to Paris and picked up some more stuff to sell on the black market. I got their cigarette rations and mine [laughs]. And then we went right down and got

my citizenship papers. So then we had another two weeks to ride the subway and see the Eiffel Tower and all the sights in Paris, go to the nightclubs. So I finally ended up with my citizenship papers.

Krebs: Wow, after all that time.

Bach: Yeah, after -- it took us a month in Paris to get my papers [both laugh].

Krebs: Not a bad deal.

Bach: Not a bad deal.

Krebs: No, and that's where those pictures you have upstairs of you in the Eiffel Tower, that's where those are from?

Bach: Yeah some of those. I took pictures around Paris.

Krebs: Outstanding.

Bach: I have a hell of a story, I couldn't believe it myself, you know, that this would happen to me.

Krebs: What happened after you got your papers? You had mentioned—

Bach: Oh, about that time I was due for heading home. And I be doggoned if I didn't come down with the mumps. Here all the other guys are packed up, and they were heading for Le Havre to get on the ship to go home. And I end up three weeks in a beautiful hospital in Wurzburg. And again speaking German, why, I always had a ball with the nurses. There were about three, four of us there with the mumps. It was kind of a little—maybe more of us, I don't know, maybe a dozen of us up there in that hospital with the mumps. And I was feeling real sorry for myself, you know. Here the guys are going home, and I'm stuck here. After three weeks of being in this beautiful hospital they finally let us pack our bags or me anyway—some of the guys didn't take care of themselves, and they were stuck in the hospital. I get there, and here they were sent[??] to this Camp Lucky Strike. Mud, ankle deep mud, and they had been there stuck in those tents, nothing to do. And they were about ready to go nuts. And the day I got there, why, here the ship comes, Liberty ship, and they loaded us all up and headed home. Another little story, they needed volunteers. Well, I ain't ready to volunteer for anything. And they had eight WACs on board, and they needed guys to guard them, 'cause they didn't want to be harassed by the regular troops. So here again, I was up top deck, inner-spring mattress, fresh watershowers, four on, four off guard duty to guard these WACs. And I had no problem. It was just a ball. Again, our trip back home we could have rowed a canoe across about this

time in May, you know, last part of April. It was just beautiful weather, sun shining. So by that time when I saw the good old Statue of Liberty [laughs] it was almost more than I could take.

Krebs: Oh, that was a great feeling?

Bach: Great feeling, yeah.

Krebs: That's outstanding.

Bach: Then of course they put us on trains and headed us for home, yeah.

Krebs: How about any contact via letters, V-mail, etcetera, etcetera during your time overseas?

Bach: Oh, I sent letters very religiously. I didn't—we looked at the letters here a few years ago and because of being censored and not keeping a diary, there really wasn't much in there about what I had done. I really didn't -- couldn't tell my wife all that much, and some of it was pretty personal, and we both decided let's get rid of them. The letters wouldn't have meant much as a veteran, quite personal.

Krebs: I see.

Bach: And we decided we wouldn't keep them. And there was really nothing there. I found one the other day, and again there was nothing in there that meant anything except to my wife and myself [laughs].

Krebs: So you wrote quite frequently?

Bach: And she wrote, she wrote an awful lot, yeah.

Krebs: Did that come in regularly?

Bach: It came in quite regular because again, you know, being out of harms way you might say, being at headquarters, why we were the first to get the mail. It was part of our job to distribute the mail, so I got in on that. And I got things. She'd send different things over, like some sausages and things that we had been used to in Wisconsin. Yeah we kept in correspondence, but like in those days we weren't able to pick up the phone. All I could do was send a telegram from Paris, France that I was a citizen. I sent another telegram from Le Havre saying that I was headed home on the ship and another telegram from New York that I was headed for Camp McCoy [between Sparta and Tomah WI], that she should meet me up there at this certain date.

Krebs: I am sure that was a good telegram –

Bach: Oh, it was great.

Krebs: For her to get back.

Bach: I think I have those telegrams somewhere.

Krebs: That's outstanding. Along the same lines of your letter – in contact with my letters and contact question, how about any updates of news from either the European Theater or as well as from the Pacific Theater? How often did you get any news from there on how the war was going, how things were going at home?

Bach: We were kept well aware of what was going on. I think at that time they kept us up to date on things. We had our radios, and we had of course the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper. And once in a while my wife would send me clippings from home so I was quite up to what was going on at home. At least, thank God I never got a "Dear John letter" like some of the guys did, you know. Either a wife or girlfriend would say "Well, I found somebody else." That was pretty pathetic. When I look back now, how lucky I was, you know. So I think I have a happier story than most of the fellas.

Krebs: It sounds like it.

Bach: Yeah.

Krebs: Yes, sir. Were you issued a weapon?

Bach: Oh yeah, I carried this M-1 rifle during my time at the camp down there, seventeen weeks, carrying this damn rifle. And of course it was supposed to be your friend. Then I carried it over there until—like at Headquarters Company they would issue us the carbine which was kind of a lightweight rifle so we didn't have to lug something heavy around. And I even had my hands on what they call a "Grease Gun," which was the 9 millimeter, 'a little machine gun, just a little bitty thing. I only shot one shot. I was -- after crossing the Rhine we put us out on a patrol, and I thought I had some prisoners, some Germans, in a cellar. And I hollered down at them, and I shot a shell down there to let them know we were serious about it, but there weren't nobody down there. I just wanted to make sure they wouldn't come out shooting at me, so one shot [laughs].

Krebs: But a good one, [both laugh].

Bach: Yeah.

Krebs: Outstanding.

Bach: So I interrogated very few prisoners. It wasn't quite the way I—nothing was the way you had figured it would be, you know, nothing. I mean, it was always everyday was a surprise you might say. And just hoping you'd come back in one piece.

Krebs: And we're glad that you did.

Bach: Why, yeah [both laugh].

Krebs: Your trip back over the pond, the ocean was--describe how that was compared to going over.

Bach: Oh, it was-- what a world of difference, you know. I mean, we knew we were already-- We knew the minute we got on this boat the U- boats were out there waiting for us. And if they had any chance, we had destroyers on both sides of us. And we knew that any moment they could send a torpedo, a lucky one or a well placed one, or whatever, and that would be it, you know, because there would be no way to-- we had not nearly enough life boats and rafts and things. And in that storm that we had, the subs were down there. They didn't know whether it was a storm, you know, what the hell, it was better for them than for us. We were just hoping to survive. Some of the guys were really bad seasick.

Krebs: Coming back, was it on a similar sized ship?

Bach: Well, coming back it was a Liberty ship; on the way over it was this cruise ship, the Santa Rosa and it would have been a luxury ship except that they painted it all in gray and took out all the furniture. So I had my first look what a cruise ship would be [both laugh]. On the way back these Liberty ships were just put together by just spot welds and a few rivets, but again then we had good weather and so. And I was kept busy essentially guarding these WACs [laughs].

Krebs: This is May of '46?

Bach: May of '46, yeah.

Krebs: And then you also landed back into New York.

Bach: Landed in New York, yeah.

Krebs: That's great. Was there a big welcoming party?

Bach: They didn't have to welcome us, we've did our own [both laugh]. It was just such a great feeling to be back, and we didn't expect -- really didn't -- there were so many coming back that they actually couldn't welcome us

all. And we just took it for granted that, my God, you know. It had been a year, see, almost a year after the Armistice, May 8th to May 6th, when I was discharged. So there was a whole year, and things had kind of petered out you might say, the welcoming stuff. We were just glad they took good care of us, put us on these trains and fed us well and decent clothes and a shower, and that's about all you wanted. Ha!

Krebs: And the American soil under your feet.

Bach: Oh God, yes, yeah, back home in one piece with your sanity [both laugh].

Krebs: And all your body parts.

Bach: Yeah, absolutely.

Krebs: Arrived in New York May 6th, or I'm sorry--

Bach: It was previous to May 6th cause May 6th was my discharge.

Krebs: Discharge, certainly. How long were you in New York before you were discharged?

Bach: Oh, they put us right on the trains. They wanted to get us right out of there and send us home, wherever we were. Whether it was Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, so they had the trains all set for us, and it was a big thing moving all these [inaudible] from the South Pacific that were coming in by that time. And we were coming from Europe. It was a tremendous undertaking. I don't know how they did all of it.

Krebs: Yeah, all the logistics of it—

Bach: The logistics.

Krebs: Probably bothered--

Bach: It's the logistics are absolutely, you know, that's what made it, you know to get the food there, to get the clothes there, to get the trains ready, to get, you know, and of course medical, there was always the medical. Guys getting sick, and yeah, getting our mail, getting whatever we sent home there. Everything I sent home got home. I sent home quite a little stuff that I had bought or I had liberated which I hate to say. I didn't do much of it because I felt—I kind of felt sorry for the Germans because they had this crazy Hitler that had bugged them on, but, you know, as long as they were winning they were happy, but then when they were losing then things went the other way. But win or lose, why, they took a beating, and so did the French and the Belgians and the Hollanders and the Czechoslovakians and all of them. And I saw just enough of it to appreciate the fact that this had to be done, you know.

Krebs: From New York, you mentioned you took a train. Did that go straight to Chicago?

Bach: Pretty much, pretty much, yeah, pretty much to Chicago and then we'd board another train up to Camp McCoy. They pretty well knew how to do this by that time.

Krebs: They've had lots of experience.

Bach: Yeah, I was one you might say of being a low pointer, so I would be one of the last ones that they were shipping home by that time. And then an odd thing was that they said, "Hey you guys if you re-up for two more years we will let you go right home, right now. You won't have to go through the process tomorrow morning." And I couldn't believe -- of course some of the guys were younger they probably didn't have much to go home to—I'll be darned if they didn't put in for a other two years. Of course they might have had shorter time then I did or whatever. Anyway, I said, "No way." This Army thing wasn't my thing. I was not a military person. I did my job and I wanted to go home and have it over with, you know. I'm surprised that I've got as much stuff left. Anyway, the next day they let us out, and my wife was there waiting for me.

Krebs: I'm sure that was a great feeling?

Bach: Oh, that was wonderful, yeah. A year and a half she hadn't seen or heard or, you know. Yeah, it was the happiest day of my life [laughs].

Krebs: That was at Camp McCoy?

Bach: Yeah, they let us out at Camp McCoy. And she had driven the car up and had overheated it. So anyway I forgave her for that [laughs]. It only cost fifty dollars to overhaul that little motor on the Willis.

Krebs: I see. Was the train from New York predominantly filled with veterans returning?

Bach: Yeah, pretty much. There were a lot of us coming home, you know. I mean, they were trying to get—there were way more of us over there than what they needed, and they wanted to cut it back, and so there were a bunch of us coming back, yeah. That ship was full of guys heading home.

Krebs: And then what did you do after your service?

Bach: Well, my job was open. I had been working then for Bowman Dairy out here in Madison for about six months before I went in. They kept the job open, and I went back and kind of kept right on going where I had left off. They were looking for me, and I was looking forward to a job and making some money again after the twenty-one dollars a month. I mean, it kind of

ticked me off that everybody else was making good money while I was making this pittance. And you may have heard this before that the State of Wisconsin was the only state in the Union that didn't pay a bonus. Most every state would pay at least three hundred dollars, and some as high as six hundred. Well, the State of Wisconsin saw fit not to give us anything. And we could have really used that. But I heard just not too long ago, and I don't know if it is hearsay or what, that they were going to put a tax on cigarettes to pay this veterans bonus. And that the cigarette companies were the ones that squelched it. They didn't want any more tax on their cigarettes. But I mean, I beat them because I never smoked anything, and what I saved on cigarettes they can keep their damn bonus.

Krebs: [laughs] Oh, that's great.

Bach: That's another little side-- I sort of forgave Wisconsin for that, but on the other hand I could have used it.

Krebs: Do you keep in contact with anyone you remember from your time?

Bach: No, see, I was in such a short time with everybody, and I didn't have all that much – ah, what's the word? In common with hardly anybody I was over there with. But on the way home, some guy from Madison, and I won't use his name, we befriended each other, and we thought we had something in common. And then a few years later he called me and said that he was running a parts store and he could-- if I wanted to invest some money. Well, I thought the guy was a vet, you know, a buddy. I borrowed some money, invested, lost all of five thousand dollars. Another blow that was hard to take but another with my attitude, I said, "Well, I could have bought a new Buick, and how long would they last, ten years then you're in the junk." So it was a lesson so nobody ever sold me another five thousand dollar con man job. You learn as you live that you will be taken advantage of by so-called friends. [End of Tape 1, Side B]

Krebs: Please go ahead sir.

Bach: [inaudible] set to go.

Krebs: Yes, sir.

Bach: Yeah, then I finally did join a VFW, tried to open up out in my city of Fitchburg about, oh, this has gotta be ten, fifteen years ago, and I joined because it was a local thing. But again, I didn't have much in common again with the fellas. Some of them were Korean veterans, some were Vietnam veterans, and sorry to say that we had a few meetings, and I did volunteer at the VA Hospital through that VFW, and I would go over there about once a week for a couple of hours and push wheelchairs. And I would see these veterans that had had the rough time. The true heroes, the guys that paid the price, and so then when it came my turn to have a heart

attack and a bypass, why, I had kind of a little bit of a hospital -- I knew kind of what went on in a hospital. So I came through that with flying colors. They didn't expect me to live fifteen years ago in '88, but again with an attitude, [laughs].

Krebs: Exactly, exactly.

Bach: I've lived the best fifteen years of my life. So I have nothing against veterans organizations. I never wanted to march down the street with my uniform, not that I had anything against the guys that want to do it, it just wasn't my thing. In the meantime my daughter, 'that's the little daughter I left home, after she got out of high school she joined the Navy with another friend of hers when we were in Phoenix, Arizona, and she joined up for four years with the Navy WAVES. She got her dental training which she used for about twenty years. And then my older son, about the time the Vietnam War came along, I had a real hard time with the Vietnam War 'cause right or wrong I couldn't see it. So I put him into the Coast Guard right out of high school. Well, seven of his guys that went into the service into the fighting part that were sent to Vietnam were either wounded, killed or whatever. He put in four years of Coast Guard, not easy years, as he was put up in Attu Island for a year, LORAN [Long Range Navigation system based on radio signals from ground stations]. He got his electronic training there which he has made use of since.

Bach: And then my younger son got the idea that he'd join the Navy to pay for some of his university stuff so I was kind of—that was at the end of the Vietnam War, and he came a little close, but one time or another all four of us put on our uniforms [laughs] and ended up as a rather military family after all this stuff, you know.

Krebs: I'm sure that was a great picture –

Bach: Yeah –

Krebs: All four of you.

Bach: Yeah, it was rather unusual, and then my younger son he was going to make a career out of the Navy because he was a navigator on an A6A Intruder [all weather attack aircraft] on the carriers. He was on carriers for like four, five, six years. And then he was a recruiter in Milwaukee, and then by the numbers when they reduced the Navy, why, he got put out by the numbers. He has now put in twenty years, eleven years of service and then another nine years in Reserves. So he was more the military type than I was. He's the one that kind of instigated my coming here with my stuff and why I'm having this interview.

Krebs: Well, that's great.

Bach: [laughs] I mean it's a long story, but it comes around. The circle comes around, you know.

Krebs: Yes sir, as do most of them.

Bach: Sure.

Krebs: Outstanding. When you returned after, in '46, did you use any of your veterans benefits like G.I. Bill?

Bach: Another little story on that is my teeth were bad when I went in, and they didn't get any better, in fact they got worse. And I had this one dentist I remember in Dortmund, Germany while we were in civil government with a treadle operated drill working on my teeth and no anesthesia or anything. And I'm telling you, it was pretty damn painful. And I think he ruined my teeth more than he helped them, of course they were going anyway. So, I came back, and I was starting to get this through the Veterans Administration to get my teeth done, probably a full upper denture and a partial lower. And the red tape got so red or so tapy or whatever you want to call it that I said the heck with it and I went and got my own dentist at Quisling Clinic here, a Doctor Hufstein [??]. Cost me a bundle, but on the other hand he did a beautiful job of removing my bad teeth and the upper denture that I lived with, you know, just from day one, and a lower partial that fit real good. So, well they were going to do it for me, but I didn't take. And I didn't need any veteran benefits to buy my home so I really never—I always figured, well, let somebody else that deserves it more than I did to get all this, and I was all for it. And I may, who knows, may need some of this. God willing I won't, but it's there, and I know that the Veterans Administration has done wonderful things. And I have no ill feeling whatsoever.

Krebs: That's great. A lot of veterans returned and immediately enrolled in school.

Bach: Yeah, I should have done that, too. I was going to enroll in flying school. I have always been a -- what they call a -- oh, —what's the word? I wanted to be a pilot.

Krebs: I see.

Bach: There's a word, there.

Krebs: You were enamored with the flying?

Bach: Yeah, and then I wanted to take the lessons, and then at the last minute my wife talked me out of it. So then I said, “All right, I’m going to get a motorcycle” because I had been deprived a bicycle when I was a kid [both laugh]. So at least I got that motorcycle thing out of my blood and my wife actually enjoyed riding motorcycle. I could have had one after I got rid of -- after we had two children then, why, motorcycles didn’t fit in with my plans anymore. But I got that out of my system. So no, it’s a shame that I should of went to school, I should’ve used it, but I didn’t. But it’s all right.

Krebs: You came out just fine, sir.

Bach: Yeah.

Krebs: How about any medals or citations?

Bach: Well, a funny thing, about five, six years ago we were out in Iowa County, and I noticed that they had a service place there for servicemen were they kept the records. I went in, and I said, “Do you have any records of me leaving here July 14th, 1944?” And some lady there, well, she looked all around through all the stuff and can’t find a thing. Well, I said, “That’s a nice how-do-you-do [laughs]. Iowa County uses me as one of their, whatever you want to call it—sent me into service because they needed to fill their quote “quota” unquote. Anyway, I said this, “Well, okay, what do I do if I ever need this stuff?” Well, about three years ago finally some fella that took over out there found my records, out of the blue, and he said, “Do you have your medals?” I said, “Well, maybe I have one here and there.” He said “Well, I’ll send you all the medals you have coming.”

Krebs: Great.

Bach: And I have them in a box up here and also what each medal meant. And I was really tickled to get it. My younger, this fifty year old son that was in the Navy, he has now taken it upon himself to get old dad to come out of the woods [laughs].

Krebs: I see, I see. Any injuries or disability at all?

Bach: Not a thing.

Krebs: That’s great.

Bach: About the only thing, I have a little scare here where we were—there was a lot of horseplay went on, you know, not enough to do, and I had a bottle of Coke and some guy wanted it. And I hung on and he twisted it out of my hand, and I got a couple of stitches there. That's my "War Wound" [both laugh].

Krebs: From like the cap or something?

Bach: Yeah the cap cut me, you know, and some guy said "You want a Purple Heart for that?" I said, "No, I don't want a – no, I don't think I deserve a Purple Heart for that kind of stuff."

Krebs: That's very admirable.

Bach: And I noticed there about pranks?

Krebs: Oh yes.

Bach: I was in this motor pool and in another picture—I would go down to the motor pool, and it was an old truck body with a windshield in it that they had covered up and a little stove in the middle in front, little coal stove with a pipe going up, and I was sitting out there in front reading something, I loved to read so I always had something to read waiting for the call to ride this jeep. Well, I hadn't noticed as there was some noise behind me, and all of a sudden this stove flares up. Some prankster you know, some guy that thought he was really being funny, takes a quart of gasoline up there and pours it down the stovepipe. And of course the stove flared up, and there was no way for me to get out of there. Thank God it didn't pour enough in there; it could have burned me up, you know. There was stuff like that going on. I have pictures of different wrecks, and the guys of course were fooling around with their pistols that they had bought, liberated, whatever. They were shooting them now and then. I saw one guy get missed by some guy who said, "Hey, I got a couple of pistols", and bang! And out the window, you know, right passed some guy's head. A lot of that stuff went on; I mean we lost any number of guys with this fooling around. A couple of guys went deer hunting, and I don't know how that happened. We had to go send a truck and bring them in, stone dead cold. I don't know how it happened, but they brought them in, and we shipped them home, you know.

Krebs: Sad.

Bach: Bad, yeah, I mean after the war was over everything we should have been, you know, but there was just too much time.

Krebs: Too much time, and, you know—

Bach: Not enough --

Krebs: Not enough to do, and you were so hyped up, or the majority of the people were so hyped up with going in and pushing.

Bach: Yeah, so there was a lot of that.

Krebs: Interesting.

Bach: And I was -- kept trying to keep—I tried to keep out of this kind of stuff, you know. Another time with this little jeep we were going down a German road as long as you want stories [laughs]--

Krebs: Please.

Bach: This little German, little roebuck, they called it, little deer, a little roebuck or whatever the German variety, little bitty things, come tearing across the road, hit the side of my jeep. Knocked both his horns off, he laid there, and I jumped out and the lieutenant said, “What are we going to do with this little deer? And I says, “Well, first I want to kill it” because it looked like it broke its neck or whatever. And I hit it a couple of times with the gas nozzle from one of those jerry cans, a five gallon can, a big nozzle if you ever seen one. They might have someone down there in the [Wisconsin Veterans] Museum. And I threw the little deer up on top of the hood. “Now, what are we going to do?” I said, “The first German is going to get that little deer.” [both laugh] So sure enough here’s a guy walking along with his briefcase and I told him, “Take that deer.” “Nien, Nien .” no he didn’t dare. No, that was out of season or whatever. He don’t dare. And I said “YOU will take that deer, American soldier is telling you, and you tell anybody that gives you a hard time that you were forced to take that deer”, trying to talk in German, of course. And he, “Danka, Danka, Danka, thank you, thank you, thank you,” and away he went with it over his head, and boy, he had a nice meal that night.

Krebs: I believe it.

Bach: Road kill [both laugh].

Krebs: Oh, that’s a great story.

Bach: It was, you know, stuff like that would happen out of the blue, and you’d have to with a little quick thinking, you know, make the best of it.

Krebs: I see.

Bach: Yeah [laughs].

Krebs: That's great. Any other stories?

Bach: Well, I could probably go on for a long time, but, anyway, I got home, and I was—my wife and I, we saved our money, and we raised three great children. The grandchildren, I have my doubts about them, but that's another story. And we've just enjoyed life since. She made it through. I think it was just as tough for her to keep the house going. And she had to take in room and boarders in order to keep the payments, you know, because I was making so little. I think that was as big a sacrifice I made was my not sending enough money home, you know. The money part of it, that I think, they kind of let us down on that because that took you out of civilian life. We had the first two years of running this cheese factory. The wife and I were able to save two thousand dollars back in '42, '43. And that was no small feat. Some fella asked me once, "You still got it?" I said, "You're darn tootin'." [both laugh] You know, you just learn to-- we just started from scratch, and we've been able to make it this far.

Krebs: That's great.

Bach: Yeah.

Krebs: That's great. Basically my last subject to talk about is just for you to describe your overall experience, joyful, glad you did it, recommend it to other people, your service?

Bach: Well, it was different times, you know. I think it was way different times when you are talking back into the '40s than today. My God, look at all the things we didn't have. There were no TVs, so many things that we didn't have then that we have now. I think we lived a simpler life when this war was put upon us with that doggone Pearl Harbor and that Hitler running, going nuts over there. The thing I want to say is that I have a lot of sympathy for the Russians. If it hadn't been for them—they saved my butt and a lot of us, I mean, by putting up the battle they did. We've denigrated the Russians something awful. They were left with practically with nothing but the womenfolk. Then after the war, the women had to more or less get Russia back going. The servicemen came home, most of them went to school which was the smart thing to do. I missed on that because I was getting older; I was one of the older guys. It seemed to me that I was going do quite well working for this Bowman Dairy. He kind of let me down, but that's another story. Then I went on to--finally got out of that, and I worked as a hardware clerk and drove school bus in order to make ends meet. And then I went with the city schools as custodian, truck driver and so on, and now for like twenty years I haven't had to do anything. I've--been a wonderful retirement. And that's kind of looking

back at being in the war. Being I was so lucky, why, I have a story that's a little different than most.

Krebs: Yes, sir.

Bach: I've talked to a couple of other 79th Division veterans, but they were in earlier, they were wounded, they were sent back wounded. And the three of them and I have very little in common with those fellas. Sure, we were in the same division, but they were at a different war than I did. I kind of got in on the mop up part of it. So I have a whole different story [laughs].

Krebs: Yes, you do. That's outstanding, sir.

Bach: That's about all I can say unless you have some other—

Krebs: Those are all my questions if you don't have anything else, sir.

Bach: And I've been going around now. Yesterday I saw a picture of a fella's 1941 encampment on maneuvers. He's on there and a whole bunch of guys in their pup tents, and I never had never saw anything like that. I had my own pup tent, too, or a half of one. What they called a shelter, a shelter half. So if I had been in that situation where we would have camped out my shelter half-- we'd probably use it at basic training just for a night or two. But we never went out on those kind of maneuvers. And I had told this fella, for God sake, or his daughter now, make sure that this map ends up here at the Veterans Museum, and she's, "Good idea".

Krebs: That's outstanding, sir.

Bach: Yeah, I'm tryin' to--so I'll be out hustling [Krebs laughs] for you.

Krebs: Well, we appreciate that.

Bach: Thank you.

Krebs: That's great, and thank you so much for taking the time today.

Bach: I feel--what's the word? Flattered or whatever? [laughs]

Krebs: Yes, sir. Exactly, exactly, thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]