

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
CHESTER L. KRAUSE
Mechanic, Army, World War II.

2002

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Krause, Chester L., (1923-). Oral History Interview, 2002.

User Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 70 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 70 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 2 videorecordings (ca. 70 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Military Papers: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Chester L. "Chet" Krause, a Helvetia, Wisconsin native, discusses his World War II service with Army anti-aircraft artillery in Europe and visiting Buchenwald concentration camp after its liberation. Krause talks about being drafted, artillery training at Camp Wallace (Texas), auto mechanic training at Camp Davis (North Carolina), and assignment to the 565th Anti-Aircraft Battalion at Camp Stewart (Georgia). He touches upon types of anti-aircraft battalions, the change of weapon control from a fire control center to radar control, and the use of proximity fuse ammunition. Assigned to Luxembourg City during the Battle of the Bulge, Krause comments on providing protection for the 3rd Army Headquarters, giving coffee to soldiers passing through in convoys, and seeing B-24 bombers dropping tinsel chaff to interfere with radar. He describes his work fixing trucks, salvaging parts, guarding field artillery near the Rhine, and following Armored Divisions. He comments on the Army's dependence on 70 octane gas and states it was always stored in five-gallon cans. Krause details visiting Buchenwald concentration camp: giving their "D-rations" to the camp doctor, having the structure of the camp explained, and visiting the Jewish section, the whorehouse, and the crematorium. He recalls retracing his steps with other veterans from his battalion in the early 1990s. He describes guarding the ports at Camp Lucky Strike (France) and Antwerp (Belgium). He evaluates the effectiveness of English soldiers and compares them to American troops. He touches upon his return to his family farm, the economic conditions following the war, getting involved in the publication business, and attending reunions.

Biographical Sketch:

Krause (b.1923) served in World War II with the 565th Anti-Aircraft Battalion. After the war he returned to Wisconsin and eventually settled in Iola. While working as a carpenter, he founded Krause Publications in 1952 and was involved with publications such as *Numismatic News*, the *Standard Catalog of World Coins*, and *Old Cars*.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2002

Transcribed by Alex Combs, 2010

Corrected by Channing Welch, 2010

Corrections typed by Erin Dix, 2010

Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2010

Transcribed Interview:

- James: July, 2002, where were you born, sir?
- Chester: Oh, I was born very near where we're sitting today; I was born in the town of Helvetia about four miles down the road.
- James: Oh, my goodness.
- Chester: Yeah, this is Waupaca County, of course.
- James: Yes, of course, and you went to school there, and high school and—
- Chester: Oh yes, I went to a grade school called Daoust(??) School and that's out here, about three miles as well, and then I started high school in Iola in 1937, graduating in 1941, and at that time graduates from high school had little to look forward to but going into service of some kind, and that's where I went.
- James: Now, you and I are essentially the same age. I was born in September of '23, and you were born in December.
- Chester: Right, yeah, makes you a little older.
- James: Yeah, just a second [laughs]—
- Chester: Yeah.
- James: So, what was your impression? Pearl Harbor arrived and—
- Chester: Well I, I remember I had a brother that was called up very early in the drafting period, and that was when they were supposed to go in for one year, and so he went in, in I don't know, February perhaps, but he was 28 years old, and so they released him later on. I don't think he spent maybe seven, eight months in the service, but we were out on the farm, and I recall at that time we still had 32 volt lights on the farm and so—
- James: 32 volts?
- Chester: 32 volt, yes, we had our own generator, and that was very common at that time, and so rather than have a radio playing at the house we would go down and we would hook the primary electricity to one of the batteries in this light plant, and so my father spent a lot of time with the radio down in this outbuilding, and on this particular day we were out around in the yard and probably out hunting or something, and so we were playing up there, and my father started to head out the door and said that the announcement

of Pearl Harbor had come over the radio, and my brother [laughs] said, “I better go start packing my suitcase, ’cause I’m gonna be back in.” And he was he, he was back in. That was December 7th, and he was in before Christmas, and he—

James: That must have been drawn out (??)

Chester: Oh, no, no, it didn’t take long to get him in. I mean that was the kind of a person they wanted that had some previous service, of course, and, but then, that was in 1941, ’42, and I never got drafted until—it was about the time I was graduating from high school, and I got drafted in February of 1943.

James: So in ’42 you just worked on the farm?

Chester: In 1942 I stayed on the farm, however—

James: You could’ve been deferred.

Chester: I could’ve been deferred, that’s right, but my father was very patriotic, and he thought if he had able-bodied sons they should be in the military fighting, and I had two brothers, and we were all in the service. I think the older one I mentioned went in shortly after Pearl Harbor, and my brother just older than I went, I believe about August of ’42. And I then went in in February of ’43.

James: As a draftee?

Chester: As a draftee, right.

James: So where did they send you for basic—

Chester: I was sent to Camp Wallace, Texas, which is near—oh, it’s a coastal area because I went into an anti-aircraft unit. I really am at a loss as to— Galveston, near Galveston, Texas, because I remember our big guns used to zero in on the oil refineries that are [laughs] over—

James: [Laughs] For practice.

Chester: Well, they weren’t about to shoot, but you know when you zero something in you have to have an object a long ways away so everything can, can zero in on the same thing.

James: So did you start, did your MOS [Military Occupational Specialty] put you right into artillery right off the bat?

- Chester: That's where I went for basic training, and I, at that time, and of course I didn't really know it then, but in later years I learned that there was a great buildup of anti-aircraft in the Army at that particular time, and they're up to a million men in it at one time, and because the Battle of Britain was on and the battle with Japan was on, and so there's a great buildup of anti-aircraft, and they were scattered all over the place. Up 'til that point anti-aircraft was a division of coast artillery and so therefore anti-aircraft was only necessary near harbors and that type of thing, but they soon learned when an airplane became a tactical weapon that they needed—
- James: Something a little better.
- Chester: They needed something a little better out in the field, and so the anti-aircraft was born out of coast artillery, and this is what was happening when I was in there in, and when I first went in I was in coast artillery, and I believe by April or May of '43 we became anti-aircraft, and it was to an anti-aircraft basic training camp that I was sent.
- James: Before you left that, those coastal guns generally were what, 16, 12 inch?
- Chester: Oh yes, they were great big things—
- James: Almost as big as [unintelligible].
- Chester: Right, yeah, but you see they were protecting harbors, and they did have some 3 inch guns, and they had some 37 millimeters, and it made more sense to give birth to anti-aircraft out of that division than it did—
- James: Right.
- Chester: You know, they also had search lights, because that was a part of anti-aircraft in the early days.
- James: So after Camp Wallace you went where for—
- Chester: I went to Camp Davis, North Carolina.
- James: For anti-aircraft training? Or what would you call it?
- Chester: Yes, it was auto mechanic training, and having been on the farm and knew what a tractor was all about and having had a couple courses after I was out of high school in mechanics, I went to this auto mechanic school for four to six, eight weeks.
- James: Where?

- Chester: It was Camp Davis, North Carolina, and that's where anti-aircraft sent all their specialists, if you would. If you wanted to be a cook you weren't [unintelligible] there. There was a lot of specialists in what we call "fire control." Those are the people that would operate the direction, directional finders and the directors, and they were hooked to guns. See, all the guns had automatic tracking devices on them, and then so they were there, and we were there, and it was just a transient camp. It was, you know, every couple of months there was a whole different bunch in there, and so then I went just a little ways south down to Camp Stewart, Georgia.
- James: Two months at Davis—
- Chester: Yes, I would judge that. I think it was six weeks of classes, but it takes time to come in and out and—
- James: And then to—
- Chester: And then I went to Camp Stewart, Georgia where I spent a lot of time, and Camp Stewart today is Fort Stewart, Georgia, and that's—
- James: Is that S-T-E-W-A-R-T or U-A-R-T?
- Chester: No, it's W, and that's where the 24th Division left for Desert Storm when they went over there. It's a huge—and one of the things it's known for is its big firing range. It has a lot of dead area out behind it where you can shoot all kinds of guns, and I believe in acreage it's probably the second largest camp. I believe there's one in California that's probably larger. It has a larger firing range, and so there was a lot of it down there, but we were relatively few, I think there was probably only 15 or 20 battalions that were training there.
- James: And you had a, you became attached to a battalion there?
- Chester: Yes, I did.
- James: And what was that?
- Chester: And it was the 565th Anti-Aircraft Battalion, and it was an AW, which meant "automatic weapons."
- James: AW Battalion.
- Chester: Yeah, yes, and just a matter of explanation, there's only three or four kinds of anti-aircraft battalions. First off, and it became obsolete, was a searchlight battalion, and that was a carry-over from coast artillery days although we did have some searchlight battalions when we got overseas.

And then there was a battalion of half-tracks (a vehicle with regular wheels on the front for steering and caterpillar tracks on the back to carry most of the load), and it had Quad-50s [four .50 caliber guns mounted on a single frame used for anti-aircraft purposes, eventually also used for anti-personnel as well, nicknamed the “meat chopper” in these instances] on a half-track, and it’s in that same firing squad would be a 37 millimeter gun and two 50s on the side of it, and it was meant to fire the 50s and the tracer ammunition and see where the plane was and then fire the 37, but—

James: But that wasn’t mobile?

Chester: Yes, it was, it was on a half-track too.

James: Oh.

Chester: And there they had, probably had the best gun in the world and the worst gun in the world because the 37 millimeter was like shooting a pop gun, but .50 caliber machine guns were wicked, especially those Quad-50s—

James: Those Quad-50s, I know what they are (??)

Chester: They were used clear out into the Vietnam War and for anti-personnel, and they were a wicked gun. And so then there was a 40 millimeter gun, the kind of unit I was with, and that was a fairly good gun. It had—that would be about a 1.6 [inches] in diameter.

James: Was that devised as an anti-aircraft gun?

Chester: Yes, it was.

James: Would that get out there?

Chester: Well, it could go out about three miles on a horizontal shot. Straight up is probably a mile and a half, two miles, but it was a wicked gun. It was a point-detonating thing so you had to hit it, but it would—

James: That was before the—

Chester: Missiles?

James: Well, it’s the proximity fuse I guess—

Chester: Yes, yes. No, well, we never had a proximity fuse, we were point-detonating, and then the large gun of anti-aircraft was a 90 millimeter anti-aircraft gun, but that was a shrapnel-type weapon whereby fire control would put that shell up in proximity to the plane, and the bullet would

explode and the shrapnel would hit the plane. Those were set up in units of four guns, and they were like 150 yards apart in a square, and so their whole fire control mechanism, while it didn't set in the center of it, it was off to the side, it was all aimed as if it was sitting in the center of those four guns, and so the guns would fire individually, but they were always, if they all fired as a unit you would have four explosions 150 yards apart, and supposedly a plane was supposed to be in the middle of that, and that's how it would hit them. And they were great guns, and when—seldom, they had ranges of about 12 miles sideways and six miles straight up.

James: That's pretty good (??)

Chester: That was a big gun, yes, and all of—that gun had, I think, about a 2,700 foot muzzle velocity, which is the same as a .30-06 [.30 caliber rifle round introduced in 1906, thus the name “thirty-aught-six,” it was used by America until the '60s and '70s], and so, you know, here you've got a gun which is a 90 millimeter is 3.6 inches, and that was a pretty damn nice big weapon, and I trained on those, but you know, in basic training you don't get to understand them. I own one at the present time, and of course it doesn't fire. But later on before we went overseas, about the time I was going overseas, which would have been in October of '44, these guns were all revamped to be used in conjunction with radar, and so all this fire-control mechanism was obsolete. It's interesting to note after the war, I've read magazine ads, and the magazine ads are just replete with how one of these guns function, and, you know, how they're aimed and how they lead the gun and all that. And I'm told that the reason that those ads were out there was to keep the Germans and the Japanese thinking we were still using fire control as opposed to radar, and so therefore they were trained(??)—I don't know how effective it was, but I do know that when the 90 millimeters went across the [English] Channel at D-Day that they had radar at that particular time, but I knew a captain of one of the battalions. He was a battery commander, and he told me how they went in there on D-Day, and he had been the first, or his unit was the first one to shoot down a German plane in the D-Day operations, and he said that they had been trained on this at, oh, some place in Massachusetts along the coast there, and they were being trained by the manufacturer that built them which was Sperry Rand, I believe, and so he said the trainer once said, “Well, the way if you had to make an adjustment to one of these is to take a screwdriver on the back here, and you put it on this screw, and you screw it,” and so that night, and they were shooting at the planes, he wasn't hitting right where he wanted to so he took a screwdriver, and he screwed this screw, [both laugh] and he knocked down two of them, and the next morning the battalion commander called everybody in, and it had turned out he was the only one who had shot down a plane the night before, and they said, “Well, how did you do that?” “Well,” he said,

“don’t you remember when we were at the Cape out there in Massachusetts they told us to take a screwdriver and turn this screw.”
 [both laugh] He said, “Oh, my God,” and he said “you know, I would have been court-martialed and lost my job had there been anybody to replace me,” but you know this was something that only somebody from the factory could turn. It wasn’t meant for—

James: To be done in the field.

Chester: Done in the field, but he said, “I’m sure the next night everybody turned”—

James: [unintelligible] screwdrivers issued (??).

Chester: Right, but he also told me that they did not have a proximity fuse which, just for informational purposes, a proximity fuse is something that ignites when it gets close to an object, and it, as opposed to, you know, X number of yards away from the muzzle of the gun, but they had proximity fuse ammunition with them, but they never used it because they didn’t want the Germans to recover a dud so they could figure out how it worked, and so they carried this ammunition, and they never used it until the Battle of the Bulge, and at that time they felt it was necessary to do that, and so he said, “Then we used it,” and then he said, “It was a very successful shell.” He said, “It was wicked.” They had used it in England for planes coming in from Germany, or those V-1 and V-2 rockets, and they would—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: Yes, and they would set up, and so all the spent ammunition would go out over the ocean. So if there was a dud, the dud would’ve dropped into the English Channel, and so—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: They would never recover it, but on land they didn’t want to let them use it.

James: Somebody said that the proximity fuse was the only invention America offered to the Allies during World War II.

Chester: Could be.

James: Most like radar, even though it was invented by an American, it sorta laid there for 20 years until the Brits [unintelligible].

- Chester: And actually, you know, we had a radar. There was a radar at Pearl Harbor, and if they'd have believed what they saw, they'd have been in great shape. However—
- James: Nobody really knew what to do with it.
- Chester: No, it was a great big cumbersome thing that was several stories high, and it took erecting crews to erect it, and I believe that was what they called a 268 or a 258 radar [SCR 268: Signal Corps Radio number 268, the Army's first radar system] and then they had a 584 [SCR 584: Signal Corps Radio number 584: a much smaller and more mobile radar system developed by America during World War 2, regarded as the best radar system in the War] which was a much better radar, and that was contained in a van on a—like on the back of a semi truck, and they had a, about a 6 foot aluminum antenna that went on top of that truck. It was hauled inside of it when they were moving, but they put that on top, and that was at least was the kind of radar that was used in 90 millimeter direction. And so it was highly mobile, and it could go in and set up as quick as a gun could, and so that's the kind of radar that you saw. However, you gotta understand that in the case of a 90 millimeter that was more of a strategic type of a defense. That would've been set up around—I remember in our area, I was in Luxembourg City, and while we had 40 millimeters there, they did have some 90 millimeters about six miles from there that was protecting a, oh, a foundry, and this foundry was casting false front ends for Sherman tanks because, you know, there was a great debate of whether the Sherman tank was better than the German heavy Tigers, and it certainly wasn't. The Tiger was a heavy tank—
- James: They weren't in the same class.
- Chester: No, and a Sherman is a medium tank, but, you know, by adding some armor to the front end of it, it had made a little bit difference. So what they did, they were making additional armor for the front of Sherman tanks at this foundry, and so we did have some 90 millimeters around such an installation, and they were around, oh, beachheads where they were unloading ships, and they were around supply depots and that sort of thing they were, and it took longer to set them up, and—
- James: When did you go to England?
- Chester: I went into England in the fall of '44, and really we were supposed to have gone to the Continent, but we went to England because they said that's where our supplies were, but as it turned out they were on the French coast, and they had to reload them onto a ship and ship them over to England, and so we were there a couple of months before we got in, and I went across the Channel—

James: And then you went to France—

Chester: I went to—

James: Two months later?

Chester: Yeah, I, we went across the Channel and were laying anchor on December 16th which was the beginning of the Bulge, and just—and that was, we were at Rouen, and that's near Le Havre, and—

James: I've been there.

Chester: And then—but we got called to go to Luxembourg City in support with the—assigned to the 1st Army, but by the time we got there the 1st Army had been all disrupted by the Bulge, and so the 3rd Army, which was south of the 1st Army, had made a 90 degree turn and had gone north to hit the southern flank of the Bulge, and so we were assigned into the 3rd Army, and we were in defense of 3rd Army headquarters, and—

James: Everyone just turned north.

Chester: Yeah.

James: In the Bulge.

Chester: Yes, and I never knew the Army had so much equipment because [both laugh] we were sitting on a highway on the south entrance to Luxembourg City and it all went past, and every kind of a shape there was, and there were two things that we did. I was in a maintenance group, of course, and so we had air compressors, and we had spare tires, and then across the street was where our headquarters was, and our kitchen made coffee constantly, and we were feeding the troops that were going north. They were riding tanks and trucks and what, and sometimes when they were moving, you know, you couldn't do much for them, but if they weren't moving, you know, or sitting out there, and it was cold, you know, and—

James: You would give them coffee?

Chester: And we would give 'em coffee and food and whatever we could arrange, you know, and then the convoy maybe moved. We'd gain for another hour before you had any service, and we were green troops. Of course to us that was like a circus moving into town [both laugh] or something, you know, and we were close enough so we could see the explosions up on the front, but I expect we were, oh, 15, 16 miles from the front, and fortunately for me I was in a headquarters battery, and I never got up where they were

shooting at one another. I could hear it, and I knew it was up there, but I knew enough not to go up there, too, because I didn't have any business there. We had some units that were up closer. One of our batteries was—defended Radio Luxembourg, the towers of Radio Luxembourg, which if you're uninformed about that, that's one of the largest radio stations in the world if you—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: Yeah, and so these are towers that were giant. If I recall there were three or four of them, and then we had two batteries that defended the city of Luxembourg City, and we had one battery that was in defense of the airport of Luxembourg City, and of course in the Battle of the Bulge, the first days it was all cloudy and foggy and cold and snowy, and so there wasn't much going on, but I remember when the sun did break out after a week or two the air was full of B-24s heading for the interior of Germany, and the air was also full of tinsel that they were dropping to confuse the radar, and the ground was not covered with it, but I mean—

James: Tinsel?

Chester: You could stepped on a piece of tinsel and walked clear downtown to Luxembourg. You know, it was all over the place, and so—but it was a great relief when that happened of course because—but it was a—I was probably, oh, I don't know, 40, 50 miles from Bastogne, which is, you know, most people think Bastogne was the only city in the Bulge, and it was a very vulnerable one, don't get me wrong, I've visited there after the war, and I've visited there in recent years, but it wasn't the only place that things were going on.

James: Yeah, I talked to several people that I put in my book. Found one, took one guy from the 82nd and two guys from the 101st and one guy [unintelligible].

Chester: Mm-hmm, yeah, but you know it should be understood that I'm not a, wasn't a combat soldier per se. Yes, I got combat pay, and I got all the stars that says I was in combat, but I forgot one time, it seems to me like there's, I don't know, 20 or 30 men behind every infantryman that's up on the front line—

James: I think there are 30 or 40.

Chester: Yeah, and I was one of them of course, you see, and well, what—I was supposed to be fixing trucks that didn't run [both laugh]. I wasn't supposed to be shooting at anybody, and ironically I don't know that it was ever a contest, but I probably fixed more flat tires in the war than a lot

of people did, and again, we were located near this highway, and when trucks would go by that had a flat tire, they'd run in and see if we could air it up, but more often we'd just change tires, and—

James: You didn't have a supply problem there?

Chester: Oh yeah, we had a lot, but you see you just didn't go to the ordnance department and get some new tires because they didn't—

James: Supposed to have a stash ready.

Chester: No, no. What we did, we found out where the, the reclamation point was, and so you know as trucks were being blowed up out on the front they weren't always all blowed to hell so the wreckers would pull them into this field, and we would go in there, and we would appropriate the tires and the carburetors and the, you know, anything that we needed. It was like going to the supply depot. We'd just tell 'em we needed that because we used it. So many times we were just, you know, the guy that went out to the reclaimed vehicles and pulled off the tires, and usually we left them flat ones there because we didn't want them accumulating around our place either, you know. They were both—

James: Did the tires generally—one size goes with a lot—

Chester: Oh yes, there's some great—

James: There was a fixed size that had one size and that worked on the jeeps, and that worked on—

Chester: You bet, no, that's right. We had about three sizes of tires, one for Jeeps, one for $\frac{3}{4}$ ton trucks and one for 2 and a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton GMCs [General Motor Company trucks] in our case. Now there were some bigger trucks that needed larger tires, but that was what the war was really all about was those three vehicles.

James: That really was what made us—

Chester: And I think another thing that a lot of people forget is that we had 70 octane gasoline. We didn't have diesel, we didn't have high-test, we didn't—there was some white gas that they used in some of the stoves and things like that, but—

James: Stoves, Coleman stoves.

- Chester: If you put that in the tank of a truck it still burned, you know, and so therefore we eliminated the, you know, getting diesel fuel in gasoline trucks or vice-verse, and everything ran on 70 octane gas—
- James: None of those trucks ran on anything but gas.
- Chester: That's all we had in World War II was gas, 70 octane gasoline, and I know subsequently they had trucks that were, they called them multiple fuel trucks, you know, and they could run on anything with a little adjustment, but I know some trucks that are run, I have one here that's a World War II truck that ran on diesel, but I don't think it ever left continental United States. I think it was used here all the time, 'cause it was used to transport big—
- James: Yeah, that would've had all kinds of problems.
- Chester: Yes.
- James: Have to change that fuel all day (??).
- Chester: Mm-hmm, no, and then odd as it might seem, all gasoline in the field was transported in five gallon cans. Now, if you look at the film *The Battle of the Bulge* and the Germans were about to capture a gas dump, and—
- James: That was a big point in that movie.
- Chester: They had 50-gallon drums, and they rolled them downhill, and they caught fire, and that was not so!
- James: Total nonsense.
- Chester: That's total nonsense, and fact is, the captain I told you about that was on the—I met that was in the Battle of the Bulge and shot down the first airplane, he was also defending that gas dump in reality, and he was telling all about the defense of that, and he would make a fine interview for you some other time, but anyway, it was in five gallon cans, and when he was out there he was just keeping people coming up that road, and he didn't realize it until the next morning, he was probably 200 yards from this dang gas dump, but it was all five gallon cans, and, and thank God one of their 90 millimeters changed the course of that. The Germans never found that gas dump because he—they'd sent out a light armored vehicle to scout the area to see if in fact what it was up there, and one of his 90 millimeters just knocked the turret right off the this light tank they'd sent out as a scout, and they turned tail and went back, and the, you know, they were within 300-400 yards of the gas when this happened.

James: Saw the whole thing.

Chester: Yeah, and he was telling me how interesting that was. They were sent out there the night before, and at that time they were using what is known as the M-4 prime mover [M-4: a half-tractor used by the United States and the Allies during World War II, used for transporting artillery & mortars], an M-4 high speed tractor to pull a 90 millimeter gun, was muddier than the devil, and they went out there, and you know operating in the dark and you don't even know what roads you're on, and one thing and another, and you had to turn these things around and get them in position, and they sounded like a Sherman tank, and apparently these Germans that sitting a couple miles from there heard all this roaring up in that road that night, and they thought the armor didn't—

James: It was coming!

Chester: They thought the armored divisions had moved in, and that's why they sent this light tank up there as a decoy to see what had happened. Well, you know, Sherman tanks, about the biggest gun they had on them was a 75 millimeter, and 90 millimeter is much more effective than they got on it (??). So that morning when they come up there and these Germans lost that tank they must've said, "Boy there's some big stuff up here," and they turned tail, but that was the gas dump that happened. And every time I see that film of I don't know whether it's in *Patton* or *Battle of the Bulge* but that scene, but it's fake. It isn't, that is not reality.

James: How long were you there? I mean after the Bulge, you started moving—

Chester: Yes, we would—well, we stayed a long time in Luxembourg City because 3rd Army headquarters stayed there. That is what they call G-2 and G-3, which is intelligence and operations. G-1 is personnel, G-4 was supply, that was left back at Nancy, France, I think, but the operations end of the 3rd Army was in Luxembourg City, and as long as their headquarters was there we stayed there, and that was probably out in early February or something before we left.

[End of Tape One, Side A]

Chester: And when we left the armies had about defeated everybody up to the Rhine River, and we went up then for the Rhine River crossings. Again we weren't the actual anti-aircraft defense that was on the river watching for planes, but rather initially we were in defense of field artillery, and they would send out, you know, a gun or two to a field artillery unit because the Germans didn't like those guns shooting, and so we were out there in case the planes came past the field artillery, and later on as the front

moved across the river and got out, then we took over defense of the bridges on the Rhine River, and we stayed there for—

James: When would you say that was? Shortly after they crossed?

Chester: Oh, yeah, they had bridgeheads. They went across on a bridge, you know, a bridgehead is when your troops get on the other bank and they set up a defense of that bank. Well, soon after the bridgeheads were there the anti-aircraft defense stayed with their division. Every division had a battalion of anti-aircraft, and invariably that was either automatic weapons or half-tracks, and half-tracks were the best they could get because they were so versatile. They could move around very nicely, and so you know, the next line of defense in anti-aircraft was 40 millimeters, and so we came in after that, and so, well, I think we had three bridges. We had one at—we particularly were at Lorch, which is—it's been so long since I've been over there I forget all these cities, but it was kind of in the middle of, you know there's a stretch about 20 miles long where there's high mountains on either side of the Rhine. Boppard was the—that would've been on the north end of it, and then from there and south it was Lorch, and then there was—

James: Sounds like Remagen.

Chester: No, Remagen would have been north of—

James: Farther down? (??)

Chester: Yeah, it's downriver, but it's north which is—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: Yeah, and Remagen was in the 1st Army territory. We were in 3rd, but we stayed there I would say a week or 10 days around the river, and then we took off on a hellacious long move, and we went north and north-east, and I believe the name of the town was Beringen, but I may be pronouncing that wrong, and there was a Grosse-Beringen and a Beringen, and Grosse of course means “big” you know, and this would be the bigger city, and the other one would be a suburb of it, like you know, could be Chicago, or like Milwaukee and South Milwaukee, you know? So we went up in that country, and at that time that was very fluid, and I remember getting up in there and we were actually strafed one night which was absolutely foreign to us. We'd never had that happened before.

James: Had to(??) unlimber your guns then.

Chester: That's right. Well, we had, we did have what they called ring mounts that they were on top of trucks many times, you know, scout cars. They were just a standard weapon for our end, so that was a single 50 caliber, but I mean you could knock a plane down with them. In fact, the battalion did knock down a plane with a 50 caliber ring mount one time, but they were a wicked weapon. I mean a plane didn't like to get mixed up in them either, and so we stayed up there for a while, and then when I say we stayed up there we stayed in that vicinity, but we would keep moving, oh, about 20 miles at a time, and what would happen is that we were attached to armored divisions at that time, and I should back up and say we were never attached to a division but rather an Army corps, which is, makes up about three divisions, I believe a corps, and so we were up in there, but we were then we were, you know they just directed us out to the divisions. And so the armored would go up there, and they would literally go from one airfield to the next airfield, and what was happening was they would clear this airfield so that the supply planes from back at Paris or in France would come in there with gliders, and they—somebody went in and got a runway that was operable, and then supplies would come in there, and so those of us that didn't, weren't especially assigned to the driving of trucks, we would stay there as a maintenance base and then airplanes would fly gasoline in and foodstuffs in there, and then our trucks were used to go up to the armored supplies and dump them off. We didn't have to go out to where they were fighting, don't get me wrong, but they had their own supplies, but they, an armored division isn't equipped. We had 87 two and one half ton GMC trucks which was a lot of mobile supply. So we weren't pulling guns around the country we were—we hauled a lot of gasoline and—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: And a lot of supplies, and so, but then when they got up in—the armor secured the next airfield, we would leave that one to somebody else, and we would go on up to that other one, and so, but there were—we operated under batteries of which there were four and so it would—you'd only take about one battery to secure an airfield, and but we went on up, and we got the last one up in that area which was up on the northern flank was Weimar, and Weimar isn't been noted too much in the world except for it's near Buchenwald, the concentration camp, and you know, soldiers are kind of a cavalier bunch anyway, you know, and they didn't have much entertainment over there. So I remember our group being a battalion maintenance group, when you were on the move like that we didn't have too much assigned to do either. We were always helpful along the road in convoys and stuff like that and, but Buchenwald was liberated one morning if I recall the story. It was about 5 o'clock, and so we were probably six, seven miles from there, and so a group of us in the maintenance section decided that we should be tourists for a while. So we

loaded up in one of our 2 ½ ton trucks and we went up there. So about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and I often brag that we were some of the first tourists that visited Buchenwald, and we were, we were there the night before Eisenhower, and Patton and all the big generals visited it, and so we were very early tourists, though I don't think we were the first ones, but anyway, that was a very interesting tour. It isn't something that you would go to every afternoon and enjoy, but I mean it did, it did reveal the realities of the war, you know. I mean, not fighting but I mean of what had happened, you know, in the political—

James: To innocent people.

Chester: Pardon?

James: To innocent people.

Chester: Yes, yes, very innocent people, and it's amazing you know, those concentration camps were—there weren't a lot of guards there. You were wondering well just how would you administer a camp that had 50,000 people in it. Well, that was all done internally. First off, all the, oh, the Christians and non-Jewish people would not associate with the Jews, and so the Jews were—

James: You're talking about the internees.

Chester: Internees, yes.

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: Yes, they would not associate with the Jews, and so the Jews were put in a separate part of the camp by this internal government, but that's the ones—they'd just dump the food off at the gate, and they, this internal government was the one that passed it out and who got fed and who didn't and all that sort of thing, and, so but I mean, you know, the internees, I guess if you and I were in that position, you know, your belly speaks very loud, and so that I—there's three or there're four particular things inside that camp that I remember. We were greeted at the gate with a young boy that was, I would say, 17 years old, but he spoke English fluently, and he took us initially to the hospital because the doctor there spoke English as well, and the doctor said, "Do you have any D ration with you?" Well, a D ration was a chocolate candy bar, and you, we often carried them with you, but we also had some in our truck just in case we missed a meal somewhere we'd have something to eat, and so he said, "Well, I'd appreciate it if you'd go get all your D bars." He says, "I can use them and if you would give one to one of the internees, their stomach isn't capable of hacking a whole bar, and, you know, all they need is a nibble and, or

that's all their digestive system could handle." So he took control of, I don't know, a couple dozen chocolate bars that we had, and then he started introducing us to the people around inside, and I'll swear we were some of the first Americans that were, you know, tourists if you will, and I don't think it took long to liberate the camp. I think all it did was they shot the SS troopers that were there, and that was it, and they just left them to their own devices because they had their own internal government. So, but we visited this hospital, and I remember meeting a fella that at one time was a shortstop for the Philadelphia Phillies in there, and there was a supreme court justice from Belgium in there. That was only about 17 patients I think, but you can see, but there again, they had separated the celebrities out of the group to go in the hospital 'cause there was so much sickness in the rest of 'em if they died they died, you know. And so that was one element we saw. Then I suppose because of the geography of the camp, the next place we went was the whorehouse, and you wonder, well, you know, what the hell is that doing there? Well, they, you know, all men when they get like that in the army, or wherever they are—

James: In the camp?

Chester: Huh?

James: In the camp?

Chester: Internally, in the camp, sure, and so if a prisoner could, you know, save the 17 cents a month or something that he had for two-three months he could go to the whorehouse, and so he would go in there, and there was about six girls there, but there was guards in the all the hallways, and they had an opening where they could open the, you know, and look in and see how things are going and—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: And it was, yeah sure, and you know, they had all of 10 minutes or something, and they were chased out, and the next crew goes—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: Yes, but that's, you know, you don't hear that story too often, but that was in there, and they were beautiful looking girls, incidentally. They—yes, no, they were all nice fed, and you know—

James: And nice about the syphilis.

Chester: Yeah, sure [laughs] right, yeah. But then we went to what was called the upper camp, and that is where the bulk of the internees were, and they—

well, you and I wouldn't call it great, but I mean, they did sleep in wooden bunks, and I can't remember whether these were two or three high. I'm not so sure they weren't three high, and they had a potbelly stove in the middle of the room to keep it warm, and they would—I remember they were boiling potatoes on that when I was in there, and that seemed a little bit, not a way that they would normally do this because you know, they did have a kitchen, but I suppose they got some potatoes or maybe the soldiers had left them some or something, but, anyway, there was some internees in there that could speak bit of English, and they of course were welcome, I mean, you know, we were getting all the welcomes that the people that really had liberated them should have gotten, but we left there and we went down to the lower camp, which was the Jewish camp, and that, I just, it's almost inconceivable that man can treat man that lowly, you know, that they—their bunks were, I would say, oh, 6 feet wide, and that was enough for 6 people to sleep on, and they were, I would say 18 inches tall and they were about six of them high, one, you know, on top of another. So you know, it was 6 by 6 by, or 6 by 7 or something like that, and there would have been 36 men sleeping in that little like cubby holes, you know, really something that was probably a foot wide and 16 inches high. That is what that they had to sleep in, and sometimes they would sleep alternately feet and head, and feet and head, but they never took a bath, and the stench in there was just ungodly—

James: I'm sure they all had tuberculosis too.

Chester: Probably, and, but anyway, when they would die at night, the next morning they would have to—their own kind would take them out and down to into that barracks, and they would put them in a little room, and then the next night they would come along with two wheeled carts and pick them bodies up and take them up to the—

James: Crematorium.

Chester: Crematorium, yeah. So, and we did go to the crematory, but there were no bodies. There were bodies in carts ready to go to the crematory, but we didn't—actually it wasn't operating when we were there, but there was piles of ashes out back that, you know, and I remember taking a series of pictures of all that crazy stuff, but I was awful careful who I gave them to. I mean when I came home, when I was over there everybody wanted to see 'em.

James: Sure.

Chester: After the war, you know, was over—

James: Different view.

Chester: Huh?

James: We had a different view of it.

Chester: Yes, yes, well, and you know, I've been in New York City where, you know, Brooklyn and New York have a lot of Jewish population, and I told this story much like I have to you, and God, the first thing you know there would be four or five people around me, you know, and they said, "Would you come tell our group that?" and I said, "Well, I'm going back home," but they said, "Well, we've got people that don't believe that," you know, "they don't believe that there were concentration camps and that they were treated this way," you know, and they were really, really concerned, and they were, you know, they don't often find somebody that had been to a concentration camp that in first person that could reveal it to them, you know, and so they were great. I was back there on a tour probably in the early '90s, I took four couples from our battalion back there, and we retraced our steps—

James: Oh, you—

Chester: We landed in Luxembourg City, by deliberate intent, and we had this little bus, and we had a multilingual driver and I had laid out the tour of where we wanted to go to the travel agent in Luxembourg which we dealt with, and so we traveled and I think it was about 1,100 miles we put on, and I don't know how long we were there. I can't remember, but one of the fellas that were with us had been a prisoner. We didn't have too many. I think we only had three prisoners in all the time we were there, but he was one of 'em. So we revisited some of the haunts that he was in while he was there, and he was there to outline how escaped and all that sort of stuff, and that [laughs] was some of the little, little interesting—
[Approx. 25 sec. gap in tape]

James: You left Germany, when?

Chester: I'm just trying to think—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: The war was over on the—

James: May.

Chester: In May, and we probably left Germany in late June, early July, and we went back to France. We went back to Rouen, France, and for a period of time, I wasn't involved again, and we were—we had turned in our guns,

and but the trucks were still ours, and we, 'cause we needed them to travel, haul our men back to France, but we were assigned as guards there, as I recall, as port guards, and there was a—

James: Le Havre, Lucky Strike?

Chester: I think we were there, and we were there when we—

James: Embarkation place.

Chester: Yes, that's probably where we were billeted. I can't remember, but anyways, we were port guards, and what that meant was is we would go to the harbors around there where they were, you know, handling goods, and so we'd stand guard around there, but also at the bridge. You know there was a triple-double Bailey bridge [Bailey bridge: portable, prefabricated bridge, light enough to carry on trucks, strong enough to carry tanks, used extensively by the Allies during World War II]. Are you familiar with—

James: I know what a Bailey bridge is.

Chester: But you know, you have a Bailey bridge, but then you put one aside of it, that's a double bailey bridge. They put one on top is a double-double bailey bridge, and you put it up here. Well, this was a triple-double Bailey bridge, and, 'cause it was really built for putting heavy stuff over, you know.

James: Oh.

Chester: And I remember we had guards on that thing, you know, at each end of it. There's a lot of 'em of course, but there was somebody else stopping the trucks and inspecting them, but—

James: These were being sent back to the United States?

Chester: You know, I don't know—

James: All right (??).

Chester: What the traffic was all about, but I mean there was lots of stuff coming in and out of the harbors, and so I suppose this was the cargo that was on 'em. I mean, they were going into, to, I suppose it was Le Havre, I don't know—

James: Well, that was a big embarkation point.

Chester: Yeah.

James: It was called Camp Lucky Strike.

Chester: Yup.

James: Everybody went there and then they got a ride home.

Chester: Yeah, right.

James: So when'd you get back to the United States?

Chester: Well, that wasn't the end of it. I, we were transferred up to Antwerp, Belgium.

James: Oh my goodness!

Chester: And there we also were guards there, and that was a port of embarkation coming back, and so a lot of people that were in that part of the world was using that. They didn't come back to Rouen.

James: That's a huge port.

Chester: What?

James: Huge.

Chester: Oh yes, and you know that was a long time in getting captured. It was a—the British were supposed to do that, and I don't know if they—

James: That didn't work out.

Chester: Oh, you know, if you ever have a, I don't know, in this day and age, but I mean, back then we always thought that the Limeys [old American & Canadian slang for British] as we called them, were the world's worst soldiers, and I honest to God believe it. You know, they wouldn't do anything unless they had three times the supplies they needed behind them—

James: Well, that's Montgomery's way of fighting the war, you know.

Chester: Oh, God, he was terrible, and, you know, there's about 40 miles of channel getting into Antwerp, but it's a beautiful harbor once you get there. But I mean, and the Germans were in all these damn islands, and all these islands, you know, had about three foot of water over the top of them, and they just didn't know how to fight out there, and you know, I

don't know if Americans did, but you know, this—an American has so damn much ingenuity of how to handle things, and I don't believe those—

James: Go to Plan B and not just look(??) at Plan C.

Chester: Oh yeah, yeah, sure if they didn't have that they'd incorporate another one, you know, and they would—

James: They would do something else(??).

Chester: Yeah, I just, I'll never forget a "typical American." This was a guy that used to drive a beer truck in Tennessee. He lived outside of Nashville a ways, and he knew how to drive a truck, but his main business was running whiskey, but—

James: He learned to drive without [unintelligible].

Chester: Yeah, but he, yeah sure, he could do any damn thing. But anyway, I remember we get some of these fellas out of the city, and they would try to back you up, I mean if you were driving a truck they were supposed to guide you into a spot, you know. Well, they would have you cross-way to the road and everything else, and finally old Jackson he came down, and he laid a stick right there and he said, "Is that where you want this goddamn truck?" and he backed this truck in, and he stopped it right on top of that stick, you know. He just, he didn't need all them guys there. He could see where he was, but that's what I'm talking about. If you can't get the damn truck in there by, you know, normal means you just get somebody who knows how(??) to drive it. [Dialogue unintelligible ca. 20 sec.]

James: Your real concern is [unintelligible]. You know, you knew how to [unintelligible]. [Dialogue unintelligible ca. 35 sec.]

Chester: 40 pounds [unintelligible]. So anyway, I, we go up there, and, see, my particular unit got split up up there, and we started going, assumed that what we were doing, all of us were getting(??) points [unintelligible] to get home, and, you know, I had 58 points or something like that. So I was transferred to some unit. I came home with a military point star (??), and somebody else would come home with something else, and they were transferred around. I assisted(??) the few military police units that I was with, but I don't recall them doing anything while I was there [unintelligible], but one of our batteries would come home with a unit, and they had half of another battery unit, and they were discharged from the 565th Anti-Aircraft Battalion. So I got home, I believe back to [unintelligible] February 2nd.

- James: Got home February of '46.
- Chester: February '46.
- James: Did you use the GI Bill?
- Chester: No, I never used it. I never [unintelligible]. I never used it to go to college. I suppose I should have, but—
- James: You could have done a lot of things with it.
- Chester: Yes.
- James: Then you went back to the farm?
- Chester: Yes, I did. I went back to the farm, and fortunately(?) my father had sold our cattle(?) [unintelligible].
- James: You didn't have the people to help(?) [unintelligible].
- Chester: No, no, and so I kind of made a living. The first six months I don't think I did anything(?). Then the next period of time I was kind of a freelance carpenter. My father had a lot of talent that way. He was [unintelligible]. But anyways, well, it was still pretty much [unintelligible]. So he knew a lot of things that he learned to do that year. He knew a lot about building [unintelligible]. So I went to work, and there was a lot of work to be had at that time. The material was very short, and it took years before supply lines amounted to(?) [unintelligible], and there was such a demand for [unintelligible] in the early '50s [unintelligible]. If you recall in automobiles, I think it was 1949 before Ford and Chevrolet came out with new models. Everything was geared for wartime production, and road development [unintelligible]. But I mean, you didn't have the road graders [unintelligible]. I often said that the postwar era for about five years after the war was a very difficult time that was just—there was a lot of work to be done, but there weren't materials [unintelligible]. So that was the time that I was dreaming up when I was younger [unintelligible].
- James: [unintelligible] numismatist(?).
- Chester: My brother, oldest brother, who was in the South Pacific, was in an ordnance unit, and he had a little gun shop he opened. He always loved that. So he had his mustering out pay [unintelligible] for three years [unintelligible]. He had all his back pay so he opened his gun shop. As a result those people would come around to help [unintelligible], but among them was a fellow that [unintelligible]. He collected coins [unintelligible].

When I came back I still had mornings open(??). About that time old Liberty Head money [unintelligible].

James: I used to go down to the bank. I'd get stacks of pennies [unintelligible] 5-0s [unintelligible].

Chester: I mentioned [unintelligible]. I went around the [unintelligible]. I'd go around [unintelligible] and pick it up.

James: You had somebody doing it for you.

Chester: Yeah.

James: Terrific. Good.

Chester: And so I [unintelligible] stamp collecting at that point, but our house burned in 1940 out at the farm, and my stamps burned up in the flames [unintelligible]. So that was [unintelligible]. And they would allow you to trade guns and ammunition through the United States mail. [unintelligible] post office [unintelligible]. So, but anyways I thought if that'll work with firearms, why wouldn't it work with coins(??) 'cause they were much smaller and you could put in [unintelligible]. So I just copied what that publication was doing and started publishing, and, you know [unintelligible]. So I retired(??) [unintelligible].

James: This is around here(??)?

Chester: [unintelligible]

James: Okay.

Chester: We moved into town in 1950, and this is the [unintelligible] place I've ever lived. [unintelligible] down in the barn and the house had [unintelligible].

James: Who was gonna buy your magazine line(??)? [unintelligible]

Chester: Foster—

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: You gotta get [unintelligible] subscriptions, and this is where, you know, a resourceful American can do that. [unintelligible]. You just [unintelligible]. You know what I mean, sell advertising [unintelligible]. So everybody [unintelligible] by mail obviously [unintelligible]. Back then telephones were only a last resort [unintelligible] needed a lot more

money to do that 'cause long distance phone charges were I believe higher than they are now, and [unintelligible]. So I just started writing [unintelligible].

[End of Tape 1, Side B]

- Chester: [unintelligible] publishing [unintelligible] the other fella was Jim Bemis(??) who was the [unintelligible] business. He said, "Well, I got Big(??) Jim to go college." My wife said(??) [unintelligible].
- James: [laughs] Screwin' around, that's all, right? (??)
- Chester: And he said, "If it's ever gonna happen you're gonna have to do it alone," and so I took over(??). I often said that "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." I knew nothing about it so I took over(??) [laughs].
- James: [unintelligible] Did you join any veterans organizations?
- Chester: Never have joined.
- James: But you have kept tight in with your [unintelligible].
- Chester: I have, yes, we have a reunion this year.
- James: There's a publication in Phillips and all that?
- Chester: Yes, well, I said I was in publishing business [unintelligible] and all that. Once I became a member I [unintelligible] that old typewriter, and so I would always typeset(??) [unintelligible].
- James: Did you learn that on the job by yourself, how to do the typesetting?
- Chester: Well, I always hired stuff done that I couldn't do myself. You know, I was supposed to be the brains. I wasn't supposed to be the—
- James: Oh, I see. You're a pointer.
- Chester: Yes, well, but he(??) was always [unintelligible]. In fact, you know, by the time I got re-associated with the outfit(??), I was substantial(??) enough that that was just a [unintelligible].
- James: Was that a [unintelligible]?
- Chester: Yes, it is, but it's becoming smaller and smaller and smaller. I suppose there's probably only 15 or 20 of us now, and when I first started going there was well over 100.

James: [unintelligible]

Chester: Few years later, you know, either too old to travel. You know, the—

James: Deaths? (??)

Chester: Deaths(??), yeah, infirm. It's just [unintelligible]. I keep in track with some of them by telephone, and some of them [unintelligible] at the reunion. You know we found that fella down in Kenosha, oh, five-six years ago. So [unintelligible].

James: Oh, how nice.

Chester: There weren't many of them from up in this part of the world. Most of them were from near(??) Detroit, New York, or [unintelligible] came from Camp Oglethorpe(??) [unintelligible]. See, I came through a basic training center into a specialist school(??) [unintelligible].

James: [unintelligible] keep you going. You've got all kinds of hobbies [unintelligible].

Chester: Oh, yes. I have a lot of stuff.

James: [unintelligible]. Tell me how you got into automobiles(??).

Chester: Well, in 1965 there was a bit of a depression in the numismatic publishing field. I don't know if it was a general depression, but there was—because the Treasury no longer was putting silver in our nation's(??) coins [unintelligible]. There was a coin shortage, and so as a result the hobby took a definite downturn to a point where I was [unintelligible] close to being broke as I think I've ever been in my life, but fortunately I had coins and stuff(??) enough. I sold it and kept my head above water, and you know it wasn't until probably the mid-70s that [unintelligible]. It took about 10 years, but one of the men that worked for me, he was knowledgeable about cars as well. He and I kind of shepherded the company. We knew(??) we had to diversify, get more products [unintelligible]. So old cars was one of the things that we determined needed a product like we had(??).

James: Oh, good.

Chester: Anyway, and so it took awhile to get going on that, but I mean he'd had a lot of experience in numismatic publishing. He didn't have the ability(??) of a printer or typesetter or any of this kind of stuff. [unintelligible] post office knew how to handle [unintelligible]. So that's how *Old Cars* was

[unintelligible]. Really the car show [unintelligible] set up here [unintelligible]. It was an outgrowth of that as well, and we felt that—we knew that [unintelligible] publishing here that there's more [unintelligible] in Wisconsin per capita than there is in California, and so [unintelligible] and so knowing that we thought it best we get acquainted with all the local car clubs. So we got all the names we could possibly get. We kept asking people about this and that. There was a local car club, and we called them. So we sent [unintelligible] to the chicken(??) barbecue. So we said, "Come on and join us. All you gotta do is come in your old car." So this was the very first time. I think about 20 cars came—

James: Great.

Chester: And I don't know how many tickets, but ours were a different kind of tickets than the general public was getting, and so, you know, at the end of the day [unintelligible]. So, but we just built on that [unintelligible] I saw that in *Publishers Weekly*. I think we had 90,000 the second year(??). It just kept growing, and we've had as many as 3,200 cars here.

James: A three day week? On a weekend or—

Chester: On a weekend, but I think we cut it down to about 2,500 [unintelligible]. If you come in an old car you get the first parking. Okay, then so you're right near the car show. Say you come in some other car you'll always be two-thirds of a mile from here. So that was our secret to getting them here every year, and then, oh, probably a couple of other things. [unintelligible] cars to bargain [unintelligible]. It used to cost about \$300 a weekend [unintelligible] and Krause Publications subsidized that. We finally got so we were breakin' even on the show(??). We had paid so much for [unintelligible]. We could handle many more people. It would be much nicer. [unintelligible] even smell, you know. So we just—I think we now have three permanent toilet facilities here and two on the [unintelligible]. So that's about \$20,000 apiece, but nonetheless, you know this is what attracts people. When you accommodate people, and you're eliminating dust to the cars they've driven(??). [unintelligible] plenty of food and drink. We were fortunate(??) that we controlled all that. The profits from that are in our pocket, not in the [unintelligible].

James: You kept the price [unintelligible]?

Chester: Sure, but it also, instead of charging \$10 entrance fees, you know you could [unintelligible] \$5 [unintelligible]. It's a very small price to pay [unintelligible] other entertainment.

James: People who drive these cars up to the show, are they young or old?

- Chester: All ages.
- James: Are they coming to buy or sell or just look?
- Chester: Sometimes when they buy and sell then we have the business(??) here. I don't know, 4,000 swap meet spaces, and then probably 1,100-1,200 spaces for what we call a car corral if anyone wants to sell a car, and there are, I don't know, probably around 1,000 [unintelligible].
- James: [unintelligible]
- Chester: [unintelligible]
- James: [unintelligible]
- Chester: Oh, by all means, but in the first ten years all we could handle were just in putting it on, put on by Krause Publications. At that point the thing was making money, and it was never our intention to make money, but rather to promote *Old Cars*. So we [unintelligible] to put it on, but once it began making some money we turned it over to a nonprofit corporation and hired an executive director—
- James: A life of its own.
- Chester: And it's a life of its own now which now has, I think, three full-time employees all year round.
- James: What a wonderful enterprise(??).
- Chester: So when you look back [unintelligible] you know, considering we're out at an intersection of two state highways—
- James: Out in the middle of nowhere.
- Chester: That's right. Yeah, we're—I don't keep track of that, and I don't think anybody else does, but they say we're the largest [unintelligible] in the Midwest. I think that we probably [unintelligible].
- James: And Wisconsin's [unintelligible].
- Chester: Yeah, right [laughs].
- James: Okay. I can't think of anything else to ask. Your experience in the service served you well? I guess that's of my last ones.

Chester: Oh, sure. You know I often reflect on it. I really am curious [unintelligible] October [unintelligible] Yankees wanted to come in, and they wanted to show us, but we got to know one another as individuals as opposed to some kind of foreigners, and that was great. There are people who [unintelligible] from the South and the North—

James: A real [unintelligible].

Chester: Yeah, and so I volunteered(??) to do that.

James: I appreciate it. Great.

Chester: Thanks.

James: Thank you, excellent interview [unintelligible]. I take these home, put it on a VCR, and send you a copy.

Chester: This thing came off sometime. I don't know if I just knocked off or—

James: I think you just did.

Chester: Okay. Yeah. I have a copy of the fella, you know, I was tellin' ya that was driving the—

[End of Interview]