

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

THOMAS LUCAS

Infantryman, Army, 82nd and 101st Airborne, World War II and Korean War

2000

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Lucas, Thomas. (b. 1922). Oral History Interview, 2000.

User Copy: 4 sound cassettes (ca. 169 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 2 video recordings (ca. 169 min.); analog, 1/2 inch, color.

Abstract:

Thomas Lucas, a Markesan, Wisconsin native, discusses his World War II service beginning in 1942 as an airborne paratrooper, mainly in Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. He explains drills, cleaning, and parachute training. Lucas reminisces about his first jump, the paratrooper's prayer, and how to pack a parachute. He details his combat experience in the Invasion of Sicily and a combat jump into Salerno (Italy). He discusses his jump into Sainte-Mère-Église (France) with the 82nd Airborne in preparation for D-Day. Lucas also explains day-to-day living tricks while fighting in Nijmegen (the Netherlands). He relates memories of the Ardennes Offensive (The Battle of the Bulge), parachuting into Bastogne (Belgium) with supplies. Lucas relates being shot in the leg, life in the hospital, recovery, treatment for gangrene, and adjusting to the injury. He explains being discharged, but was called back to be an infantry officer in 1951. Lucas compares his experience in World War II with being first an officer of the 187th regimental combat team in Korea, then a forward observer for an artillery unit, then the Executive Officer of a medical company.

Biographical Sketch:

Thomas Lucas (b. 1922) served with the 82nd Airborne, the 101st Airborne, and the 187th Regimental Combat Team in his career, performing varied assignments including paratrooper, pathfinder, infantry officer, forward observer for an artillery unit, and Executive Officer of a medical company. These assignments took place in Italy, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and, later, Korea. Lucas was awarded three Purple Hearts over the course of a career spanning both World War II and the Korean War.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2000.

Transcribed by Patrick Gould, 2012.

Abstract written by Rebecca Cook, 2015

Interview Transcript:

- Lucas: The years over the time that—the years fade, and I really don't put a priority on it.
- McIntosh: I appreciate that.
- Lucas: I don't know what the—now if I can read that writing. In fact, I had to go down into the basement last night and go through a chest and look at—my mother and grandmother kept—I found when my mother died my grandmother kept all of the letters that I wrote during the war.
- McIntosh: Oh, really.
- Lucas: And I forgot what units I had been in, you know, what units I was in, and the time frames, you know.
- McIntosh: Sure, well, I'm glad that you got those notes.
- Lucas: I wrote one here. In fact, I was in an artillery unit in Korea, and I wrote it down here.
- McIntosh: All right, I'll just wait till—hold the notes until we need them.
- Lucas: Yeah, well, let me just see if I can find—go ahead, I can—
- McIntosh: No, all right, when were you born?
- Lucas: November 8, 1922
- McIntosh: Where, Madison?
- Lucas: No, Markesan, Wisconsin
- McIntosh: And when did you enter military service?
- Lucas: Graduated high school, you know, in '41, and I started the University [of Wisconsin] and I got drafted. I left in February of '42. I sort of made a deal with the draft board. I lived out in Westmorland [a Madison, Wisconsin neighborhood] you know, and "Dutchy" Van Kleeck.
- McIntosh: I remember that. Right

Lucas: And so we're out there with all of the farm kids, so we're right at the top of the list. So I made a deal with them that I'd go in February if they'd let me finish the University, you know, semester.

McIntosh: Sure. They did that. Did "Dutch" go in at the same time?

Lucas: Yeah, we both went to Fort Sheridan [Illinois], and I just kept going, and I didn't come home. And [laughs] my mother wanted to know why I didn't come back, and I said, "I didn't want anybody to see me with that damn haircut that they gave me [both laugh]."

McIntosh: Oh, yeah. So after your basic in Fort Sheridan—

Lucas: No, I didn't do any basic at—I just reported.

McIntosh: Oh, I see. Where did you go then?

Lucas: Well, they tested us, you know, and gave us our shots. And this was in February so, you know, when you got the tetanus shots you got sore arms in those days.

McIntosh: Right. You still do.

Lucas: So, what you do, they had us go around the block, one group shoveling snow off the road, and the next group come by shoveling it back on [both laugh]. We did this for, I don't know, for a week. And went through the exams. I was, I had an inclination, when I knew I was being drafted I went downtown. I was going to join the Navy, the submarine service, but they closed them. They wouldn't take anymore because the Army and the Marines weren't getting enough. So that's where I ended up. But I thought about going in the airborne unit then, but they put me in the armor unit and sent me to Fort Hood, Texas, and I was there in basic from February to, I don't know—

McIntosh: Well, roughly how long? Six months or so?

Lucas: Yeah, well, not quite that much. I think it was sixteen weeks, the basic. That's four months about, and we were confined to quarters or the company area for all sixteen weeks. We just went through one disease, spinal meningitis, you know.

McIntosh: Oh, that's the reason you were confined? Because they were worried about contagion?

Lucas: Yeah, the whole company area. We'd just get over one, and they'd say, "Okay, we're over. You're going to have a pass Saturday, and poof! Somebody else would come down.

McIntosh: Oh, my.

Lucas: So, it got pretty hectic and they kept us doing a lot of stuff that normally we wouldn't do, a lot of night problems that wore us out, you know. So I went through that basic. You know, in Texas, Temple, Texas, down there at Fort Hood, Fort Hood then—no, Camp Hood then. We'd fall out in the morning with every damn stitch of clothes that you had to put on you. You'd be cold, and at noon, you'd be playing in the shorts, you know.

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: I was just between the sixteen weeks and confinement and that, but we'd had night maneuvers, and we got smart. In the daytime the rattlesnakes would come out, you know, and we'd take—we'd be out in the field—we'd take a break. We'd catch some rattlers and cut off the rattles. And at night we'd have these night maneuvers, and the officers would be giving some instruction in the field, and one of the guys would rattle it, and he'd, "Stop, stop," you know, and then he'd cut a little another rattle. Oh, that—"Clear the area, clear the area." And we'd all go back and have cake and coffee.

McIntosh: And they never caught on to that?

Lucas: No [both laugh]. So, you know, we had a lot of time to think of these things. But that was my first experience with all of these kids from Georgia. I was really a Madison boy, a Midwesterner. Guys would sit there on Sunday and just look at their shoes, the only time that they'd had two pairs of shoes, in their life, you know.

McIntosh: Oh, really?

Lucas: Yeah, I made some friends that I've kept in contact with, and then on weekend you'd play cards and crap and shoot dice. Confinement does that to you. Well, then after the graduation, we got from there—oh, when we were out there one morning, and I was really fed, right up to here with Texas, and I talked to a sergeant about a transfer. He said, "No way, no way." So one morning at reveille, cold, I could still [laughs] feel, they said, "We're taking applications for airborne. All applications will be forwarded without endorsement." And I was first in line [laughs], first in line.

McIntosh: You wanted to get out?

Lucas: I even missed breakfast [laughs]. And they typed it up, you know, and I went back and didn't think much about it, and I went to Camp Rucker in Alabama and in an armored unit there, tank destroyer. We called them "tank disturbers." They're twelve tons, you know? Open turret, you know? But we went, I don't know how, we were there, I think it was in July, we went to Tennessee Maneuvers [large scale maneuvers in Tennessee terrain that resembled France, Belgium, and Germany], and we were in maneuvers there with the armored units. I got assigned to a recon unit and worked on the half-tracks, and learned to ride a motorcycle and rode a motorcycle for awhile.

McIntosh: And you still hadn't heard anything about your application?

Lucas: No, I was just going along. And it would get cold at night so it was pretty good to be in an armored unit because we'd run the motors of the tanks, and we'd sleep on the top of the motors, you know, kept warm. I remember one night, I crawled underneath the damn half-track and fell asleep and woke up in the morning, everybody was gone, and I was still laying there on the ground. They started up the motor and drove the half-track off. It took me two days to find my outfit [laughs].

McIntosh: Oh, my God [laughs].

Lucas: But one day they called me down, and they said, "You got orders. The company commander wants to see you." And I went in, and he said, "You got orders for to go to airborne." He said, "If you stay, he said, "I'll give you a promotion and make you a sergeant." You know, I was a corporal. I said, "No way," I said. So, they sent me to Fort Benning [Georgia]. I got into Fort Benning, I think I had to go by bus.

McIntosh: By this time it was what time of the year? Roughly?

Lucas: Lets see—

McIntosh: The fall of—

Lucas: No, this was in the summer. It must have been about August.

McIntosh: Of '42?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. In August, of '42. And I got to Fort Benning. Got in on a bus at night. Got off there and they like the Army we had these barracks, and I had khakis on and my bag. No bedding, nothing, and so we slept on the floor in the barracks with no bunks. But that was the last time I saw any khakis. From then on it was all field fatigues. I

really enjoyed it. I think I enjoyed the airborne training I went through. It's a—for a kid that's, you know, nineteen years old, you know, you find out about yourself. I think that's one of the things the Army did, or the service did for a lot of people. [Inaudible] and to test themselves. And there's nothing that you see in this life we had that gives you a really a test other than academic tests, you know.

McIntosh: The physical training—

Lucas: The physical training amongst other things, yeah.

McIntosh: Considerably more intense.

Lucas: Yeah, and, oh, it was, psychological and physical. We'd fall out in the morning. We'd go for a five mile run before breakfast. We'd be up at 5:00. We'd come back, and we'd eat. We'd scrub barracks and scrub our barracks, and they'd come through, and they'd check you if you had—they checked the cracks in the floor for dirt, you know. And they gave a lot of pushups if you didn't do it. If you just looked the wrong way they'd give you, what, fifty, fifty. And they had one noncom, or acting noncom, for about every six guys, and he had a book, and, you got fifty, and you'd do what you want, and you didn't leave the barracks until you got your record clean. The idea was, oh, they'd have you run around in circles, "I'm an airplane," and, you know, silly stuff. And what they were trying to do was clean those out that can't take that kind of picking.

McIntosh: Yeah. They'd break you down so they could build you up.

Lucas: Yeah, and they had one for every five. I remember I got a lot of pushups but I remember one time remember. I was nineteen years old, I was hardly shaving, you know what I mean? And I'm out there and the guy comes by, and he looks at me, and he says, "You've got fuzz there." He said, "You've got three minutes to go back to that barracks and shave," you know. "And put on a clean uniform." You know, fatigues. Well, the only one I had back there was wet. We only had three. You scrubbed it till—if it hanging there it was soaking wet. I put on that clean one, and I went back [laughs]. The water was dripping. But those are the kind of things they did. Anyway, we went through the physical, and they had the towers, you know.

McIntosh: How'd that go?

Lucas: Oh, that was fun. They had two towers, and they had four arms on them. But things would go slow because it depends on the wind, they could only use the wind where you drifted away from the tower. You'd

be lined up and tested and all that and getting ready to go, and the wind would shift, and they'd have to stop. But we had a lot of dummy exercises. You know, up on platforms, you'd go up with a release harness, slide down a cable and release, and we had water release, you know, if you're over water. A parachute over water just shrinks on you. You've got to get out of it, or you're dead.

McIntosh: It'll take you down.

Lucas: No, you just can't get out of the harness. It just shrinks up on you.

McIntosh: Oh, the harness shrinks.

Lucas: Yeah, we had the clip harnesses, you know. When you put 'em on, if you got 'em on right, you can't stand up, hardly. You know what I mean? You're hunched over. They're so tight. And then when they open they loosen, and if you don't put them on tight you get what they call "strawberry burns." We'd get red burns—

McIntosh: Sure. Scrapin'—

Lucas: But you'd go down this chute—on this cable, and you'd be like twenty feet off of the ground, and you'd, they'd break, pull a cord, and your chute would— your harness would relax, and you'd fall, and you'd do your tumbling, you know. I still do it today, nowadays, just by instinct with me, you know, if I fall or something.

McIntosh: You tumble?

Lucas: Yeah. I was on a ladder this last year carrying some shingles up on a roof, and the ladder sort of, I had it too steep, and I ended—just didn't think—I got rid of them. What is it? Forty pounds of shingles. Got rid of it. And when I was falling I turned myself in the air, and I landed and just rolled.

McIntosh: Might have saved yourself a broken leg.

Lucas: Yeah. Just instinctively.

McIntosh: Amazing.

Lucas: Yeah, but not only do it in basic, but you do it all through. I think I've got about 139 jumps, you know, and after that, you—

McIntosh: In your career?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: How many jumps did you have to complete?

Lucas: Well, you had five. But you did the training and then you had to do five jumps.

McIntosh: From the plane?

Lucas: From the airplane, yeah, after you completed—you went through the physical, all the mockups, all the towers. Then you went down in packing. You know, you packed your own chutes. You packed chutes, and then you packed your own that you were going to use.

McIntosh: Did you always do that?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: From [inaudible]. I was gonna say

Lucas: No, no, no. But you did that. I still got the chute—every chute had like a little logbook in it. And I still got the chute from my first jump someplace at home.

McIntosh: So—and the five from the airplane, were any of them at night?

Lucas: Yes. You had to have one at night. The night we were jumping from 1,300 feet for the four, and that the night we made it was 800.

McIntosh: Is that a lot more difficult?

Lucas: No, I don't—you know. Stepping out of the airplane, it was as bad (??) [inaudible][laughs].

McIntosh: That was the first one. Yeah, once you got past that it was easier.

Lucas: Yeah. [laughs]. So—

McIntosh: What was your feeling about that, your first time you jumped out of that airplane?

Lucas: I don't remember. That's why I went back to the second [both laugh].

McIntosh: I just wondered whether it was different than you anticipated. I guess that's what I'm looking for.

Lucas: Well, instinctively I think all human beings step out unknowing, you know what I mean? They go out their back door, and somebody says, “There’s not any steps back there.”

McIntosh: I know the feeling.

Lucas: But, if say, you go ahead and take the—you know, I wasn’t thinking about the parachute not opening. I didn’t think that that was—this is all hindsight, you know what I mean? At my age now I think I was thinking of—not of the parachute, it was just—I was trying to overcome a fear. And the fear, it was just a fear, you know? It was not a natural thing to do.

McIntosh: And rare. Did you worry about packing your chute?

Lucas: No, unh-uh.

McIntosh: They checked to make sure you did it right?

Lucas: Yeah, but the training was good.

McIntosh: Was that fairly easy to learn?

Lucas: Oh, yeah.

McIntosh: Packing the chute was no real problem?

Lucas: You get to the point where you look at the parachute like a sailor looks at a life preserver. You don’t worry that life preserver is going to work.

McIntosh: It became automatic then.

Lucas: Yeah. But the only thing we used to say, the big joke was, the only thing that bothered us most that you knew back in your mind that the lowest bidder made those goddamn parachutes [both laugh].

McIntosh: That was a standard joke [both laugh]?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: That’s funny.

Lucas: Yeah. And we always went out, you did the paratroopers prayer. You know, you probably heard about, “God bless the silk worm”?

McIntosh: Tell me more.

Lucas: “God bless the silk worm.” That was the paratroopers prayer [both laugh]. Now they do nylon, so, but yeah, and the night jumps were—you had more stable air at night. It’s like flying, I’m a licensed pilot, and you fly during the day, you know, in a small plane like you’re flying over a field, and one’s black, and the other is snow, you get—

McIntosh: The heat that rises off the ground. It’s not there as much.

Lucas: You get this up to 3,000 feet. You know, it depends on the weather. But the night jumps are smooth. The air is smooth and stable coming down. It’s heavier, and you land softer. And one of the things they taught in the training, that they emphasized, and I never knew why, I thought they spent a lot of time on, is turning yourself in the chute. You know, you had four risers. If you wanted to slip forward, you know, come down forward, you pull, and the air goes out the back, and you come forward, and if you want to go back—

McIntosh: Just the opposite.

Lucas: And if you wanted to turn you had to go out and grab the front one here and the back one there and do this. Now, I was nineteen years old and I weighed about 100 pounds, you know. I remember when I would see these pictures in track in school I’m a skinny kid. I just couldn’t do it. I didn’t do it right. And so I would say out of the 139 jumps, I just rode her the way she came in.

McIntosh: Whatever it gave you, that was it.

Lucas: I hit barns backwards, and, you know, and came in backwards, and maybe that’s why I learned to tumble so well [laughs].

McIntosh: How long this training in Benning?

Lucas: Pardon?

McIntosh: How long was the Benning training?

Lucas: Oh, let’s see, I was there about, oh, I’m trying to think of the dates I left there. I came there about August, September, October. I think it was September. The chute packing was, like a week, you know. I learned in the packing of the chute, and they demonstrated it, but [inaudible] parachute has the risers, and you’ve got the nylon cords going up. It was put on the table, and you bring those cords in, and you hold ‘em in place by rubber bands. You pull them I, and then you take another

bunch and go over here and another bunch over here. And you go back and forth with the rubber bands. The cover, then you lace the backpack up with number four strand cord, they called it. I think it was four strand cord or three strand cord, and tied it. And then the back cover, you tied to the apex of the parachute. You tied that with seven strand cord.

McIntosh: Is that long?

Lucas: It was cord.

McIntosh: More strong? Stronger?

Lucas: Thing—yeah, four to seven. And then you laced the cover back up, and then your static line came out. When it came out, when you jumped, went out the door, you were trained to go to your left, you know, and sort of crouched down. And the prop blast would get you. The parachutes would be out before you got to the end of the cord. And the motors from the C-47s [Douglas cargo plane, developed from the civilian DC-3 airliner], and it would come out. Now, the static line in the backpack, if you tied that with the strong cord [laughs], you know, it might not break, and you would hang there.

McIntosh: Oops.

Lucas: And that was one of the things they had to watch. You had to watch, did I tie that with a three cord or the strong cord, you know.

McIntosh: And the parachute would wrap around the tail of the plane.

Lucas: No. you were under it. You were under it. The only time you'd get near the tail, the guys used to get smart, when they went out they tried to hit the tail. They couldn't do it. Because the plane's in a downward glide. They slow her down I think in combat they had it 120 miles an hour in a downward glide. Well, you just couldn't do anything. The parachute, they found out, the structures, would get the cords all straightened out; just rolled it out and get all of the cords straight so that none were twisted. And he'd just roll it. Just roll it all up. Put it on, put it underneath his arm, and jump out the door.

McIntosh: Jeezus.

Lucas: Like that it would open up.

McIntosh: Wow!

Lucas: But, you know, the idea was to get these cords straight.

McIntosh: Right. I understand.

Lucas: So, you know, and then you had a reserve chute. The main chute was twenty-eight feet in diameter, and the small chute was twenty-four. And when I was in Korea, we were making some jumps and going up at Fukuoka, and we were going to Korea. This was in November. I went up to the truck to get a parachute, and the guy, a sergeant, was up throwing the parachutes out. He said, "What do you want?" I said, "Give me a officer's chute" [both laugh]. And he said, "What's that?" I said, "The big one" [both laugh]. It was just another joke. Enlisted men got that. So they get on the ground quicker, and [inaudible] it trains (??) and do that, so.

McIntosh: So after your training in Benning, then where were you sent to?

Lucas: I ah—where the heck did I go from there? Oh, Camp Rucker, Alabama. No, not Camp Rucker,—Camp Mackall, South Carolina [North Carolina]. Was it South Carolina or North Carolina? North Carolina I think. It's on the back end of Fort Bragg.

McIntosh: That would be North Carolina.

Lucas: Yeah, it's on the back end of Fort Bragg, and I mean the back end. They opened it up. It was training for replacements, I suppose, and we had the barracks, you know, the typical Army barracks, and when we reported down there they had trains from the buses full of us, you know, and they just opened it up. They had a coal box out in front, you know, and when we walked in the barracks, and the wooden floors, and the barracks were up—there was a grade so they were raised higher in the back than in the front, but they were up about that high. I walked in, and the grass was growing up in the cracks in the floor. The [laughs] grass was that high.

McIntosh: Wow.

Lucas: So we had to clean 'em up and scrub the floor.

McIntosh: Yeah, you had a lot of work to do.

Lucas: Yup, and the stove— we fired up the stoves, and the smoke—

McIntosh: Obviously no one had been to those barracks for many years.

Lucas: No, no. That was, you know—So that was it.

McIntosh: Probably pretty worn—probably World War I barracks.

Lucas: I don't know what they were, but it was surrounded by swamp.

McIntosh: No one went AWOL [absent with out leave] from there then [laughs].

Lucas: No, no. Well, we had AWOL 'cause we had our own barracks for where they did summary court martials, you know, and we'd have to pull guard in 'em, inside. They had the cage, and they had the bunks, and there'd be like eight guys or ten guys. You'd have to pull duty in there just like another gun post. But those were summary court martials. When I was in the armor I was, had an MOS [military occupational specialty] as gunner on a tank destroyer and a six inch gun. So, I found out I'm in artillery unit, and we had pack howitzers, the 75 millimeter pack howitzer? And that was the only artillery that the airborne had, and we'd drop it in pieces.

McIntosh: This was your special deal?

Lucas: Yeah, this is the airborne artillery.

McIntosh: Airborne artillery.

Lucas: And we'd drop it in pieces. You know, the barrel would be one parachute, and the leg trail would be another. Two trails and then the two wheels, you know. We'd go up in the airplane, and we'd jump 'em out, and then we'd go out.

McIntosh: And try to find 'em.

Lucas: Well, we'd find them, but you know, you'd have a battery of some, let's say four guns, you know, and you'd end up with two because you'd find a wheel missing on this one and a trail missing on this one. That was always a problem. And then, when you went to jump, the idea, they had the trails, and they had harnesses built and ropes, and you pulled 'em. They'd get us out in double time pulling that French 75 [field gun]—

McIntosh: Jeezus.

Lucas: And the sergeant was ridin' the barrel—or two of the—to keep the balance.

McIntosh: So two of you were pulled that sergeant—

Lucas: No, there was six. It was the whole gunner crew, six, you know [inaudible].

McIntosh: Six of you operated the gun?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. But that's what we did through the swamps, and you would come to a swamp, and you'd take it apart, and then you pick up a trail. You'd step off in the water, and you go right down [laughs]. The guy's head—

McIntosh: It was so heavy.

Lucas: Well, no, the mud and all that.

McIntosh: Snakes and—

Lucas: Oh, a lot of snakes, yeah, and we did a lot of training like that out in the field, firing accuracy, and surveying, and things like that. We had a lot of forward and survey experience, one over, one short, one low, you know what I mean? But then somebody got a bright idea that in the military that, gee, this is a problem. Let's put the gun in the glider. You know, the glider can land, and the gun would be in one piece, and then we'd have two gliders, and then the troops would jump out of the other glider. Well, that was a rare experience for me. I was fortunate to be one of the lucky ones [laughs] to get in on that. You know, when you are jumping you get that prop blast. You count, one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three, and if that chute don't open, you pull, you know what I mean, you start looking that reserve.

McIntosh: Reserve, if nothing happens.

Lucas: You pull it. In basic, in our training in the five jumps, a lot of guys would get out, and they'd pull it right away before even their main chute was open, and now you got problems. One will go up inside the other.

McIntosh: That's potential danger then up there. You've got both chutes open.

Lucas: Yeah. And we were talking about getting out of the airplane, you know, in terms of control of fear. The instructions were, if you had a "Mae West" [a round parachute that had been fouled with parachute cord into two parts] or the straight and down, what you do is you put your hand over your reserve, pull it, this is what they taught us, pull it, put the handle in your back pocket [laughs], take the parachute and throw it out from you. And that's what the instructions were. Again, in hindsight,

you figure—when I listened to them I put the handle in my back pocket. But they were trying to teach you to keep cool, you know what I mean?

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: Keep control, control.

McIntosh: Keep you thinkin' on what you're doin'.

Lucas: Control.

McIntosh: Yeah.

Lucas: Well, you know, you're—one says you're going thirty-three feet or thirty-two feet per second, per second. I remember [laughs] that from my high school physics class. But, you know, at 1,300 feet, you know—

McIntosh: Yeah, you haven't got a lot of time.

Lucas: Well, you got time to do that. I pulled my reserve I think two or three times, but we mentioned about the jumps and the difference between day and night. I think it was my third jump. We were out—one of the DZs [drop zones] outside of Fort Benning there, right near the Chattahoochee River. I must have been like in a first flight, three planes. And I jump out, the sun's shinin', and I'm coming down, and guys are going by me. It never dawned on me. **[End of Tape 1, Side A]** The guys are goin' by, and the next thing I know, the next flight, more guys are goin', and I'm still up there. There is a sergeant down on the ground. He's got a megaphone, and he's yelling. I didn't think he was yelling at me, and I am still up there. I hit a thermal [a current of rising air][laughs], and I'm going up.

McIntosh: Your chute was open.

Lucas: Yeah, my chute was open, and I'm goin' up—

McIntosh: I thought maybe you were hung up on the door.

Lucas: No, all of the other guys are coming down [McIntosh laughs]. And this sergeant down there, [laughs], and I didn't know. I didn't even pay any attention to him. He's got this megaphone, and he's runnin' around hell.

McIntosh: He wanted you to empty your chute.

Lucas: Well, he's telling me to slip. Well, I finally figured it out, and I slipped and finally started coming down. I got it down, and boy, he was there waiting for me [laughs]. I was doing pushups. I don't know how many [both laugh]. I didn't see a pass for months. But, it was sort of fun sitting up there, you know.

McIntosh: Sure?

Lucas: In a thermal [both laugh]. But we spent of lot time, a lot of training, they had us mortar training, all advanced training, heavy weapon training, rifle training.

McIntosh: So you could operate all the other equipment if need be?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. We took everything. Then we got to unit training. They had some deals where you went underground with a .45 pistol or a rifle and made certain stances, you know, shootin' by instinct, completely dark, and they rattled some tin cans, and you fired. Then they turned the lights on, and they'd rig up you up, [inaudible] from the hip with 45s—well, automatic—

McIntosh: You carried a .45?

Lucas: No, unh-uh.

McIntosh: They didn't issue those to you.

Lucas: No, not to enlisted men. I had one. My dad bought me one. I got it when I was in Europe, you know, he bought me one, but I never really wanted one.

McIntosh: Well, it's extra weight.

Lucas: Well, it was not the weight so much as that when you needed it you couldn't get at it. You know, it's under all this gear and harness. I don't know how many—you carry another hundred of pounds of equipment, you just can't get that. Like with a combat jump you go out of that plane at 400 feet, you know, "foom, foom," and you're on the ground if it opens, you know. You're on the ground, anyhow, but it's just that fast.

McIntosh: Combat jumps are at 400 feet generally?

Lucas: Well, some of 'em are. I think the ones that we had us going out below 400.

McIntosh: Oh, my.

Lucas: Maybe 300 feet.

McIntosh: Boy, “boom, boom,” and you’re on the ground.

Lucas: Yeah. Yeah. The pilots, you know—the pilots that flew the C-47s were not like fighter pilots and bomber pilots, you know what I mean.

McIntosh: All they wanted to do was get rid of you there and get back home.

Lucas: Get their ass out, get ass out. And that is why—we had to—they’d get that plane up over 120 you’re going to have these chutes with blown panels and things like that. So we had—it meant it increased the casualties on the drops. But we used to go back to—jumpmaster would go back to the pilot and tell him, now, 120 miles an hour.

McIntosh: No faster.

Lucas: No faster and ‘cause if you do—and he’d take a grenade, “I’m the last one out. I’m going to leave it.” And they meant it. “I’ll leave it.”

McIntosh: The jumpmaster would really have told him that?

Lucas: Yeah. So he’s the last one out, and he said “I’ll leave it. Just roll it up.” I said, “I’ll toss it up.” And they had the grenades, and they meant it. Oh, Christ, I don’t know. I carried a BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle]. When you were loaded on the planes before you went in by you went by a like a—got your equipment. You went by a bunch of stuff, and they’d hand you some rifle grenades. They’d shove two, three down in here, and you’d go some [inaudible] place or other, and they’d shove somethin’ else back there. Then when you got on the ground went to a spot, and you you just dumped it. So that’s –I liked the Browning Automatic Rifle. I just loved that, and I went over before we got on the plane and picked one up and cleaned it up and bandoliers, and that’s what I carried, and I jumped with it.

McIntosh: They didn’t object to you carrying it?

Lucas: Oh, hell, they don’t care what you take as long as it’s a weapon [laughs].

McIntosh: No kiddin’? You had your choice?

Lucas: Yeah. Well, I—when you’re gettin’ on the airplane you had your choice.

McIntosh: Oh, yeah. I understand that.

Lucas: I went over to the sergeant. I said “Sergeant, I’ll trade you for the BAR. You got one?” “Yeah,” he said, “Here, a couple bandoliers.” You know, these ten clips.

McIntosh: Right.

McIntosh: That’s a good weapon.

Lucas: I had a lot of—

McIntosh: That’s the weapon I had when I took ROTC training when we first went to college.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: The second year, the sophomore year, I had to do that, take that apart and put it back together. That was the exercise. I never spent the time with that.

Lucas: Oh, I just loved it. I could clean that thing.

McIntosh: Yeah. Tell me about the—how long were you in North Carolina?

Lucas: I was like nineteen in February, and we went through July and August, September. Yeah, I was nineteen in November.

McIntosh: Yeah, and how long were you there?

Lucas: Oh—

McIntosh: Six months?

Lucas: Oh, no. I think I was there longer than that.

McIntosh: From there you went to England?

Lucas: No, I’m tryin’ to think where the hell else did I go from there. Well, we some exercises. One of ‘em, they flew us. They’d take us out, and they’d kick our butts out of the airplane at night, and then you had to get back to camp. And you couldn’t write anything. They’d make sure you didn’t have any money. And then you had to be back in forty-four

hours. One of 'em, they flew us out to Myrtle Beach [South Carolina] [laughs], and we jumped on the beach as units, you know what I mean, companies, you know, and we had to be back in two days, double timin' and marchin'. I remember—I've been to Myrtle Beach, but that's the only time [laughs] I've been to North Carolina.

McIntosh: Well, that's—how tough to get back?

Lucas: Well, no, no, there's a lot of road signs, but we'd be goin' down these highways timin' [laughs], goin' at night you know.

McIntosh: Jeezus—

Lucas: And we couldn't go in—we didn't have any money. A lot of people would stop and give us ride, but, hell, you had a company, three platoons, you know.

McIntosh: So your unit was the 101st?

Lucas: No, no I was unassigned. This was just a training—

McIntosh: Oh, you weren't anything at this point.

Lucas: I was nothing, no.

McIntosh: Okay.

Lucas: And then I went—see, when was it? Went to Camp—was it New Jersey, Camp—New Jersey—I know the name of it. I'll think about it. Went to New Jersey, and we disembarked and we went down to North Africa. Was it at Oran? That's North Africa, and we went to another replacement there, and we did some training, continued. It did keep you busy, you know. Started basic training over again. I don't know how many times I've gone through basic training, and this was all infantry training.

McIntosh: Oh, this is not airborne now?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. You go through infantry training in airborne just like anything else. But I went through armor training, see. So then I went through infantry, but I did that four or five times. I did it once in England, you know. They started it, and I did it once in Italy, and they started it, you know what I mean, and then your orders come. This was in September of—must have been '43.

McIntosh: '43? Yeah, that's the [inaudible].

Lucas: Yeah, September and we were there, and that's when they started the invasion of Sicily, I think it was around the middle of September. That was when they used airborne there. That was really the first major airborne assault.

McIntosh: By this time you were assigned to—

Lucas: Yeah, I was in the 504th of the 101st.

McIntosh: 101st and the 504th—

Lucas: Airborne Division.

McIntosh: Regiment, huh?

Lucas: And our company commander—I was in Charlie Company, and the company commander was Captain Tucker. We were there, and we went got in—they took went by boat to Sicily, and we got in just on the end of the airborne—

McIntosh: So you didn't have to jump then?

Lucas: No, no, we fought—but that Sicily invasion—we were sort of glad—that Sicily invasion was really a fiasco. They missed a long distance target by fifty miles.

McIntosh: Your jumpers in—yeah, had a big problem, didn't they?

Lucas: Yeah, they really had one. But that was really I think the largest amphibious action ever held during World War II. And it still is today.

McIntosh: At Sicily.

Lucas: Yeah, and it was a British, and, you know, an American—but anyhow you felt like a mountain goat. We never had any training in the mountain, training—well, it's not mountain really. It was hills, rocks, you know. Trying to dig a foxhole, you didn't dig one, you built one.

McIntosh: Yeah. So what was your duty there?

Lucas: I was a BAR gunner in the platoon.

McIntosh: And they put you on the line?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, we were on the line.

McIntosh: That was your first experience then in combat?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: What was that like?

Lucas: Well, you know, everybody is scared. The idea is your body trembles, and your mind is clear. That's the key.

McIntosh: Right. That's normal.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, and people react differently. I thought, gee, it's exciting. You know what I mean, it's what you train for until that first damn bullet went over my head. I'd never heard one before, get that close. And then you start putting things together. All your training, a lot of it's unconscious.

McIntosh: That's the whole idea.

Lucas: For example, you know—and then you start learning. You start getting reeducated over. For example, in the Army, they say, "Okay, follow me." And you do the hand signals. The first time I saw a guy get his head blown off using hand and arm signals, I never did another one. Never did another one.

McIntosh: Just yelled at 'em, "This way."

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, yeah. "Get your ass going." When they say, "Which way?", you don't point. You just say, "Up the hill or down the hill or over there."

McIntosh: Yeah, you don't want to stick anything up in the air.

Lucas: Then you gotta control yourself because it's a natural instinct when you do that.

McIntosh: Sure.

Lucas: But those things start falling into place, you know what I mean, how to dig a hole, you know I didn't worry. They say three feet wide, you learn just to dig a damn hole and made sure it's deep.

McIntosh: Yeah, down is the direction you're interested in.

Lucas: Down, that's right, you know. And then you start refining it. When they start putting in airbursts [the explosion of a shell in the air], you start putting tops on 'em, you know what I mean. And they give these briefly and things about splinter proofing the tops.

McIntosh: Splinter proofing?

Lucas: We called it splinter proofing. Put a top on a foxhole.

McIntosh: With what?

Lucas: Whatever you can find [laughs], whatever you find, because when they. Because when they put in an airburst—

McIntosh: Right. And the shrapnel comes down at you.

Lucas: Yeah, that comes down on you. You know, when you can find those rocks—so what you do is you get down and you dig in so—

McIntosh: Make a little shelf there.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, you get in out of the direct line. And if you can find some wood or somethin' you can put stones on top. But that's real effective, real effective, and I learned that which I learned later on in my military experience. I learned it at that point in Sicily, you know, about these airbursts. But, it was our first experience, and a lot of it was mopping up the British—or the Germans had taken off to Italy. And so we stayed there. I am trying to think—I've got the name of the town there. It started with an "L."

McIntosh: But anyway, you were moving most of the time.

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Moving forward?

Lucas: Yes.

McIntosh: Moving towards Messina [Italy], I suppose?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. So we were—and then from there we got involved with the invasion of Italy.

McIntosh: Did you have a rest—

Lucas: Yeah, they—

McIntosh: Period after Sicily?

Lucas: Yeah, we had a rest period, yeah.

McIntosh: Couple months?

Lucas: Yeah, we only could get out and mix with the goats in Sicily [laughs].

McIntosh: Wonderful.

Lucas: So [laughs] nothing there, but you know, [McIntosh laughs], that was our first experience. It was exciting, you know what I mean, the life.

McIntosh: Sure.

Lucas: It can be so frightening at one time and terrifying one time, and, gee, it's exciting for a kid, nineteen or twenty years old from the Midwest [both laugh]. So they were getting ready for Salerno, and that was our really first—my first combat jump was in Italy. They had a number of missions there, and I got—there were two towns, and both of 'em started with A, and one was Avellino, was the one. So the beachhead is Salerno. There was some main highways coming down, and some causeways out there. And the Germans,—in Salerno, the infantry—you know, you find these things out later in life [laughs]. You didn't know what the hell was going on. It was only a couple of years ago I really understood the invasion of Holland [McIntosh laughs]. I read the book, *The Longest Day*. I really didn't know what the hell was going on, and I was at Arnheim [Netherlands], in the middle of that crap, and I didn't know what the hell—

McIntosh: Right. At the time it's just a blur.

Lucas: It takes some author to write this up [laughs] and tell you where you were. But the airborne activity in Italy was not simultaneous with the landing. They had a lot of trouble on the beach—

McIntosh: They sure did.

Lucas: And they were really laying them out then. So, they had these crossroads so they split the unit and our unit went to Avellino.

McIntosh: You dropped there?

Lucas: We dropped there. It was over the mountains. I don't know—it wasn't far from the beach, really, like this one, you know what I mean. You could probably walk it in two days.

McIntosh: The whole division dropped there?

Lucas: No, they split it. And that's another one, some of 'em dropped twenty miles, twenty-five miles. We were to take those bridges and hold them, and when we held them to prepare charges for blowing them. There was a little village down there. And the other town, Alivia [Aliano] or something, was to the west of us. We took the Germans who were there. We fought the Germans.

McIntosh: You dropped in among 'em?

Lucas: Yeah, right among 'em, yeah.

McIntosh: How did you survive that?

Lucas: Well, we fought 'em and cleaned 'em out. They were not that heavy. There was a town there, and there was Germans in town.

McIntosh: But you had enough of you down—

Lucas: Yeah, there was a big highway coming down. See, a big transport highway—

McIntosh: Oh, I see.

Lucas: And armor coming down. So, there were Germans all over the place. You couldn't go anywhere without seeing a German.

McIntosh: Oh, I understand.

Lucas: And Italian, and Italians, you know.

McIntosh: That's right, they were still against us then.

Lucas: Yeah, the Italians.

McIntosh: Did you get your gun down and working okay in Italy?

Lucas: No, we went in there—we didn't drop any artillery. We all went in as infantry. I was not in artillery. When I got to the 504, I was infantry [laughs]. Some guy changed the numbers and gave me a new MOS [military occupational specialty], you know [laughs].

McIntosh: Yeah, without asking.

Lucas: 7-4-5, that's infantry, and 7-7-4-5 is infantry officer [McIntosh laughs]. So I got a new MOS, and I had gone through infantry basic and bayonet training and all of that stuff. Well, we fought there, and we'd go down and fight, and we'd work on the bridge, and we'd have skirmishes, and then the Germans would bring more, and we'd have more skirmishes. Trying to get people together and each day we'd get more together so underway (??) at night we'd pull up in the hills and take advantage of firing down.

McIntosh: Your unit was never in serious trouble?

Lucas: Well, a lot of—we were between the beach and the Germans, you know [laughs]—

McIntosh: Right, and at what strength were you? Companies or platoons or—

Lucas: We had—think we had—

McIntosh: Probably a battalion by then.

Lucas: It wasn't a battalion. I think it was like two companies.

McIntosh: About two companies?

Lucas: Yeah. It was about like two companies, but we had—in a way we had the advantage of the hills and the rocks, you know what I mean. It was basically infantry. There was not a lot of heavy German armor. They had some half-tracks, and of course they had their—

McIntosh: But you didn't have any heavy stuff?

Lucas: No, we didn't have anything. All we had was small arm fire and mortars and 30s and 60s and machine guns and that. But that's really what infantry action is, fire and move, fire and move. And in the airborne, that's what we were trained at. One of the things about the training is that they emphasize unit operations. They really do a lot of that, but they also at the same time always prepare you that there are gonna be many occasions that you may be alone, and everybody knows the mission. We had sand tables [model of the operating area], and we'd go for briefings, and we'd have briefing after briefing at these sand tables. And you could go back anytime and study that sand table. When you're coming down you gotta get oriented. And that's frightening when you're coming down if it's in the daytime and you

don't recognize it. Now, you just gotta [inaudible] and say, "Hey, I'm [laughs] on my own."

McIntosh: Right, until you can find some other people and—

Lucas: Yeah. But we carried on the operation, and the demolitionists put the charges in, and we blew the bridge, and that kept the armor from coming down. And then we moved down, and when we did that we just moved down to the beaches and joined them on the beach. We went through Italy as what they called "straight legs" [not mechanized] or "ground pounders." [both laugh]. You know, the infantry option (??), and we just went up—

McIntosh: The whole division?

Lucas: The whole division just went up, and we just fought with the infantry. An interesting point was that we got a rest to go back to Rome. A couple of friends and I were in a bar. First time I had been in a foreign bar, you know what I mean, in Rome, you know.

McIntosh: Right. A little boy from Madison, Wisconsin—

Lucas: Yeah [laughs].

McIntosh: Out of his element.

Lucas: And I'm in this bar, and I walk in the door and standing there trying to figure out what to do, and do with some money, might get a drink, and I hear somebody yell, "Hey! Are you from Wisconsin?"

McIntosh: You're kidding.

Lucas: I looked up and looked across the room, and this guy's over there like this—it was sort of dark, and I yelled, "Yeah." I walked over, Sonny Lambdin (??).

McIntosh: I'll be damned.

Lucas: Yeah. It was Sonny Lambdin(??).

McIntosh: He didn't survive the war.

Lucas: Yeah, he survived.

McIntosh: Did he? Oh, I guess that's his [inaudible].

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, so yeah [both laugh].

McIntosh: Amazing.

Lucas: Yeah, we were both in the same outfit, the 504. He was in I think H Company, or something.

McIntosh: Oh, and you didn't know that?

Lucas: And that's the last time I saw Sonny, that time.

McIntosh: You were in 505 Regiment?

Lucas: The 504. He was in 504.

McIntosh: He also was in it. Geez, the same regiment, and you never saw each other before or since.

Lucas: Oh, that's not unusual.

McIntosh: Isn't it?

Lucas: No, not at all.

McIntosh: Did the other regular soldiers—

Lucas: See, this would have been basic training, we would have seen each other.

McIntosh: I understand.

Lucas: When you would get in a unit and you're in combat, you'd see people—

McIntosh: Your world shrinks pretty—

Lucas: You never see people—you'll never see them again.

McIntosh: Where the regular soldiers jealous of you guys?

Lucas: No, no, we were the ones that were probably—

McIntosh: I'm sorry?

Lucas: We were probably smart asses in the [inaudible]. "Hey, you 'Straight Legs'."

McIntosh: Yeah, so all the static came from your direction—

Lucas: Yeah, yeah—

McIntosh: Rather than theirs.

Lucas: And the “Glider Riders,” the ones in the gliders. What did they have? They had two glider units and two airborne units, and the 325th was the one that was I think with us. I can’t remember the other one, the 326th. And we used to call them “Herman.” We’d say, “Hey, Herman, where’s your motor?” [both laugh]. And they didn’t wear the boots, you know, they didn’t have the boots.

McIntosh: Oh, they didn’t get the boots?

Lucas: No, they—

McIntosh: Oh, that gives you an edge.

Lucas: Yeah, the “Straight Legs,” and the “Glider Riders,” they had no wings or anything else. No, you know—but now—

McIntosh: But they’re still in your division.

Lucas: Yeah, they were still [laughs] in our division.

McIntosh: Oh, I am sure they resented that.

Lucas: Oh, they did. They probably still, but—

McIntosh: Yeah, I’ve interviewed one guy, one of the first who was in a glider.

Lucas: Yeah, and it was in Italy I got my first Purple Heart.

McIntosh: Well, tell me how you acquired that.

Lucas: I just got shot [laughs].

McIntosh: It was easy, huh?

Lucas: Yeah [laughs], I didn’t dodge fast enough.

McIntosh: Well, what was the situation?

Lucas: It was a piece of shrapnel. We'd just gone through some firefight and artillery. I don't know whether it was a mortar or a heavy mortar or if I got a piece of artillery, and I got it in my shoulder here.

McIntosh: Front?

Lucas: Right in the shoulder here. I went down to the aide station, and the doc, "No," he said, "That's not going to get you home." [both laugh].

McIntosh: [laughs] Not bad enough?

Lucas: You smart ass, you know, he was kidding me. It's like the doctor when you got hemorrhoids. He says, "Hey, bring that proctoscope" "Yeah" [both laugh]. So, he pushed and prodded, you know, he said, "Bite the bullet there, Corporal, bite the bullet." And he pulled it out and put a band-aide on, and he said, "All ready to go back" [laughs]. So I went back to duty. Right back on the line.

McIntosh: So how long were you at that—

Lucas: Twenty, no—was I nineteen? My birthday's in November. That was September.

McIntosh: Yeah. Now, you were out there how long before they moved you away?

Lucas: Well, let's see, I am trying to think now. That's what? '43. We were there not too long. We went back on the line. When they got up to that deadlock up in Italy where they—

McIntosh: The Rapido River? Or Count—the Monte—

Lucas: Yeah. Everybody [inaudible]. That's when they pulled us off the line.

McIntosh: Monte Cassino.

Lucas: Yeah, and they pulled us off the line, and we went back down to an area around Rome. And we got some passes, and I had a cousin. My Dad grew up in Serbia(??), and said, "You have your cousins down—must be at Anzio or someplace. He was a lieutenant, and he was in charge of the docks. Oh, that reminds me, when were down around there in Rome, they took us out, and they were loading and unloading ships, bringing in supplies, and they had the Italian prisoners of war working on the boats. They're lazy buggers. And they always had boats not unloaded fast enough, you know, and so they put us down there to help out. Well, no, we were supposed to guard the—you know, make

'em work. So one of the lieutenants there who worked with us, he said one day, "You know, if they'd work like the Germans work, we'd have these goddamn boats in and out of here in nothing flat." So some—they had a big German prisoner of war camp there. Well, we went up there, the sergeant and myself and the captain went up there. We got some German sergeants [laughs]. The Germans, the noncoms, and we brought 'em down, and they put 'em in charge of a crew [laughs] of Italians. And they gave them like an ax handle, and they said, "You can't kill 'em." [both laugh].

McIntosh: But anything else.

Lucas: And I'll tell you, I never seen Italians work so much [both laugh]. We just sat back and just watched. We had to make sure—we had to guard the Germans.

McIntosh: Make sure you had to—guard them too.

Lucas: Oh, but, you didn't have to guard the Italians. They had it made. They didn't want to go anywhere, but the Germans, oh, they worked them. The German discipline, you know, and they had 'em lined up. They reminded me of the sergeants we had at Fort Benning [both laugh]. But they got ships—they broke records on loading ships [laughs].

McIntosh: Oh, my. Did you get into Rome much?

Lucas: No, I went there once.

McIntosh: You managed to stay out of trouble?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, I was still green, you know [laughs]. Well, they took us from there—let's see, this was December, around December of '44 I think.

McIntosh: December of '44?

Lucas: Yeah, then January 44. It was in December, yeah. They took us by boat up to—they went through, and they took a cadre out. And I was one of the cadres. Oh, there must have been, oh, about a regiment. They took us up, and we landed at Belfast, Ireland. And we were at Belfast and for, oh, maybe a month. And all we did was just minimal activities to keep us busy. The map reading training, all the things they do. And we got more replacements in, and then they moved us to Nottingham, England, and this was around the first of the year.

McIntosh: January of 44?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Did they tell you anything about what your mission was going to be? Nobody asked or—

Lucas: They created the 508th Parachute Infantry Unit.

McIntosh: You mean they added another regiment?

Lucas: Yeah, and they put us in that. And this was right from the States, the 508th. And that was in the 82nd Airborne.

McIntosh: Oh, so now we're in a different division?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: You just automatically announced one day we're not—

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, and so we're in the 82nd Airborne. And then we went, we were stationed in Nottingham, England, and the big airfield was up at Leicester in Nottingham.

McIntosh: I've been there.

Lucas: In Sherwood Forest.

McIntosh: Lady Godiva.

Lucas: Huh?

McIntosh: Lady Godiva.

Lucas: Yeah, and they made, what was it? They made bicycles there. What was that bicycle? I had one when I was a kid? Raleigh bicycles.

McIntosh: Oh, yeah. I remember. **[End of Tape 1, Side B]**

Lucas: And so we were there, and there was like a park there with a big red wall around it, red brick wall, and there was a castle in it, right in town. That's where our camp was.

McIntosh: Oh, really.

Lucas: Down below and over on the north were some meadows, and then there's some woods and a big pond. And on Sundays we used to go

down there, and they'd bring their sheepdogs in with the local people, and they'd have sheep in pens, and it was fabulous to watch these dogs.

McIntosh: Oh, they had contests.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. On Sundays.

McIntosh: Watch 'em work.

Lucas: Yeah, They they'd put 'em in, and they'd put one black sheep in with the rest of them, and the dog would separate [laughs] them. But there were deer in this area, all this fenced in area. There were a lot of deer king's deer. You'd be in bed at night in. You'd be in bed [inaudible] attention (??), and the tent would start shaking in the middle of the night, and you'd run out with a flashlight, and there would be one of these bucks with their antlers caught in the tent ropes. You know, they'd roam around feeding, and they'd lift their head [McIntosh laughs], you know. Some of the tents would go down. And we killed a few on guard duty, these recruits from the States. In England, "Halt, halt, password, halt" Bang! [both laugh].

McIntosh: If the deer didn't say anything he got shot.

Lucas: No, so [McIntosh laughs] we'd be diggin' holes and burying the deer, you know—

McIntosh: Oh, I thought you'd chop them up and eat them.

Lucas: Oh, Christ no. Those were the king's deer. We didn't want to pay [laughs], nobody wanted—the government didn't want to pay the king for the damn deer. But then I had a choice of going to different schools. You could go to demolition school. So I said, "Okay, I'll go to Pathfinder School." That was up at Leicester. The British had an airborne unit up near there someplace, and they were there. The pathfinders were, the first of the pathfinders came out was in North Africa. They had an exercise out of Oran there. Some airborne unit, I don't know what the hell it was. I think that was really the first combat unit they ever had. It was a disaster. They dropped them fifty miles, and they got behind the lines and the Arabs. So they created this pathfinder. The idea was to train people to jump in because in airborne tactics the critical point is assembly to be an effective unit. Eisenhower was against the airborne unit. It took [Gen. George] Marshall and [Gen. Omar] Bradley to convince him. He was against them. They teach assembly, and so I went to Pathfinder School 'cause I had some demolition training down in Camp Mackall, North Carolina. And I didn't mind it. My MOS was a demolitionist. Pathfinder training, I was

surprised. I didn't know what it was, but it sounded good. You want to do some jumping, and we were jumping like three jumps a day. Normally, you don't get 139 jumps. We jumped three jumps a day. You get in the plane, and you go up, fly, circle around, and jump, pull up with your unit. They were using what they called Eureka sets then. They're like a homing device. It was a black box, it was pre-tuned to an alpha code, "ta-da-da" or "da-dit-dit," and then you had an aluminum pole that was jointed, and on the end they had a spike in it with a place for your foot in, and you'd drive it in the ground and open the strap, and the pole would go up, and on the top you'd have an infrared light. And if you had a little piece of plastic you'd hold up, and you could pick that up, and then you turn on the switch, and this sends in this beacon. So we were trained to drop it on the assembly area where we were going to assemble. In the airfield somebody would be on the north side, and somebody would be on the south where we dropped, the drop zone. You set these things up and run 'em. And they'd do different things to try to confuse you, you know what I mean. They'd get you in the airplane, and you were going to go here, but then they say, "Okay, you're going to go over to Drop Zone B." So in the briefing you had to remember Drop Zone B and what to do if—how to destroy it. So I think I—

McIntosh: How do you mean, how to destroy it?

Lucas: Well, you'd put a thermite hand grenade under it or something, you know what I mean, because the Germans—

McIntosh: Something else you had to carry.

Lucas: Yeah, well—

McIntosh: How big was this thing?

Lucas: Well, not too big.

McIntosh: You just had to patch your back?

Lucas: Oh, yeah, they put them in a pack. They were getting a little more sophisticated then. Like in the demolitionists, when we jumped with demolition stuff you'd have something like twenty-five pounds of C-2 [plastic explosives] composition or C-2 on their hip. But it was in a big plastic bag or a big canvas bag.

McIntosh: It was taped to your leg?

Lucas: No, it was tied. Well, it was tied when you were walking around. I tied mine when I walked around, but when you were in an airplane you just let it there, but it was hooked to your belt, and you had a long strap like a riser on a parachute, a long web strap. And when you pulled this it dropped down, and if you see parachute jumpers, you'll see some of 'em with somethin' hanging on 'em and swayin'. That's what they were. But the first jumps we just carried twenty-five pounds like in a musette bag [small canvas bag used during marching] around the waist. And you'd put a roll-up primer cord around your filter underneath the epaulet. And you'd take some fuse and roll it up and tape it and put it under this arm [McIntosh laughs] and under this epaulet. Then [laughs] you'd—

McIntosh: Jeezus.

Lucas: Then you'd take the blasting caps [laughs]—

McIntosh: Where did you hide those?

Lucas: They'd say, "Get them as far away from the explosives as possible." You put 'em in your back pocket or [laughs].—

McIntosh: [inaudible] had trouble remembering where he was.

Lucas: And then when your chute opened, you pull that, but when you're going out and jumpin' at 300 feet and 350 you say, "Now, what the hell am I gonna do?" [laughs] But usually you hit the ground, plop. Same thing with the Eureka's, they were smaller than twenty-five pounds. The tower thing, that was about that long with straps around it, and it had a cable on the bottom. You put it on, check it, you know. But you couldn't hear anything. You'd check the light with a—and they were all pretty close (??) And it was like a directional finder for airplanes, see. This is really what it was.

McIntosh: Theoretically you jumped, what, a half hour before?

Lucas: Well, normally, see, they didn't tell us all this about pathfinding. They taught you the basics, assembly, you know, but if I'd known all along [both laugh] I wouldn't have gone into it. I might have gone back to demolition.

McIntosh: You thought they were right behind you, but actually they weren't.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. These guys in demolition training would go—you've been to Nottingham where that camp is. Well, if you walk down on the rear side, there's a river that went along there. And every sunny day these

guys would go down there on the weekdays fishing. And these guys who were with my buddy who went to demolition, he told me they went down there, and on the way back these people would all be fishin' on the river. They'd catch little fish like this, and he said they had these quarter pound blocks of C-2 [an explosive], and they put a fuse in, and they'd "How's the fishin?" "Well, no good." "You want some fish?" "Yeah, yeah." "Boom" [both laugh]. And they would just wait for us to come back to get fish [both laugh]. But that's what they did, but we didn't have that. I'll tell you, I'd get back three jumps a day and nothing physical. We didn't carry any equipment other than that. It was just exhausting.

McIntosh: I'm sure.

Lucas: I never realized that—you don't realize the mental stress—

McIntosh: A lot of stress.

Lucas: Because like in combat, you're going to combat jump, you're worrin' about the plane being shot down, you're worrin' about just getting out. A lot of people, the biggest fear they have is having the courage to get out of the plane. That is really the [inaudible].

McIntosh: That's number one?

Lucas: Yes. You know, that's what you, I mentioned before, you learn yourself, and you learn what controls are, and that's it.

McIntosh: Isn't the jumpmaster going to kick you out?

Lucas: Oh, yeah, you got out—they line you up.

McIntosh: No matter whether you change your mind or not, he's going to boot you out.

Lucas: Well, where was it? We were someplace on a jump where the jumpmaster tried to get into the line, no chute on, and his arm got caught, and they took him out with them.

McIntosh: What was he trying to do?

Lucas: I don't know, but he was standing in the door, you know, and you come from this way, and he's standing in the door this way, and getting you out, and the guys in the back are pushing, and he tried to—now, this was not the jumpmaster, this was the flight sergeant in the airplane, the crew chief.

McIntosh: Oh, I see.

Lucas: The crew chief. And he tried to---

McIntosh: He hadn't planned to go out at all?

Lucas: No, and he got his arm in, no parachute, and he went out. Where in the hell—was this in Japan? I think it might have been in Japan. But that's how they go out, you just go out, and you don't—you just shuffle, you know what I mean? When they say, "Stand up and hook up," somebody comes along and pulls a guy up. You can't get out of those damn seats, you know what I mean, you're so—

McIntosh: Oh, that's right. You're so loaded down.

Lucas: Oh, with all the junk, and once you get up, and you hook up, and you can't move your arms too well and check equipment, you know, and then you check the guy in front of you.

McIntosh: You're supposed to do that?

Lucas: Oh, yeah.

McIntosh: You're supposed to look at his back to make sure that he—

Lucas: It's training. You get the alert for "Stand up and hook up," and everybody stands up.

McIntosh: But you're responsible for how his back looks. Of course, you can't tell what's inside.

Lucas: When you got your static cord, you got it over your shoulder, and your parachute has a couple of loops here, you know what I mean, metal? And you hook it on there. You don't snap it. You just hook it, and you say, "Stand up and hook up." You stand up and hook up, and when you hook up you put your hand on it a certain way so that when you go out the cord isn't under your shoulder, you know what I mean?

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: Otherwise, you start this—

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: And then they say, “Check equipment.” So the guy in the back turns around, and the guy behind him, checks his first because there is nobody behind him. He checks it to make sure those straps are all right and static lines are out, and then he turns around, and they check theirs.

McIntosh: And everybody checks the guy in front.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, and then you go down, you do a quick count. “Number one, equipment check, okay.” Equipment check down the line, you know, and “A okay.”

McIntosh: Now, this would be on both sides of the plane or one?

Lucas: Both sides. Well, when they get up, you all go to one. See, we were doing it in C-47s.

McIntosh: Right. So you ended up with just one stick would come out?

Lucas: One stick, yeah, one door.

McIntosh: How many men are we talking? Twenty?

Lucas: I think forty-eight.

McIntosh: Forty-eight.

Lucas: I thought forty-eight. And then you had the bundles underneath, you know, we had the bundles underneath, these big, long bundles, you know?

McIntosh: What with?

Lucas: These were, a lot of them were padded, canvas. You would have in there ammunition, and you’d have medical supplies. You’d have—

McIntosh: When would that go out?

Lucas: Underneath you. Underneath the plane you’d have—

McIntosh: Right, but, oh, would they drop that after you were airborne or first?

Lucas: First. Then you had—

McIntosh: To go backwards to find ‘em once you hit the ground.

Lucas: Yeah. But I think that mostly—these guys would push buttons—when they wanted to get the hell out everything goes out. When they push the button, everybody wants to get the hell out. Everything goes out.

McIntosh: The pilot would empty that out.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. But anyhow, and they'd have dynamite and explosives. And when you're flying a C-47 and they're shooting at you and you got all that goddamn explosives, you know, you say, "Now, what's going to be the worst, if I get hit with that or go out the door." So everybody is glad [laughs] to get out of the damn airplane.

McIntosh: You mean you much preferred to get killed forward rather than in that plane? That was your biggest concern?

Lucas: Well, those were your choices. You didn't have any preferences [laughs].

McIntosh: Not great choices.

Lucas: No, but the thought went through your mind real fast when the flak came. But anyhow, this is what we did up in there. And I went through the pathfinders, and then I started finding out what the idea is they jump in invasion. We didn't think about it.

McIntosh: Did they tell—say anything— about France at that time in your training?

Lucas: No, no, no.

McIntosh: You still didn't know what exactly what they were—

Lucas: We were just training, just training.

McIntosh: For somethin'.

Lucas: You knew somewhere along the line you were going [inaudible]. You've known this for a long time. Anyhow, we got the orders, and we moved to Leicester, and they really clamped down on us. As long as you had [inaudible] you couldn't do anything. They moved out, moved us out, you know, very quietly—

McIntosh: And there's no—you couldn't get out of base or anything.

Lucas: Unh-uh. They had guards around, you know.

McIntosh: This was about a month before?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. That castle on a hill, you know, all there was just a little fence there.

McIntosh: This was in Leicester?

Lucas: No, this was in Nottingham. That castle was on the hill. We'd go up there on Sundays, and a lot of people would come out to see the castle, and we'd walk in the town. We went up to the front gate, there was a bus stop right there, a triangle in the camp. But if you went out the back gate you had to walk down the drive from the castle to the back, and there's where you found the British cottages with the thatched roofs. It was real pretty, you know. And downtown Nottingham, we used to go down there, they had the castle on the hill, and the pump underneath that with the cut in the cliff and the big square.

McIntosh: You saw the bombed out church?

Lucas: No, I don't know if we—didn't see it.

McIntosh: That's in Coventry. You didn't get down to Coventry?

Lucas: No, unh-uh, no, no. I just didn't [laughs] get out of Nottingham. Went to Leicester, and not at that time. We were doing our training, and they were keeping us busy, and they moved us out, and that's how we got the word at the airport. They had the sand tables, all built up.

McIntosh: Then they told you what your mission was.

Lucas: Yeah, they told about what our mission was, you know, we were going to jump in down at Sainte-Mère-Église.

McIntosh: Been there. How much before D-Day was this, when you first found out? A week or two weeks?

Lucas: About a week, about a week, yeah. A lot of work on the sand tables and a lot of briefings. Went to church every day.

McIntosh: So you had [laughs]—

Lucas: No, really. They had Mass there. Anytime you wanted to go to Mass, they had—

McIntosh: Operated around the clock.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. It was in the hangers, and you slept on canvas cots, and they never turned the damn lights off. You know what I mean, it was like sleeping in the daylight. It was boring as hell. You could write letters, but they said you're not going to mail them right away. They couldn't tell you when they were going to mail them. But we knew we were going to France then.

McIntosh: But they still wouldn't tell you when, of course.

Lucas: But we knew our 508th was going to be I think it was south of, what they call it? Dove River? The river that runs through to the beach.

McIntosh: The Orne River runs in to the beach, but the other one starts with a D.

Lucas: We called it the Dove. It sounds like "Dove," but the French spelled it a little different—D-R-O or D-R-E-V-E. [Douve]. The pathfinders, we got special briefings. A lot of it was just—we got briefed and briefed.

McIntosh: What kind of an area where you were supposed to jump into?

Lucas: We were supposed to jump south at Sainte Mère-Église.

McIntosh: South of it?

Lucas: Yeah, just south of Sainte-Mère-Église and secure some bridges and causeways. Down there the roads are all built up. It was a marshy area, and we had—supposed to secure the area south. I think north of us was Saint-Lo, with the 82nd. I don't know what units were up there. And the 101st was up—we were up next with the British. We all carried little clickers, you know, you used to get in Cracker Jack, and you had an orange scarf that you'd wave when the airplanes came in. The Americans, you know, strafin' you'd [McIntosh laughs]—

McIntosh: Not us, right.

Lucas: We'd run for a damn hole [laughs] if somebody wanted to get out [both laugh].

McIntosh: That's when it's easy to get shot.

Lucas: Yeah, the damn Germans would shoot you, you know, standing out there waving this red, orange scarf [both laugh]. We just dived in the damn holes like the Germans did. But we wouldn't shoot at 'em though. We were all glad to see 'em. But we took off at 23:00 [11:00 pm], and there was I think there was six of us, six of us in the plane, yeah.

McIntosh: Just six of you guys?

Lucas: Yeah, and—

McIntosh: Each had a segment to go to?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: These segment of what, five miles or two miles apart, would you say?

Lucas: Oh, they were about five. Five, ten miles. The diameter, you know. If you were anyplace within a five mile area, it was good. But, you know, it just didn't work out.

McIntosh: You were blown away, yeah.

Lucas: Yeah, well—

McIntosh: How did the jump go? It was a night jump.

Lucas: Well, I jumped. I never—I missed the DZ [drop zone]. I landed in a damn swamp. What happened is that the area that the Germans had the marsh, they closed the dikes, and they raised the water level. It was to be at knee deep, and waist deep it was sixteen feet, twenty three feet deep.

McIntosh: Jeepers. You had to get out of that harness.

Lucas: We didn't.

McIntosh: I'm sorry?

Lucas: We didn't—my company, we lost almost a whole company.

McIntosh: They drowned.

Lucas: Mm-hm.

McIntosh: Yeah, because they couldn't get out of that harness. You said you were in—

Lucas: Well, they went right to the bottom, you know what I mean?

McIntosh: Oh, even if they got out?

Lucas: You couldn't get out of all the equipment 'cause you know— If you knew you were going to land in water, but you know, 400 feet, “bang, bang.”

McIntosh: And it was night besides.

Lucas: And I landed in the water, I landed in the damn water, and I went under, but, my parachute caught on something on the causeway, and I started climbing up the parachute then and that got out. I don't know how many men we lost there. They just all drowned.

McIntosh: And how did you get out of your harness? Had a knife or somethin'?

Lucas: No [laughs], I wrote home in one of my letters. My grandfather was a barber. I told him my grandmother always said, “What can we send you?” And I always got a lot of cookies and cheese, and they kept me going. I smoked cigarettes then. I took up smoking then, I don't know why [laughs]. I never smoked in high school, running, you know. My grandmother sent me a lighter. I've never seen one since. It had a flint thing like a regular lighter, but it had a piece of like wick goin' through. And then you pulled it up, and you sparked it. You know, no flame. You just blow it [laughs]. So I got a lot of that stuff. But I told my grandfather if he had an old straight razor, send it to me. He sent me a straight razor. We had shirts and our jackets, you know, we had pockets up here, and I carried that straight razor, and when I got on the ground I just [swooshing sound] and all four of the risers [parachute webbing] went. That was the best thing I had.

McIntosh: Why, because that was the better than a knife?

Lucas: Oh, those knives—you know Army knives are made for stabbing. They're not made for cutting. You couldn't cut butter with an Army knife. I've got a couple of them at home.

McIntosh: They wouldn't hurt anybody?

Lucas: No, they wouldn't. You never heard a soldier cutting his finger on an Army knife [both laugh].

McIntosh: Yeah, well, that razor worked good then.

Lucas: Yeah, oh, yeah. I just “pfft.” And then you run with the harness on. You know what I mean? You just leave the dang harness, and you don't have to try to stand there to get out of these buckles. If they're shooting, you're on your belly. The wind's dragging you. If you only

cut two, you still have a chute. But I'd just, "whoom," and they'd go real fast. That was the best thing I ever received.

McIntosh: So after you hit, you looked around and you got out of the water?

Lucas: Yeah, we got out of the water and tried to get our orientation, and I couldn't find any orientation. I couldn't find anybody.

McIntosh: Nothing looked like that sand pile?

Lucas: I knew that there was water, but—

McIntosh: There wasn't supposed to be water?

Lucas: Well, yeah, there was supposed to be water. It was supposed to be marsh, but it's not supposed to be that deep. So I just took my goddamn Eureka set and threw it in the goddamn—it's someplace in the marsh over in France now. To set it up and have the planes come and drop more men there.

McIntosh: That's right. So you had no need for it then.

Lucas: But they did come in, and they did drop them regardless of the—some of the other fellas had their sets up, and they probably when they didn't pick up like the alpha beacon, they went to the beacon or the Charlie, you know what I mean? They dropped them, and they just went down to the bottom. And so for about, oh, ten days we just ran around with our little squawkers, you know?

McIntosh: Yeah, how did those work?

Lucas: Well, fine, but they sound just like a bolt on a German rifle [laughs].

McIntosh: Not good.

Lucas: No [laughs], you find that out.

McIntosh: That attracts attention you don't want.

Lucas: Or you think, you hear that bolt and you think, oh, there's another clicker, and you go like that, and then "wham, wham," they shoot at you [laughs].

McIntosh: Jeezus.

Lucas: Well, you didn't use them too much. I wanted to see, you know.

McIntosh: How long did it take before you found somebody?

Lucas: Oh, I think, I don't know really. At the time I'd go from sunrise to sunset. We left England about 23:00. I know I didn't see anybody that night, and the next day I got daylight. I got myself into a hedgerow and just buried myself. You know, these hedgerows are thicker, and the tanks couldn't go through them. I just got in there.

McIntosh: Waited till daylight?

Lucas: I waited until night.

McIntosh: Oh. This is all day. You still haven't seen anybody.

Lucas: Oh, I saw a lot of Germans, you know, lots of Germans.

McIntosh: They were looking for you?

Lucas: I wasn't near a road, but then I could hear that they were tracking the road here. You could hear a tank. When you hear that heavy armor, you know, it's not civilian. There weren't any civilians around that we saw, where I was.

McIntosh: No town nearby?

Lucas: No, I didn't—I knew we [inaudible] Sainte-Mère Église was supposed to be and and some of these others on the map. I worked my way over when it got dark. I worked my over to a road. I found a road, and I got on the road, and I started walking on the road, and every time I'd hear a noise or a grunt, or anything, if somebody belched, I'd probably jump in the ditch or in a hedgerow.

McIntosh: Sure.

Lucas: You know, everything was so slow. I'd run into some German patrols, you know. They weren't out necessarily, I don't know if they were looking for us or not, but—

McIntosh: So this is the second day, and you still haven't found anybody?

Lucas: Well, then the next night I got off the road, and in a hedgerow and tryin' to find some water. I didn't carry a canteen. I didn't bother with a canteen because back here when you land on a parachute, if you had a canteen that hurts, you know. And I really, I am not one of a water drinker. I am more like a camel. So I—then I don't know how I ran into

somebody. I heard some clicking, and for the first time I found it was a rifle, hearin' a rifle sound, just like a snapper. But I didn't do anything. I just looked and checked, and it was a German. A little later on I heard some firing, and I heard some American rifles. The Germans used a 9 millimeter, and we were using a 30 and the Garand. You pick up the sounds. So I got my water (??), and I got together with somebody from another company, I can't remember. In about a week we had about seven of us together.

McIntosh: Still 81st?

Lucas: No, they were the 82nd.

McIntosh: I mean 82nd. You didn't find any of 81st?

Lucas: No, they were north. They were farther north.

McIntosh: Yeah. You didn't mix then.

Lucas: No, we were farther north. Then we got some together, and we were able to start having enough staff where we can start blowing things. I was toting that goddamn bag of demolition along with me.

McIntosh: So what was your charge to do?

Lucas: To blow the causeways and bridges.

McIntosh: To prevent a counterattack?

Lucas: Yeah, well movement of vehicles on bridges and locks. And there was some locks on this Douve River that we wanted to secure because it was a navigable river. So, we start setting up booby traps in it, find some wire and put it across the road for the motorcyclists and just do nasty, dirty things. And we'd come to a roadblock, and we'd observe it, that there would only be a few Germans. We'd start a firefight and kill them off. We were always working towards the north, you know, 'cause we knew that's where we were going to run into some other troops. I remember one time we got a half-track, and it had a German payroll in it [both laugh]. But we didn't know it was just funny money [laughs], you know what I mean. Oh, everybody stuffed in their shirts. We had money, money [McIntosh laughs], and we were using it to light cigarettes. The guys were having fun with it. I had some I stuffed in my pockets, and I thought it was a good souvenir, and my jump suit jacket, they had a liner, I cut it with my razor and then I could push things in [laughs]. So it was all nicely wrapped money. But anyhow, we finally got up, and we run into this is the 33rd Division.

McIntosh: How?

Lucas: I think it was the 33rd Division. I am trying to think of the patch. It was blue, blue and white, and I think it had some stripes in it.

McIntosh: The 3rd Division, that's blue with white stripes.

Lucas: Yeah. Okay. We had about a platoon size by then, and the Germans were looking for us. We were doing enough damage, but really the thing was our main objective was after we blew up, I said I gotta get rid of this damn dynamite and C-2. I'm too tired of carrying it [laughs]. So we set some booby traps and stuff, and we used it up. And whenever we went across a bridge we'd blow it out, but these were not the causeways. Anything we could do to harass, you know. Let's see—yeah, I think it was either the 31st or the 32nd Division. We ran into them, and they took us back to their CP [command post], and they sort of gave them a briefing of where we went. We really didn't know where the hell we came from, other than where they dropped us off. But the activity, and— we didn't we were surprised we didn't have a lot. We ran into a lot of Germans, but they really weren't fooling around with five, six people or seven people, you know what I mean? **[End of Tape 2, Side A]** So they wanted us—we'd go back up further to the front, and they took some of—I was one of 'em. They said, "Would you go up with the point unit?" You know what I mean, and take us back down there. And that's when I got shot the second time.

McIntosh: Shrapnel?

Lucas: No, I got a 9 millimeter in the shoulder over here.

McIntosh: Balance you, on one each side.

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: That went came through, though, didn't it?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. So, anyhow—

McIntosh: That put you in the hospital?

Lucas: Well, yeah—

McIntosh: You hadn't even started coughin' up the blood—

Lucas: No, I didn't get any—

McIntosh: Oh, they were outside the lung (??)

Lucas: No, no, it wasn't that serious. No big deal. Nice and clean. And they patched me up, and I was back in their center a week, and then I went back to try to find my unit. And I went back in the line, and we were there in July, hedgerow to hedgerow to hedgerow, you know.

McIntosh: And the 82nd sort of reformed by this time?

Lucas: Oh, yeah, yeah. We were one of the units that were I think—we lost so many men in the jump that my company, you know what I mean, it was probably just a company size rather than a battalion size. The other assemblies were—but we moved to the north and to the west. And these units were south of us, and they were fighting in the hedgerows. Then I got back to the unit, and I think we left and got back to Nottingham in July.

McIntosh: So you were there about a little over a month?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. Then we got a furlough, and I got back and I got my mail, and my Dad was—

McIntosh: Furloughed to where?

Lucas: First furlough we went, the guys, we had seven days. And some were going up to Scotland, but we all went down to London. And then the guy said, "Who is going to go to Scotland or stay in London?" Well, we got down there, and I remember we came up out of the subway, and the sirens were going and the goddamn buzz bombs [German V-1 rockets] were going, and we all went down in the subway, and we said, "Hell with London." We all went to Scotland [laughs].

McIntosh: You had one look, and that's enough?

Lucas: All went to Scotland and spent our time up in Scotland [both laugh]. We weren't going to get killed in London that's for goldarn—

McIntosh: After all this, right.

Lucas: And those subways at night were so crowded that I just--I said I'd keep you from sleeping. Anyhow, we were up in Scotland, and, oh, about a week and I went back, and I had some mail. I got a letter from my mother that said, "Hey, your Dad's in Brighton, England."

McIntosh: What do you mean, he was in service?

Lucas: Yeah, he was a major with the—he was assigned to the British, and he was stationed in Brighton.

McIntosh: How did he get assigned to the British?

Lucas: He was Allied Military Government [military rule administered by Allied forces in WWII in occupied territories], and he was assigned to the British.

McIntosh: When did he go in service? About a year before you?

Lucas: Oh, he went in about '40, '43.

McIntosh: After you?

Lucas: Yeah. [Approx. 30 sec. pause in recording]

Lucas: And we did a lot of cleaning up, and the 101st were down at Eindhoven [Netherlands], south of us. And they were taking some bridges and causeways. The airborne, the symbol on the airborne is taking bridges [laughs].

McIntosh: It's taking bridges?

Lucas: Taking bridges [both laugh]. There is a chapter here in the 82nd Airborne, and they've gone up, and they got a memorial for the 82nd in Stevens Point [Wisconsin]. I think it's Stevens Point, on the new bridge, they got a memorial. They got one down in Racine on a bridge [laughs]. So they're still taking bridges [both laugh]. But really that's appropriate for us because it secures transportation, movement. Part of basic tactics of the military is fire and movement. But we did a lot of street fighting, a lot of close fighting at Nijmegen.

McIntosh: What was that like?

Lucas: Well, building to building, you know. The same thing you got in Italy in the villages. It depends on—

McIntosh: Didn't bother you though tryin' to bounce in the door not knowing what you were going to find in there?

Lucas: Well, you don't just do it that way [laughs]. The danger you have is going by the door and having somebody behind you. And these were multi-story houses and buildings. We'd get up on a roof, and you'd try to get up on a roof and work down.

McIntosh: That would be the safe way to do it.

Lucas: Yeah, then work down, and since we didn't own the property, you know, soldiers aren't that careful, you know, runnin' and somebody would throw a grenade in the room and—

McIntosh: Did civilians bother you? I mean, were they in your face?

Lucas: No, they got the hell out. Nijmegen in Holland was a lot like it was in Italy and in France. They gave you thirty, forty dollars of—we would called it “Mickey Mouse money.” You know, the invasion money. I still got some at home. I meant to mention, you know, I told you we got that payroll tank. We got back to England, one day they announced, “If you got any money, turn it in.” I said, “I got a little.” So cleaned out my bag, and I lined it, stacked like that. I went over, and I said, “Is this any good?” I gave it to the guy [laughs]. He says, “Where the hell did you get that?” I said, “Well, I got about six hundred dollars.” [laughs] I kept some for souvenirs, I still got a couple of them. They were French francs.

McIntosh: I'll be damned.

Lucas: Yeah, about six hundred dollars, you know. Yeah, but we were lighting cigarettes with them and building fires.

McIntosh: Yeah. You assumed they were worthless.

Lucas: Yeah, I didn't have to build fires. Being a demolitionist, you would take composition C-2, you know. Take a little bit, and just light it, and it burns with a white hot heat, and you could heat a can of coffee or water in nothing.

McIntosh: Oh, really.

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Wasn't it dangerous holding it?

Lucas: No, oh, you put it on the ground, and put a match—just put a cigarette to it, and it just burnt. You would think it was going to burn a hole in the canteen. Boy, it would heat up a pot of water. I didn't dig many foxholes [laughs]. I'd make a shaped charge, you know, like a coffee can and set a fuse, and it would blow the nicest foxhole you ever saw [both laugh]. I'd just have to get in there and shape it up a little for my comfort. But it had some advantages.

McIntosh: Did you ever see you father again over there?

Lucas: No, unh-uh, no.

McIntosh: He came back?

Lucas: No, he was over there longer than I was.

McIntosh: He stayed there after the war?

Lucas: Yeah, he was there after the war.

McIntosh: Well, he was there a long time. He stayed in England all the time?

Lucas: No, no, he was over in Europe in France and Belgium.

McIntosh: After you had your—

Lucas: When we were in Holland, he was in Liege, Belgium in the Namur because we they had gone through, and that's when they brought him over.

McIntosh: Gosh, he must have had a wonderful experience, too.

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Not as exciting as yours, but interesting.

Lucas: Yeah. But anyhow in Holland, then we were on the south side of the Waal River, I guess the Nijmegen side. We were moving across the river for—before that. We were outside of Nijmegen someplace, I don't know. I'm trying to think of the name. It's a little village. There's one at Olympia, Washington named Eureka. Eureka. That little village was Eureka. Because I found a Bible in there in one of the houses that we were living in. The Bible was from Eureka, and there was a Eureka, Washington and a family name in it. And we were on the line there with the Germans, and we were doing patrols at night, and we had skirmishes, usually on patrol.

McIntosh: I mean that's six guys against six guys or something like that?

Lucas: Yeah, and we'd go out on outposts, a lot of outposts and a lot of patrols. You'd sleep during the day and go out at night.

McIntosh: This was two or three days after you dropped?

Lucas: Yeah, all the time we were there, you always go out and get intelligence, you always go out on patrol. They want prisoners, you go out and find some Germans and try to pull 'em out of a hole and take 'em back with you.

McIntosh: Is that the way you found the prisoners?

Lucas: Well, it's the only way you'd get them. Or you go out and ambush them on a patrol. Just lay there awake all night long.

McIntosh: Shoot five and take one back?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, and sometimes you'd lay out there all night, and nothing would happen. Then one night they killed one of our own officers. A German patrol came through our outpost, and we got in a firefight, and the machine gunner turned his machine gun on him. We're shooting at him, and he got up and ran, and he ran right into the field of fire and killed a young second lieutenant. But we'd go out and get in these firefights and get the intelligence. The night we picked this one guy from battalion, S-2 [intelligence section] would get out there into this flatland in Holland. They have the dikes, and he'd get out there, and he'd start yelling in German at them, you know what I mean? And they'd (??) start yelling at him (??). What he wanted 'em to do was—

McIntosh: To say something.

Lucas: Shoot, you know.

McIntosh: Oh.

Lucas: Shoot because then you knew their positions, but they wouldn't do it. We wouldn't do it either, you know, they'd come in.

McIntosh: When you grabbed one of these prisoners, were they reluctant to come—

Lucas: Well, most of them were shot.

McIntosh: Wounded?

Lucas: Yeah, wounded. At night in these firefights, you know, you just can't say, "Well, we're not going to shoot that guy." If he's got a gun, you shoot and shoot and hope that he gets done. 'Cause when you would go back you'd tell 'em you didn't see anything. You don't tell 'em anything because like in Korea they had us out at night I think—for a

week, every night for a week, and I lost about six men killed looking for a railroad line, a railroad line. They sort of briefed us, and they said—they give me a map, “There’s the railroad line.” After the sixth one, I said, “There’s no railroad line out there. There’s no line.” I said to the major, I said, “Come on along.” I said, “We’ll find a [inaudible]. And he finally went out, and there was no railroad line. They found out they were using Japanese maps, and some Japanese colonel probably got some money to build a railroad, and he never built it, but they put in on the map. And we lost six men.

McIntosh: We’re getting way ahead of our story now [laughs].

Lucas: But, anyhow, but that’s the way it is.

McIntosh: When did you decide that Market Garden [Operation Market Garden was an unsuccessful Allied Military operation, the largest airborne operation up to that time, Sept. 17-25, 1944] wasn’t working? How did you recognize some things weren’t going well?

Lucas: Well, we didn’t know it wasn’t going well. We thought it was going—hell, we were taking our objectives (??). We were blowing up bridges. We were killing Germans.

McIntosh: Yeah, things were going along smooth (??)

Lucas: Going good, you know. We were hungry. We were living off of potatoes we’d dig out of the field. Now, this was in—we’re in October in the snow and the foxholes, and purple cabbage. I don’t want to see any purple cabbage the rest of my life. And then the British would come by, and we’d see what we could borrow, or beg or steal from them. The British had a toothpaste that I think was a hundred percent sodium. We’d ask them for some, and we’d cook a cabbage of snow and water and we’d see what happen—put [laughs] this salt in it, or this toothpaste, and it got a big foam on it, but it was salty [both laugh]. It was sodium, you know what I mean. And we’d eat it, you know, green apples and green tomatoes, you know, throw everything in. A lot of dead cows around, but you can’t eat them because it’s—

McIntosh: Might be diseased?

Lucas: Well, they’re shot. They got shrapnel in ‘em, you know what I mean.

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: They told us, the medics said, “Don’t eat that meat.” But our rations were pretty much at that point what we could find. We didn’t have any hot turkey dinners or anything like that.

McIntosh: But you had a supply of K-rations.

Lucas: Well, I don’t remember getting anything after what I carried with me on the jump. Then we didn’t get C-rations. We carried the D-bars, you know, those small chocolate bars. That’s all we had. I ate a lot of [inaudible]. The first thing we get a bunch of Germans, we’d shake them down and see what we could find. I ate a lot of the German black bread that they carried in their little bags, a little aluminum container like, and it was supposed to be butter, but I think it was pure lard. But in Holland we found a beautiful, a wonderful jam. Oh, it was delicious. And it would come in big barrels like five gallon, you’d see it. And we’d take these grenade launcher [laughs] canisters and fill that full of jam and then put it in our pocket, and you could eat it. You can eat it just like eating jello. It wasn’t that sweet. It was great. So that’s about what we did. And we’d go into town once in awhile. I remember one night I was going into the town. I don’t know what the hell I was doing. I went into a store, and I had this funny money, and I wanted to find out if I could buy something. And I went in the store and the guy sold me something. Definitely he couldn’t speak English, but I don’t know what I bought. But we were out in the country on these patrols, and then we moved across the river. The British, you know, were up in Arnhem. The British were driving these two ton DUKWs [six wheel drive amphibious trucks]. We were going across the river, and we were the last DUKW. There must have been about fifteen of us in the convoy. And when we went across the bridge the driver stalled on the raft, and he couldn’t get the car—the DUKW going. It was a nice sunny day, and I was sitting up on the front of the DUKW, and they guys were in the back, and there was another fellow on the seat. I think another guy might have been on the other side of the DUKW. And I sat there with the BAR enjoying the ride, and we went, I remember we went across the bridge, and we got on the other side. We stalled, and the MP—the road went straight, but there was a road to the right, and he flagged us down. I remember the terrible odor. Oh, it was terrible. And we went by a cemetery, and what had happened, they must have recently had a bombardment—

McIntosh: It threw up all the bodies.

Lucas: All the bodies and graves and that. Oh, it was terrible. But we drove by, and we’re going down and up on top of the causeway and the slope down, and the land was low. It was flat and open, and we’re going along, and the apple orchards were on this side, and all the guys were

looking at the apple orchards because there's apples on them. And it was nice and warm, and we didn't have any snow. All of the sudden, he stopped, and I looked up the road, and there was a tank, a German tank in the road, maybe a hundred yards away. It was sitting across, you know, there was a lot of knocked out tanks around, you didn't pay much attention. But I didn't pay any attention until I saw the god damn turret turn—

McIntosh: Oops!

Lucas: And these guys were standing up in the back, and they said, "Oh, let's get apples." You know what I mean, they wanted to get some apples. And some of them had gotten off and had gone in the ditch, and there was three or four standing there. And when that damn tank turret turned I moved. And I dropped down on the side of the ditch. And the vehicle was up here. And the machine guns, they opened up machine guns, and the guys who were standing up in the turret, all got shot. So, here I was on this side of the road, and everybody was on the other side. And when the machine gun fired, I happened to look over my shoulder, up out of the ground, oh, fifteen, twenty yards away, all these German soldiers came out of foxholes, and they had their underwear on. You know what I mean? It was a warm day. Here I am [laughs] with all of these German soldiers. What had happened is that, and we remember coming up in hindsight, when we came up this road, there was a house up on a hill. Some guys came out of the house and were yelling and going like this. They were British, they must have been British telling us, "Don't go. Stop."

McIntosh: Yeah, but you didn't pay attention.

Lucas: Yeah. And so here I'm on this side of the road. So I turned around, and I yelled, "Hände hoch! [Hands up!] I had the BAR, and I fired a couple of rounds. They all put their hands up. And I yelled, "Kommen sie hier!" [Come here!]

McIntosh: How many are we talking?

Lucas: Oh, there was about four of them. That's all I could see, but when they came up—and I said—when they got down they got down because a machine gun was firing, and he couldn't get us in the ditch. But I wanted to get on the other side of the road. I didn't want to be with these Germans. So I yelled over, and they yelled at me, and I said, "Yeah, I'm over here alone, and I got four Germans." And he said, "Send the bastards over." So, I figured, well, if I send them over they'd stop firing. Well, so this German got up with his hands up, and he stood up, and they started firing and he ran over. When I got over, I heard

“Bang.” I didn’t pay much attention. And they sent another one over. So I kept the last one for myself, and then I went over. What they were doing, they were shooting them [laughs] as they went over.

McIntosh: The Germans shot their own men?

Lucas: No, the Americans were shooting. The soldiers on the other side were—when the guy came over and they were shooting ‘em. But then we were all on the other side of the road. And this is one of the marvels of being in a defensive position with the Germans. They started a mortar fire, and they came down where that tank was. They came down that ditch [inaudible] where we were all in the ditch. They were dropping those mortar shells in that ditch as if they were standing on top. And when they got down to the intersection down there they put three of them in, and then they went right. We went into the orchard. We jumped into the orchard, and we got in the orchard, and then the Germans on the other side, we had a firefight in the orchard, and we moved back and finally got out. We got back down where that house was. And it was a British CP [command post]. I don’t know where the hell the British were, why they were there, but they didn’t have any security out or anything when we went down that road.

McIntosh: What did you do to your German prisoner?

Lucas: There weren’t any. We left ‘em.

McIntosh: Oh, that one guy was in—

Lucas: They killed him.

McIntosh: Oh, you said you saved one.

Lucas: Oh, I just took him over with me. Yeah, the last one—

McIntosh: They shot him, too?

Lucas: Yeah, they got him, too. Here what we had done was penetrated the line, and we were behind the lines. You don’t want to take anybody along. But I was never more surprised, and they were more surprised than I was. Came up out of the hole and they looked at—and I yelled, “Hände hoch!” And I fired. I didn’t hit anybody. I just fired a clip or a few rounds, and they put their hands up. They were all in their pants and their suspenders and their winter underwear. Well, this was in October, or probably first part of November. So that year I spent my birthday in Holland. Well, then, we got back down, and we got back on the right road and went up to this little village where Eureka was, and

we were on the line, and we just sat on the line and just held it, and that's when they were going through Arnhem. And we were there until November.

McIntosh: They pulled you out?

Lucas: Yeah, then we went to Reims, France. We were—

McIntosh: The whole division?

Lucas: Yeah, and bivouacked at Reims, France and we were there enjoying ourselves, doing some minimum training, and getting replacements in and doing the things that you do to reinforce it. The war was still on, you know.

McIntosh: But you thought was going to be over soon?

Lucas: Yeah. I don't know if we did. I can't speak for everybody. I just took one day at a time, you know, what the hell. You start muddling your mind up with these things. You get homesick, and you hear rumors. I'd get letters from home, and you'd write to 'em. And Reims was nice, and then, oh, about the twentieth of—

McIntosh: December.

Lucas: Twentieth of November.

McIntosh: Oh, November.

Lucas: No, excuse me, December.

McIntosh: Right, that's when you got a call to go in the Ardennes.

Lucas: Yeah, they called. They got the list out of the pathfinders. They had the fog and the trouble getting in the Ardennes (??) [inaudible].

McIntosh: Well, they wanted you there as infantry. They didn't want you—

Lucas: Well, no. They just called up pathfinders at that time. They were trying to get supplies in so somebody thought, well, if we drop some pathfinders through the fog, you know, and set up the Eureka sets—

McIntosh: Jesus Christ.

Lucas: Yeah, that's what we said [both laugh].

McIntosh: You're out of your (??).

Lucas: "What idiot thought that up?" So, they took us, and they outfitted us and briefed us, and they gave us the Eureka sets, and they said, "Now you jump with these in your arm" because they had a thermite grenade. If you hear (??) any sign, any sign that the German, the opponent was—just drop it. I was lucky. I landed in the perimeter.

McIntosh: Where was this?

Lucas: In Bastogne [Belgium].

McIntosh: In Bastogne?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Outside or the north side of that were you (??)?

Lucas: Pardon?

McIntosh: Out north side of Bastogne then?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Yeah, that's where the division was.

Lucas: Yeah. And I landed and put up the Eureka set and then got some supplies in, and then a couple of days later they came in with more. So, I was just there, you know, I was thinkin,' geeze, you go from Reims, France where we were partying and having a good time, and then I'm surrounded [laughs].

McIntosh: That drop was back that they couldn't see you. It was so foggy—

Lucas: No, we went (??) through the fog.

McIntosh: You were probably a hundred feet off before you saw your first—

Lucas: Yeah, I don't know. I don't think I saw anything until I hit the ground [laughs]. I had my eyes closed maybe.

McIntosh: How many jumped there?

Lucas: Huh?

McIntosh: How many jumped for the pathfinders?

Lucas: I think there was six of us.

McIntosh: That jumped in Bastogne area?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Okay.

Lucas: I don't know what happened. I saw one or two of the others. But anyhow, I was with them.

McIntosh: Well, then you were stuck there till they got that solved.

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: It's cold there.

Lucas: Yeah, it was cold. You could tell us because we had the clean uniforms [laughs]. Even had dry socks.

McIntosh: Yeah, those guys, were they in pretty tough shape by the time when you got there?

Lucas: Medical supplies were down low. I think medical supplies were one of the first things that they put in and ammunition.

McIntosh: But, they were running out of that too.

Lucas: Yeah, ammunition was—

McIntosh: Food?

Lucas: Yeah, but you know—it's funny—you don't really miss food. You don't get hungry. You get hungry when things get quiet, and then you start thinking. You know, you're just trying to stay alive. Your mind is focused. Altogether you're in a different world. You go by instinct, you go by what—

McIntosh: Well, this is a real mishmash that you are in. At Bastogne there was the 101st [Airborne Division] was there, and your group, and then of course the Army. So you had just a bunch of different people.

Lucas: Then Christmas Eve I was out on a, I think it was Christmas Eve, it could have been the twenty-third, I was out on a roadblock, and armor

was trying to get in. We went out on a patrol, and I really got shot. Blew all of the muscle out of the back of my leg.

McIntosh: With shrapnel?

Lucas: No, no, machine gun.

McIntosh: Machine gun.

Lucas: I stepped on, I almost stepped on a machine gun. It was one of these, I don't know what they call them. It was a bipod like a BAR.

McIntosh: On the Schmeissers [MP 40 German submachine gun].

Lucas: Yeah, he was on a—no, they're like a—just like a BAR, but they got a handle, and they got a tripod, and they got two round discs on the side. They go from canister to canister. And he was on the side of a hill, and we were on patrol, and I heard the noise, and I looked down, and it was too late. He pulled the trigger. If I would have been back farther he would have got me up here, but the first blast got me in the leg. I just went in the ditch, and as I went in the ditch I had an M1 on the patrol, and I just was shooting with the M1 when I fell. I didn't remember anything after that, and I woke up, and I was down in the ditch with a dead German.

McIntosh: Oh, you killed him?

Lucas: Yeah, and a dead cow, you know.

McIntosh: [laughs] The three of you were enjoying it (??).

Lucas: So, I don't know how long I was there, and I tried to get out. Ice had formed on over the water. There was some water where ice had formed, and so I crawled to the top of the dike and to get my bearings, and I figured I came from that way in, and I crawled out, and I got to the outpost. I don't know the rest of them, I said, "Did anybody else come back through?" And nobody else came through so they might have been taken prisoners. I don't know.

McIntosh: So somebody found you.

Lucas: Yeah. And so I ended up in the hospital, and then I was in the hospital—

McIntosh: In the Bastogne "General Hospital" [laughs]? Right. That was in a tent?

Lucas: In the aid station.

McIntosh: What did they do to your leg?

Lucas: Well, I don't know.

McIntosh: Did it [inaudible] much?

Lucas: Medically what they did, I don't know. They probably cleaned it out and put me on a litter. Next thing I knew I was back in Reims in a hospital, and then I was there—

McIntosh: How did you get there?

Lucas: They took me by ambulance. This was after—

McIntosh: After they relieved the pressure on the—

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. All I know is they had my leg wrapped up, and they were giving me shots for something. I don't know what it was.

McIntosh: Was there any concern that you'd be overrun by Germans when you were in Bastogne?

Lucas: Oh, yeah, they all thought—

McIntosh: You thought—I mean, everybody considered that as a real possibility?

Lucas: Oh yes, yeah.

McIntosh: But they had—I don't understand what kept them out. They had armor. It seems to be they could have overrun Bastogne.

Lucas: I don't know what it was. Well, the armor was pretty vulnerable, you know what I mean. They lost a lot of armor there, lots of armor.

McIntosh: If you could get to the side of 'em I know you could knock those tanks out, **[End of Tape 2, Side B]** and I suppose a land mine would stop 'em too.

Lucas: Well, you went to stop 'em, all you gotta do was knock the damn treads off, you what I mean?

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: You know, hell, if they're sitting out there 100 yards firing at you, it's not good, but it's better than having them right in your perimeter firing at you. But they killed—a lot of armor. And we didn't take any prisoners, you know what I mean?

McIntosh: Shot 'em all?

Lucas: We didn't keep 'em all. You know, to get a prisoner somebody had to stand up and put his hands up, and nobody did that. Nobody did that over there. It was fierce fighting, you know? The people there, you know, knowing that they were going to be overrun, you know—

McIntosh: Right. There weren't going to be any prisoners.

Lucas: And they were fighting the panzer [armored] units, you know.

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: So it got pretty fierce, and the patrols at night, you know, a lot of them, there wasn't a patrol that went out that didn't have string (??) 'cause this is the way they picked up our intelligence. There was no other way, you know what I mean? You couldn't lay wire. There was no wire to lay, no phones to lay, you know what I mean? It was just going out and finding them, where are they and how many there are. Because the front was always so fluid, you know? And we held certain road intersections, and that controlled the armor for movement, you know what I mean? Because they could go through, off the field, but there was a lot of woods up there in those areas, and they don't move that freely. They stay away from woods because they're very vulnerable. They can't swing their guns and everything else.

McIntosh: You said you had a chance to talk to guys from the 101st Air?

Lucas: Yeah, so—

McIntosh: Yeah.

Lucas: Well anyhow, then I was in the hospital. I don't remember too much about it after that. I got to Reims, and I remember my back was hurting me. Oh, it was killing me. My back hurt more than my leg, and it was from laying on those damn canvas cots, you know.

McIntosh: Oh, yeah.

Lucas: Oh, they're killers. I couldn't turn or anything. And you had to know your nurses to give you a massage. So then I went into surgery down

there, and I remember I woke up in a ward, and I woke up at night, and then I looked over, and there was a medic sitting—it was a big room. There was a medic sitting there at a table, a night-light on, and he was reading, and I said, “Hey,” and he came over. He said, “Oh, you’re awake.” And he says, “What do you want?” And I says, “It feels like something is dripping.” And he says, “What do you mean?” I said, “It feels like something is dripping down my leg.” And he pulled the sheet back, and I was able to look down and the bed was just all red [laughs], all red. And the drip—I never realized, the blood was dripping out of my leg, and I could feel it. I knew it was—

McIntosh: Yeah. The blood vessels got loose.

Lucas: Yeah, but, so then in the middle of the night I’m back, you know—

McIntosh: In the operating room.

Lucas: I don’t know what they did.

McIntosh: Right. To stop the bleeding.

Lucas: Yeah, and so then I lost another day [laughs] so I woke up in the afternoon, and I said I was hungry. “Do you want something to eat?” And I said, “Yes,” and so they came. I said I was thirsty, and they gave me a glass of water. Drank the glass of water, and I lost my appetite.

McIntosh: There were three or four days that you hadn’t eaten.

Lucas: Yeah. Well, like up in Holland, I found out your stomach shrinks.

McIntosh: Yeah, sure.

Lucas: So they had, “Don’t give the sergeant here any liquids until after he eats.” I was down to about, oh I think about, oh, ninety-five pounds.

McIntosh: Jeepers.

Lucas: Yeah. My thirty, thirty-two; no, my thirty, twenty-eight waist pants normally, were too big for me. But nobody noticed it, you know what I mean? You don’t notice it.

McIntosh: So they send you home from there?

Lucas: No, I went to England, and I was in Oxford, England, and I was there, and I had surgery. I had gangrene—

McIntosh: Oh, really.

Lucas: And they kept me there, and I remember one day, he was talkin' about Pavlov's (??) dog and how you can react. One of the famous things the doctor was doing, he was from St. Louis. His name was Samuel Froines (??). He was a captain. He was a rectal surgeon, and I was the only casualty from the war, wounded in the ward, in England, Oxford. And the rest were all there with perianal cysts and hemorrhoids, you know, these were Air Force guys [both laugh]. And of course—

McIntosh: Sittin' in an airplane.

Lucas: I used to tease them about getting Purple Hearts [both laugh]. And why didn't they get Flying Crosses. And that's where the doctor would come in, and they'd have these hemorrhoids, and they'd have to give them massages, you know [laughs], the treatment. And these guys would, you know, bite the bullet, but they'd come in with me, and they'd roll me over, and he'd take a—I can still see him taking that clamp and a big piece of gauze, and he'd dip it in something, and he'd just go in there, and my leg was laid open. My whole side from the back of my knee up was all laid open. The nurse, I didn't know it, but the nurse showed me with a mirror one day and held it up, and I could see the bone. That bone was brown. It had turned brown like this table, you know. I said, "It's all brown." She said, "Oh don't worry. When they close it up it will turn white again" [laughs]. But he'd just go in there and scrub that.

McIntosh: He was gettin' rid of the gangrene.

Lucas: I don't know why—then he put silver nitrate or something on it and scrub it and get it bleedin', you know what I mean?

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: But I'd hear that cart in the morning with the bottles rattling, and I'd just break out in a sweat, just break out. Just automatically I'd be ringing wet. By the time they got there my sweat with my—it's funny how the body reacts to that. And that was worse than getting shot.

McIntosh: Yeah, they still hurt from that.

Lucas: And when you get shot you don't feel it. I learned that early. Don't worry about getting shot because you won't feel it because your body reacts wonderfully. It gives you that immunity, you know what I mean. But it don't ask for long. But then they shipped me back to Halloran Hospital out in New York. Spent about a month there. And I remember,

this was in the winter. It must have been in January, February, in the winter, and they had me out in crutches, and I was out in the yard walking along getting some fresh air, and a damn airplane went over, and the next thing I knew I was flat in the snow [laughs], and they— “What are you doing? You fall?” [laughs] I said, “No.”

McIntosh: Automatic.

Lucas: Yeah, anyway, then they sent me too—I was there, oh, maybe a month, then they sent me to Clinton, Iowa. They had a big VA hospital there. And I was there, oh, maybe a month in rehabilitation. I was still on crutches in there. I had—I still got the medical report at home that’s pretty tattered. It says severe leg wound. There is nothing with the bone at all. But almost all of the muscles that lift your leg are gone. For example, I stand up, I can’t lift my leg up.

McIntosh: You get up on the other leg.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. But I have compensated. I’ve been real lucky with the muscles up here. If I don’t, I notice when I don’t work on them, I’ll trip. I forget to lift my foot. A crack in the sidewalk, you know. And I get pain in it, but I’ve had it for forty years, you know. You get used to it.

McIntosh: Did they give you a disability for that?

Lucas: Yeah, had 100 percent.

McIntosh: Hundred percent. So then they discharged you—

Lucas: No, they sent me from there—

McIntosh: Oh, Lord!

Lucas: I went out to Camp Carson, Colorado. What’s that, Broadmoor Hotel? A couple of movie stars were there, and I was out there in rehabilitation. They kept sending me home on furloughs, and my mother [laughs] got sick and tired of me being around [both laugh]. Then they sent me down to Miami Beach. I was down in Miami Beach. They sent me down in August in Miami Beach. I was there a week, and I went in and said, “Send me back to duty.” Miami Beach in August, the hotels were not air conditioned. You couldn’t run on the beach. The sand would burn your feet. The sand fleas would eat you up. And a GI on eighteen dollars, or was it twenty-one dollars a month? You don’t live very high on Miami Beach.

McIntosh: Of course, you were a sergeant by then.

Lucas: Yeah, but you don't live very high. So, I said, "I want to go back to duty." And they said, "Oh, well you go home for thirty days [laughs] and think about it." So I came back, thirty days I came back, and I said, "I want to go." So they sent me to Fort Benning [Georgia], back to duty.

McIntosh: Were you ready for full duty then?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah, I was full duty. I went back and went back into jumping [laughs]. They put me back into jumping. So anyhow, I was at Fort Benning, and one day we went out on our jump, and I came in wrong. You know, like I never did learn to turn the damn parachute. Oh, what we were doing [laughs], we were doing some war bond tours, too. One of them we went up to Washington, D.C., and we landed there, and we stayed overnight. And we were supposed to go up to New York. There was an airfield, a big air base at New York and I—Hempstead or something like that. They were prepared for an attack, you know, in their training, and they were supposed to defend and secure the base. So on a Sunday morning, or that night, Sunday morning we were supposed to fly up and make a drop up there at Hempstead. My to-be brother-in-law was stationed there in the Air Force, and my wife's sister was there at the base. But, the airplanes were taking off. We were in the airplane. We didn't carry combat stuff or anything. We were just jumping. We were taking off from—we stayed at the WAVES Barracks B at the top of the Potomac [River]. There weren't any WAVES there, but they gave up their barracks for us. So, we were taking off, and we were fooling around in the airplane. We didn't have seat belts or anything. And we had our parachutes on, like the sailor wears his life preserver. The pilot took off, and he was turning over Potomac Park and he turned, and the motor went "put, put, put, put", and six of us went out [laughs] of the plane [both laugh]. I landed in the Potomac River, wet and dirty, you know. The plane just circled, had to come back, and land and round us up.

McIntosh: You didn't wait for any discussion?

Lucas: None of us did. It scared the other guys, you know, it kept them from going, the crew chief of the airplane. We were just gone, out of that plane. We were low, you know, about 500 feet.

McIntosh: Right, but you knew what to do.

Lucas: Sunday morning about 7:00, [McIntosh laughs] here we are. So we go back, and they get us out of the river, and they wring our clothes out

and put us back in a plane [both laugh]. And so we took off. I think we had three planes with us, and they flew up there. It was Sunday morning, and I can see we—came in over the water. It was like—you lead the plane over water. You know, water is scary for a paratrooper.

McIntosh: Right, you told me that.

Lucas: And out we went. My chute opened, you know, I checked my canopy, I looked down, and I'm over Hempstead [laughs], Sunday morning. And I'm coming down, and I'm looking, where the hell am I going to go? There are telephone wires, and houses, and cars and everything else. So I ended up going—I saw this greenhouse roof coming up. I didn't know what it was. It was an all glass building. And when I came up I took my feet, and I kicked, and I went through the greenhouse roof. People were coming out of church and they were comin' down. They missed the [inaudible] [laughs].

McIntosh: How far were they away from the drop zone?

Lucas: Oh, not too far. Some of them, one guy, when he hit the drop zone, but he landed in a big pile of manure. They had a pile about—must have been about—

McIntosh: This wonderful demonstration.

Lucas: Yeah, he went right into it. Anyhow, people in the community were all impressed. The Air Corps had their airborne invaded.

McIntosh: Right. You missed the—

Lucas: I didn't get a cut on me or anything—

McIntosh: Amazing.

Lucas: Like that, you know. But then we went back, flew back down. They got us rounded up, and we had a night there at the air base, and they had a little thing for us. And we went back down to Fort Benning. And then, oh, I was doing stuff with mail and public information, you know, bulletin boards, and stuff. And we'd go to Atlanta once in a while. Nothing that really—that's when they were counting points, and I had about ninety-five points, and they were down to seventy, and I was still there, and I wanted to know why that pathfinder fell within that rate doc (??). They had certain ones like radar, MOS [Military Occupational Specialty]. They kept me there. So we made a jump one night—

McIntosh: You mean a training jump?

Lucas: Yeah, a training jump, and I hurt my leg. It hurt, and it didn't get any better, and so I went over to sick call one day, and this was my left leg. And the guy said, the medic said, "We better send you up to the hospital to get some x-rays." So I got to the hospital, and some doctor in there who checked me out, and he says, "You better stay here a few days." So he put me in a ward. Sent me down for some therapy. And I could get up and hobble around, you know what I mean, not too bad. I wasn't complainin.' I figured I'd be goin' back. One day this major came through, and he was airborne. He put some time in the air, but he had a pair of wings, and he must have been a surgeon or something. And he came up to my bed, and we started talking, and he said, "When are you going home?" And I said, "I don't know." I said, "I got ninety some points." He said, "Aw, this is no place for you." He said, "We'll get you out of here." I said, "Hey, thanks." About two days later a nurse came in and said, "Tomorrow morning you gotta go before a board." And I said, "What board?" I they said, "You gotta go before the board." So, I walked in this room you know, and I couldn't walk. She said, "Take the wheelchair." They pushed me down in a wheelchair and pushed me in and called my name, and he was sitting there, and he started telling about my wound and everything. I just sat there. And he said, Well [inaudible], does your leg hurt?" I said, "Yeah, it hurts." And he says, "Well, we'll have the papers done. You should be on your way home by the end of the week."

McIntosh: Huh! Good.

Lucas: And the major after a while came down, and he said, "Well," he said, "I'm going to get every one of you guys out here [laughs]." So, I don't know what he said or what he wrote up, but he got me out of there.

McIntosh: That's wonderful.

Lucas: Yeah. So, I went home. I came home in February. Laying around, you know, after that idleness I had 100 percent disability. I was waiting for school to start. I went down to apply for a job at USAFI [United States Armed Forces Institute, Madison, WI] as a file clerk, just somethin' to keep me busy and my mother tired of having me around the house. I worked there till school started about a month, a month and a half. Then I got a letter from the government sayin' that since they showed that I'm working I'm no longer 100 percent disabled. So, they cut it to eighty-five percent. And that was the first dumb decision I [laughs]—and I signed up for school, and I was on the GI Bill here, a disabled veteran, so I was getting, oh, a couple hundred dollars a month. And my father was in Europe, and my mother was living in Milwaukee. She went back to Milwaukee. That's where all of our relatives were.

McIntosh: I see.

Lucas: I only put a year at West [High School, Madison, WI], you know, when my father was [inaudible]. So I lived with the Van Kleecks. Out Westmorland 'cause they lived just about across the street when we were out there. "Dutchy" and I were real close friends. Speaking of "Dutchy," he was in Namur, Belgium.

McIntosh: That's where he got killed?

Lucas: Yeah, 'cause he was in the medics. See, he went in the medics. He was in Namur, and my dad was in Liege [Belgium]. And he went up to see "Dutchy." He found out where he was. And when he got there he found the company commander, and he asked for "Dutchy," and he said, "You're a day late. He was killed yesterday." A V2 bomb exploded.

McIntosh: Oh, really?

Lucas: He was on a railroad train, you know, carrying medical trains, and he was killed. It hit the railroad yard.

McIntosh: With a V2?

Lucas: Yeah. But, my dad went to the cemetery. He took some pictures of the grave and—

McIntosh: Brought 'em back.

Lucas: Yeah. But I lived with the Van Kleecks, oh, until my dad got back at the end of '46. He went all the way up into Germany with the 16th Army, I think. And he ended up as a briefing officer for a general with a French name. You know, Americans, they had a French name. Then I stayed in school and went right back to school and went through and finished my BS. Anyhow, in those days you could go to summer school, you know.

McIntosh: I know.

Lucas: And so—

McIntosh: Year round.

Lucas: I went the year round. I probably shouldn't have, but I wanted to get out. You know, you can't catch up, but I wanted to get out. So, I went

through and got my BS degree, and then I went on, and I got my masters. And I went through my masters in I think—

McIntosh: In what? In business?

Lucas: No, no, it was school of social work. I am a psychiatric social worker, professionally trained. And I was going to ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps], you know.

McIntosh: Oh, you stayed with that, ROTC?

Lucas: Yeah, oh, I had a job, but—

McIntosh: Sure. This is a side venture.

Lucas: I started off by giving off—I went down and handled drill, Saturday drills in the morning, and so, I was like the drill instructor every Saturday morning from 8:00 until 11:00. And then I had a job every Saturday, I did this in the afternoon, cleaning the commandant's office. I got seventy-five dollars a month for that. So I'd go in and dust, wax the floor, wash the floor, wax every Saturday morning. Sometimes I'd go down Sunday, but I'd finish up, and I graduated, and I got a job in Milwaukee as a parole officer. Got married in '46. And my first job as a parole officer I lost seventy-five dollars a month in paycheck [laughs]. I was making more money going to school than on the jobs. I worked for my father-in-law for awhile when I was in graduate school. He owned a Firestone Tire store, and that was the time when they were recapping tires. He had his own recapping place so I'd go over there and work in the recap place and take the old rubber off the tire and all that dirty hot work. And I worked at Madison Gas and Electric in the summer and in the fall, part-time, down in the boiler room where they raked those hot coals out of the oil pressure boilers, they gotta pass through a grill. I stood there with a sledgehammer breaking those hot coals up. Kept me out of trouble. But I enjoyed the work in Milwaukee. I was down there until 1951. My wife was pregnant. I got a notice one day from the Army saying, "Lieutenant, you have been selected to—"

McIntosh: Lieutenant?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: How did you do become a lieutenant?

Lucas: Oh, I was—

McIntosh: Oh, through the ROTC?

Lucas: Yeah, I forgot about it, you know.

McIntosh: Sure.

Lucas: He said, “You have been selected to do duty for your country. Come in for a physical.” And my wife was about eight months pregnant. So, I went in for a physical, and they said, “Oh, you’re in good health.” I said, “Look at my leg.” He said, “Oh, that’s great” [both laugh]

McIntosh: [laughs] “Looks pretty to us.”

Lucas: Gave me about ten days to report to Fort Riley, Kansas.

McIntosh: What made you want to go back in the service?

Lucas: I didn’t want to go back.

McIntosh: Oh.

Lucas: I was ordered back. I was a Reserve officer.

McIntosh: Oh, you were Active Reserve?

Lucas: No, I was Inactive Reserve. If I had been Active, I never would have gone.

McIntosh: I don’t understand. That confuses me.

Lucas: No, what they did was, if you were part of an organization, they wouldn’t touch you because—

McIntosh: They’d take the organization.

Lucas: They’d take the organization. So, they went around and took all these loose ones [laughs] who had no home, you know [both laugh].

McIntosh: And they had no option?

Lucas: No, no option. They called me back then.

McIntosh: In ten days?

Lucas: Yeah. Gave me ten days.

McIntosh: Wonderful.

Lucas: Yeah. Well, part of that ten days, we had gone on vacation, and my neighbor in Milwaukee said, “Oh, when you were gone—

McIntosh: “There was a letter” [laughs].

Lucas: “That came for you, and I signed for it.” And she thought she really did us a wonderful job, and I opened it up, and [both laugh] I said—

McIntosh: Turned green (??).

Lucas: Yeah, and she, “Oh, I’m so sorry.” So that used up some, but I just went in, and we didn’t have a lot there. I called the 5th Army down there, and I said, “Hey, I got a house full of furniture and my wife.” And they gave me a number to call, and the moving company came and took the furniture, and my wife went back to live with—

McIntosh: The Korean War hadn’t started yet?

Lucas: Oh yeah, it was goin’ in ‘51.

McIntosh: Oh, ‘51, all right.

Lucas: And went with her parents, you know, and I went temporarily went into a rooming house in Milwaukee and finished up my work. I had to go down to Milwaukee for the physical, and she was pregnant, and so she was with her mother. And we had to get the medical bills out of the hospital down there in Milwaukee so she could take ‘em back and Madison would have ‘em. So anyhow, I passed the physical, and I went down to Chicago. She went with me, and we spent a night in Chicago, and I got on a plane and went to Camp Stoneman in [Pittsburg] California. They briefed you—I mean they—you go in, you make out a will, power of attorney, you know what I mean, and they turn you loose. Every morning they’d have a list of people who are on flight for shipping out. I sent all my clothes home. I didn’t have any uniforms. I bought some uniforms. I learned enough from my enlisted duty. I went over to the enlisted men’s, you know, quartermaster, and I bought my khakis, and I bought my shoes [laughs].

McIntosh: They’re cheaper.

Lucas: Oh sure, a lot cheaper. [laughs] And if you can’t do it, you can always find a noncom there, and they’ll do it for you. I never bought anything at the officers’. So anyway, I got what I needed.

McIntosh: And you were a second lieutenant?

Lucas: Yeah, second lieutenant.

McIntosh: And what was your specialty now?

Lucas: Infantry officer.

McIntosh: Just infantry?

Lucas: Tec [technical sergeant] 4-5, you know.

McIntosh: Yeah. No more airborne?

Lucas: No, unh-uh.

McIntosh: Okay.

Lucas: Well, anyhow I had wings, you know, and combat infantry badge, you know, and—

McIntosh: Yeah, well, you earned all that.

Lucas: Yeah, and I wore my—

McIntosh: And your three purple hearts.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. So anyhow, I get there and go over to Camp Stoneman, and I ran into a fellow from—in Chicago they were in the hotel, Bud Loetz (??), from down in Dubuque [Iowa]. So we sort of buddied around together. I said, “Well, we’ll go, we’ll have some time in San Francisco.” When we went into the town of San Francisco, I gotta go back to England again. When I was in the hospital in Rochford, England, in a ward there was a nurse there whose name was Dunn, Eleanor Dunn. We used to call her, “Dynamite Dunn,” a second lieutenant, and she took care of me a lot. Somehow my mother kept contact. My mother kept contact with all these people.

McIntosh: [laughs] Everybody in the eastern European Theater.

Lucas: Yeah, and they wrote back and forth, and I was out. She went down to Texas, but she had a friend, another nurse who did private—her name was Billie. I can’t think of her last name. My mother invited them to Madison. Now, this was about a year and a half after I am out, and I’m an agent. No, I was in school yet. To Madison in the summer, so they kind of spent the week on my mother, and they’d take her to New

Glarus and everything and her friend, Billie. Well, so that's that. So, anyhow Billie was in San Francisco. So we go to San Francisco, I call the nursing directory for private nursing. "Oh yeah, Billie's here." I got a phone number, and I call her, and she said, "Oh, I'll meet you at the hotel." We were at the Drake Hotel. She came down and we went to a place called Julians, a beautiful restaurant, and we had a nice supper. And we went up to the Top of the Mark [Mark Hopkins Hotel], and things like that. And we went back to camp. Well, the next day, our name wasn't on it, so back to San Francisco we go. But this time we go up to the Top of the Mark, and I am sitting in the Top of the Mark in the afternoon about 2:00, and this guy walks in and sits at the bar, and he looks familiar as hell to me, and I went up, and I said, "Aren't you from Madison?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Didn't you go to West High?" He said, "Yeah." It's our classmate who is the actor in England.

McIntosh: Don Fellows?

Lucas: Don Fellows.

McIntosh: I talk to him about once a month on the phone.

Lucas: Yeah, it was Don Fellows.

McIntosh: He'll be here this summer.

Lucas: Well, I don't know, I tried to catch him at the last reunion, but I don't think he remembers. He was playin' in *Mr. Roberts*.

[End of Tape 3, Side A]

Lucas: So we were sitting there, see [McIntosh laughs], Bud Loetz (??) and I and Fellows in the Top of the Mark. And he said, "Are you guys going to be around?" And I said, "Yeah, but we've gotta be back to camp, you know, we gotta check in, and then you haul out." He said, "Well, come to a party. I'm meeting some friends here." I said, "Well, that's a kind invitation." "Well," I said, "yeah, it sounds good." And who should walk in? His friend was Henry Fonda.

McIntosh: Great.

Lucas: Yeah, and so we left, and we got back to camp and you know who's on that list [both laugh]. So, I never saw him again. I haven't seen him since that day.

McIntosh: Yeah, I see him often. I was just there last spring—

Lucas: Yeah. Where?

McIntosh: In England.

Lucas: Oh, yeah.

McIntosh: We went and stayed with him.

Lucas: But I tried to catch him that day he was at the—, and I was up in Michigan, and I drove all the way back, but I missed him. He left.

McIntosh: He'll be here in August.

Lucas: Well, you talk to him. I don't think he'll remember that, but he was playing, I think it was in March? April? I don't know. But anyhow, we got on the plane and right into Tokyo. Oh, and before, when I got out to Camp Stoneman I wrote a letter to Colonel Matthews who was the ROTC. And Colonel Matthews, when [Gen. Omar] Bradley got chief of staff, he pulled him out because Matthews was with Bradley, his staff, in the South Pacific, and so he pulled him out, and he went—

McIntosh: Bradley wasn't in the South Pacific.

Lucas: Wasn't he—

McIntosh: He was in Europe.

Lucas: Who was it?

McIntosh: MacArthur you mean?

Lucas: No, it wasn't MacArthur. Thought it was Bradley. But he knew Bradley from someplace. But he pulled him, and he went out. So I wrote to him, and I said I am going airborne. I said I'd like to get in the airborne unit. I figured if I was going to get shot at I was going to get a hundred dollars a month more [laughs]. He said—no, I wrote to him before Stoneman. I think I wrote to him when I got my orders because before I went to Stoneman I got a letter from him saying, "When you get to Tokyo, you report to, "—he named the organization, [inaudible] or somethin', a reassignment or something in Tokyo. We got the flight. We flew to Japan and landed in Haneda [now Tokyo International Airport]and took us off at Haneda. On the way over we flew to Hawaii, and on the way over from Hawaii in the middle of the night everyone was sleeping on this Pan Am, a big Pan Am, and I look out the window and I see the motor's on fire [laughs]. I had no parachute [laughs], you know. I felt insecure so I walk up, everybody's sleeping, and I knock

on the door, [McIntosh laughs] and I said to the pilot, I said, “You’ve got a fire, I think. I think you got a fire on that motor back there.” And they start checking, and they get on the radio, and we ended up going into Guam. So we landed in Guam at 2:00 in the morning. I never was in the South Pacific, but I tell you, 2:00 in the morning, they said “You go in that Quonset hut, and you can get some water or something.” I went up to the Quonset hut, and the guys were going in, and I put my hand—I damn near got third degree burns, that Quonset hut was that hot. So, we were there, I don’t know how long, but anyhow, we took off and we came into Tokyo, or we came into Japan. I slept—so tired (??). I went up and talked to them. They got a little friendlier with me, and they said, “Oh, you can sit here.” So I walk up, and they said, “Come on in. I want show you something.” And we were flying along, and we looked up, and there’s Mount Fuji comin’—and I had a camera, and I took, I still got the slides, color slides. That’s my first view of Mount Fuji. Now, my Japanese friends are all impressed by that. I got more friends in Japan than I have here. So anyhow, we landed at Haneda, yeah, that’s the old one. Narita’s the new one. They gave us box lunches. We had rifles. We had our rifles and they took us down to Yokohama which I didn’t know what it was, and they put us on a boat. Took us over to Korea, it was at night. In the morning they got us up, and gave us some coffee, and they said, “Lock and load.”

McIntosh: Here we go.

Lucas: And off we went.

McIntosh: Where did you go from Pusan?

Lucas: Well, they were, Pusan they were, down—their tails were in the water down in Pusan when we got there. They were fighting in Taegu [South Korea]. Taegu, yeah we were in Taegu.

McIntosh: Yeah, you were further north.

Lucas: And I was assigned to the 187th Regimental Combat Team, Parachute Unit. I was an infantry officer, 7-7-4-5.

McIntosh: What was the name of that regiment?

Lucas: 187th Regimental Combat Team. We fought there.

McIntosh: Was the fighting different?

Lucas: Not much. The bullets sound the same. You went to (??) smell the cordite [smokeless explosive powder].

McIntosh: You weren't struck by any difference?

Lucas: But, you know, six years went by, and I felt, you know, I haven't jumped out of an airplane. I haven't seen a rifle or anything. I forgot to mention, when I got called back I went down to Fort Benning Georgia for a week of officer refresher course (??). Then we went from there to Stoneman.

McIntosh: So, how many men were you in charge of now?

Lucas: I was a platoon leader.

McIntosh: Platoon leader.

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: As a captain?

Lucas: A second lieutenant.

McIntosh: Second lieutenant. And these guys were green troops who'd never been in combat?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: Oh, I'm sure they looked to you as the savior.

Lucas: Well, I'll tell you a story. When I was a parole officer I had a lot of juveniles. These kids would run away, and most of the juveniles were for car theft. They didn't steal car for stealing. They'd just joy ride, run out of gas, and they'd leave it. Most of them were up for truancy. We had a truancy law, and there were two kids on the south side of Milwaukee, two Polish kids. The police [inaudible]. Anyhow, that's the way I closed out my file. So I get off the boat and report to the commanding officer at Taegu, you know [laughs], and I walk into the CP [command post] and the CQ [Charge of Quarters] sitting there is one of these parolees [laughs] that I had the police pick up [both laugh].

McIntosh: You told him, "I finally found you"?

Lucas: He looked at me, I said, it didn't dawn on me, I said, "Will you tell the captain that Lieutenant Lucas is here reporting." And the kid got up, and he went, and I thought he went for the captain. And I am waiting there [both laugh], and the captain comes out, and he says, "Can anyone [inaudible]?" I told him who I was, and I didn't pay much

attention. So he called me in, sat down, and gave me assignment. When I came out and this kid is there and the other one is with him, both of them. They both had joined the Army together. And they said, “Gee, Mr. Lucas, I mean Lieutenant, we didn’t think the State [of Wisconsin] would send you in the Army to get us” [both laugh]. I said, “They didn’t send me here to get you” [both laugh]. So I didn’t say anything. I knew how it worked with the military. If they found out these kids had a police record, even juvenile for school truancy, they’d kick ‘em out. So, I said, “Just go back to work.” So I checked their records, and they had good records. One was a PFC, both PFCs. When I had time I wrote a letter back sayin’—and they got a big kick out of it here. I said, “I followed your two parolees [both laugh]. They’re with me in a foxhole in Korea.” And I suggested they give them an early release and clear their records. But I haven’t seen those kids either. I don’t know if they’re alive yet. But anyhow, we went up and fought up, and we made two combat jumps in Korea.

McIntosh: But you were in the stature of an (??) airborne, you said?

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Well, the combat team was a—

Lucas: Regimental Combat Team.

McIntosh: So that wasn’t assigned to either division at all?

Lucas: No, it was a combat team.

McIntosh: I see.

Lucas: I forgot what corps we were assigned to.

McIntosh: I see. So you made two jumps?

Lucas: I found it hard to get behind—get ahead of a battalion. You know what I mean? From anything up there, it was unimportant to me [laughs], you know.

McIntosh: Right. Now, you got responsibilities.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. I figured that when I can deal with them when you’re up at corps level, I said, second lieutenants or even a private don’t mean much. But anyhow, I—

McIntosh: How did the jumping go? Did it come back to you okay? Or was it a problem or what?

Lucas: I'll tell you, I think that—you asked me earlier about the first jump. I think this was really the hardest thing I ever did. Never had anything. No training. Recoilless rifle, I didn't know what the hell it was.

McIntosh: Right. Now you've got an entirely—

Lucas: And I'm in an airplane full of—you know, I'm jumpmaster, you know? I'm first to the door. That was the hardest thing I did.

McIntosh: Yeah. See, now you knew too much.

Lucas: And I'm married. My wife had the baby.

McIntosh: Right. So you got a lot more on your plate this time.

Lucas: Well, you see, when you're married you have other things on your mind. When you're in combat you can't have anything on your mind. You just can't.

McIntosh: You have to deal with—react, is that right?

Lucas: Yeah, yeah. You don't think, you know.

McIntosh: Tell me, how did the jumps go?

Lucas: Well, they're—going out of the airplane, everything's the same, but I was in the infantry, and then for the platoon leader, and I got a call one day to report to battalion. And I went to battalion. He said, "Hey, Lieutenant, we're transferring you." And I said, "Where to?" And they said, "You're going to the artillery unit." Where the hell is it? 760—I got it written down.

McIntosh: That's where you went—second after that night you were away from the combat team?

Lucas: Well, in the combat—they have a—

McIntosh: Oh, I see.

Lucas: Part of the team is an artillery battalion.

McIntosh: I see. Okay.

Lucas: Where in the hell is it? I had to go down into the basement and look at the letters to find out what it was.

McIntosh: Well, that's okay.

Lucas: But anyhow, I went to the combat team, and I reported in to 'em. There was an infantry officer at the battalion, and I said, "What the hell am I going over there for?" He said, "They've had high instances of casualties with the forward observers." I said, "Well, I'm an infantry officer."

McIntosh: Where was this conversation taking place?

Lucas: With the battalion. I said I wanted to know why—

McIntosh: When you got to Korea?

Lucas: Yeah. They said, "Report to battalion for reassignment." And I said, "Where am I going?" And he said, "You're going to be in the 764th or something or other Airborne." So this was the same one that [Camp] Mackall, you know, where they had the pack howitzers? Well, now they got 105s and 155s, and they're dropping three-quarter tons and all that stuff. So, you don't have to run around and look for trails or anything else. So I said, "Well, why in the hell am I over there? I am an infantry officer." He said, "Oh, you were a gunner [laughs] on a six inch gunner."

McIntosh: You said that was a hundred years ago [laughs].

Lucas: Yeah [both laugh], 1942.

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: You know I learned—

McIntosh: [both laugh] The logic—

Lucas: And you get that common, you say, "Oh shit." [laughs].

McIntosh: Right. Exactly.

Lucas: So I go up and report, and they say, "Yeah, they're giving commissions to the sergeants on the line." You know, they are running out of forward observers. I said, "Who the hell is the colonel here?" And they told me his name, and I said, "That sounds familiar." I can't think of his name. I want to say Callahan. I think they called him "Squeaky

Callahan” or something. But, he had a philosophy in Europe, I wasn’t with him, that the forward observer should be up front of the infantry and the last to leave the hill and the first one on the top. And he was the one, he reported to someplace in England that was one of our—he reported, he came in by parachute [laughs]. He came down into the headquarters by parachute, one of those guys. Skinny, tall skinny fellow. But you’d be up on the frontline, and he’d come up, and you’d see somebody coming, and he’d crawl right in the hole with you. But he believed that forward observers—

McIntosh: Had to be in forward, right.

Lucas: With every assault that forward observer was up front. And that’s why they were losing the casualties, they had the casualties. So there I was.

McIntosh: That’s a wonderful job.

Lucas: Second lieutenant, you didn’t have to do that all of the time [laughs]. You know, you had two platoons in front and one in reserve sometimes. They’re sitting up there. I reported up to the OP [observation post] post. I had a radio operator and a jeep driver and a jeep, you know. And I’d crawl up the hill, and the sergeant’s there. He’s got an M10 plotting board. The only time I saw an M10 plotting board was that week down in Fort Benning, Georgia [laughs]. We had a session on M10—

McIntosh: What’s M10 mean? I don’t understand—

Lucas: Well, that’s the model number. M10 plotting board. All new fire arrangements they do by azimuth. So anyhow, we sit there for five days, and it was fortunate it was real quiet. I got instructions and learned the M10 and the fire missions and everything else. I think I was there on the line, I think I was there—after six months I was the oldest forward observer in the whole damn battalion.

McIntosh: Were you moving at this time?

Lucas: Yeah—

McIntosh: Back up north, you must have been.

Lucas: Yeah, and then we went back to reserve and off the line. We got replacements. And then we made the jump into Wonsan-ri, and they made another one before I got there.

McIntosh: What was the purpose of those jumps?

Lucas: Ah, the one up at—the one that was up by Pyonyang [capital city of North Korea]. That one there was when they were taking all of the prisoners back to North Korea. Somebody thought if we make a jump there we could cut them off and keep those prisoners from going, in the—we missed ‘em, and we took a lot of casualties, though. That was the second one that I was in. The other one was at Wonsan, I think. That’s where we—the craziest thing you ever saw, we made a parachute jump behind the lines and we marched laterally to the lines.

McIntosh: Jeezus.

Lucas: You know, I had never seen anything like that. Nothing, we didn’t see hardly anything, you know what I mean? But we did run into something, but all of that long march, we didn’t run into any real significant fighting.

McIntosh: You were fighting Chinese up there.

Lucas: Yeah, and Koreans. Oh, that was, it reminded me of the hills of Italy. There was a Rotary Club, we’d get these scholars over, and I had a young girl from Korea, she was getting her masters. She went back in May, and I was her counselor when they were here for probably two years or a year. And she says to me, “Well, you come and visit me.” And I said, “You’ll never see me in Korea.”

McIntosh: No, I have no interest in ever going back there. There is nothing in the country that attracted me at all.

Lucas: Well, you know, it was like going back 100 years. You’d see the ox carts and the A frames and—

McIntosh: Smell bad, smell bad. I didn’t like any part of it.

Lucas: And kimchi. Somebody the other day said something to me, I stopped into an oriental shop out here. I could buy some Japanese food. The woman, “We got some kimchi.” I told her I was in Korea. I said I had this bad smell all the time, and I thought it was decaying corpses, and [McIntosh laughs] I found out—no, it was kimchi.

McIntosh: Cabbage juice.

Lucas: They had these pots out in their backyard, you know—

McIntosh: That cabbage was so bad. We had patients aboard the hospital ship, Korean patients. Nobody wanted them on their ward. All the other

patients on that ward, they would scream and holler, “I can’t stand it. Get me out of here.” This one guy could just drive everybody crazy.

Lucas: And you get that reaction when you eat cabbage [laughs]. But I said, “You’ll never see me.” But those mountains were the coldest places in the world. They were worse than Italy, you know, those hills.

McIntosh: I know. Were the soldiers different, the Chinese soldiers?

Lucas: No.

McIntosh: Were they different, the Chinese?

Lucas: Oh, they’re crazy. They all had a will to die, I guess.

McIntosh: I talked to a guy who was a demolitions guy, and he said the Chinese, they didn’t use mine detectors. They just run a platoon ahead of them, and that cleared out any mines, and then they’d run the soldiers after them.

Lucas: Well, in Europe, you know, it was in Normandy, it was sort of funny. When we were fighting we’d come to a road, and there would be some of these engineers out there, probing. We’d go down, and we’d sit—always cut off these nylon lanyards from parachutes. You’d roll it up, all that someday you’d need it. And we’d go down—they’d have them uncovered. We’d put string on one and one on the other and zoom! [both laugh] They’d all go off, and away we’d go. These guys would stand there looking at us [both laugh]. We could pull ‘em out by hand, but we did it a helluva lot faster, you know what I mean [both laugh]. And you got to do it right because if the first one blows it will break your string, see, so you start on the other end and you work back this way. I remember we were in Holland. We were fighting in Nijmegen one night, it was a firefight. And I, another guy and I, we got in fire. We looked for cover, and I thought there was a big rock up the side of the street, and I got behind the damn rock, and I’m there, and we’re firing, and the bullets were going around. All of the sudden this guy comes running up, and he said, “Move over, move over.” And I look over, and this guy’s got a star on his shoulder, and it’s General Gavin [both laugh].

McIntosh: Your leader.

Lucas: Yeah, and here we’re behind it, and this buddy, I don’t know who it was, he said, “Jesus Christ, let’s get out of here.” I said, “Why?” He said, “Look.” And they were hiding behind piles of land mines that some of the engineers—

McIntosh: Oh, my God.

Lucas: German land mines that they'd taken out. We were right behind 'em [both laugh], and Gavin says, "I'm going," and that's the last I ever saw of him. He took off. They were hiding behind all of these land mines, you know, but we put the string on them, any wire or anything, it's called commo wire, and we'd just pull them. The only problem was if they had a booby trap underneath, otherwise you could just pick them up.

McIntosh: Sure.

Lucas: Unscrew the fuse, but if there was one underneath then we just—if they came out, fine. So these engineers would sit and look at these crazy airborne guys [laughs].

McIntosh: Did you undergo any of charges of the Chinese with the trumpets and all that?

Lucas: Oh yeah, all the time.

McIntosh: That's what the way they started their attack, was with trumpets?

Lucas: Oh yeah, trumpets, whistles—

McIntosh: Whistles, too?

Lucas: Some of them never had guns. Some of them never had guns in their hands. You'd go out—

McIntosh: You mean they'd put a hundred men in a row and just charge—

Lucas: And they had depth to them. Not the row. I never worried about a row. It didn't bother me, but when I saw depth—

McIntosh: Ten deep.

Lucas: Yeah, it's like your defenses. If you put up one line on a—you're very vulnerable. When I had one squad on the line I worried about 'em. But I told you before about the proximity fuses, you know, airborne. When I climbed those mountains, and I said to myself, "Tom, you don't want to come up these damn things a second time because the probability of you making it in a firefight up to the top is pretty poor." So, your odds might be better staying here. I never took a lot of statistics, but those things go through your mind.

McIntosh: You bet.

Lucas: Where is the least risk? So, when I got on these hills I'd report to where I was assigned to the battalion, and I'd go talk to the battalion commander. I said, "I want you to have the men splinter proof the top of their holes." And he said, "Why?" And I said, "I don't like climbing these hills." And he said, "I don't either." I said, "Cause I'll call in proximity fuses." You know what I mean?

McIntosh: Yeah, that's right. They'll sprinkle down on you.

Lucas: Yup, and I said—and so he did. He sent out the order, "Cover your holes." We used it in rock, and we tunneled, you know, went in. And on three occasions I called her in. They were within—when we got out from the holes they were amongst the holes in some hand to hand fighting. You could walk 150 yards stepping on bodies without touching the ground.

McIntosh: Geeze.

Lucas: We'd just walk—Chinese, Koreans, that time I really didn't make—discriminate, you know what I mean? But you'd have to go out after. There would be a lot of wounded and just walk around shootin' 'em, you know what I mean?

McIntosh: Because you couldn't be sure there's—

Lucas: Well, a lot of 'em weren't—they weren't dead, and you wanted to make sure they were dead because—

McIntosh: You mean they purposely just lay down and wait till you passed over them?

Lucas: Well, I don't think so. I think they were all wounded or dead, but a lot of them weren't dead. They were wounded, and you didn't—so all night this come. The whistles would blow—

McIntosh: You didn't bother with any prisoners then?

Lucas: I don't think they'd let you.

McIntosh: They normally don't?

Lucas: We always thought they might have been doped up, but I don't know. But they would just come screaming up. One would fall, and the other one pick up a gun. Some of 'em didn't have any guns.

McIntosh: Boy, it's hard to defend if you don't have enough firepower.

Lucas: Yeah. But that, those proximity fuses, we had some observation planes shot down from those proximity fuses.

McIntosh: Your own?

Lucas: Yeah. In a heavy cloud, a dense cloud would turn them on, too, set them off. You know, they were way up. They weren't necessarily from our guns.

McIntosh: I see.

Lucas: But other guns would set them off. These would go off. Another one that I found real effective was phosphorous weapons. You know, white phosphorous, real nasty.

McIntosh: I had a real problem with those, with the guys who came aboard who had been burned with that phosphor. I couldn't keep those wounds—I couldn't get all of that stuff out of there. The wounds were so burned and so deep.

Lucas: Go right through you.

McIntosh: Those were the worst wounds I saw, and I saw every kind of wound there was when I was there. But those were absolutely the worst I've ever seen.

Lucas: Well, that was one of my favorites, but the only drawback was that you got the smoke, and you'd lose visibility.

McIntosh: The smoke would come back at you?

Lucas: Well—it'd go—it depends. It could obscure you, you know what I mean? They could use it as a defense mechanism to get movement.

McIntosh: Did you pick that particular bomb for any special reason?

Lucas: Well, it's a killer. It's just nasty. They're very powerful.

McIntosh: You mean you could hit more people with it?

Lucas: Yeah, it was just—

McIntosh: Use it as mortar shells?

Lucas: No, I used it firing 155s [howitzer, towed medium artillery gun].

McIntosh: 155, well, that's quite a distance.

Lucas: Yeah. I was forward observer at one time. A couple of times I tried to—I went to battalion, and I tried to say to 'em, "Let me coordinate," you know, rather than have somebody up here. They didn't have a forward observer. They had their 60s [60 mm artillery] back here and their 80s [80 mm artillery] would be behind the hill. And I said, "Well"—and they weren't too effective, you know what I mean? So I said, "Why don't you let me run some wires up, and I'll do yours with ours. Or else send your guy up to sit in the hole with us." And that would have given us some relief. But they'd rather let me fire. So it got—what I could do is—had better control of the 60s. I knew what they were doing and what I was—

McIntosh: You could call whatever you wanted—

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: Depending on the distance.

Lucas: Yeah. And you could use them in closer. You couldn't get those 155s in real close except through the proximity fuses. That's the closest we could get, but the 30s and the 60s you could drop them right down in. But they'd come right through that hail. They'd just keep coming. It wouldn't stop them till there weren't any of them left. They wouldn't turn around and run away.

McIntosh: No matter what was dropping on them?

Lucas: No, they wouldn't turn around.

McIntosh: Nothing seemed to scare them?

Lucas: No, they'd just keep coming.

McIntosh: That was different.

Lucas: Yeah.

McIntosh: I mean, the Germans were a little more reasonable about that.

Lucas: Yeah, they just keep coming. There were bodies, I tell ya. It wasn't bad in the wintertime because it'd get cold, but when it got warm [inaudible] the rats would be—

McIntosh: They didn't pick up their stuff? Their bodies?

Lucas: No, no.

McIntosh: Ignore 'em.

Lucas: No, no, we carried out a lot (??). Anyway, we did a lot of patrol work. Well, that was in the infantry I did more, but when I was forward observer, Christ, I couldn't go any further forward [laughs]. They really made—that guy really believed in forward observers. Forward. You know, the forward observers always used to be back a little bit, you know what I mean? But not with this outfit.

McIntosh: That was really dangerous. How the hell did you survive that?

Lucas: Well, I tell you, I thought about it for a long time, and I think it was my infantry training. I really—

McIntosh: You could take cover better?

Lucas: Well, you know, I don't know. I looked at things as an infantry. I think, mentally, I looked at things as an infantry officer rather than a forward observer, you know what I mean? And I reacted as an infantry, you know what I mean? These guys would stick their heads up—

McIntosh: And you were down.

Lucas: They'd hear "Whack, bang" or somethin'. They'd still be lookin' around, and they'd get right—the sniper would get them between the eyes. And I never reacted to that. Somebody would say to me, "What's that out there?" I'd say, "I don't know." And then they'd stick their head up, and then "Bang," and I've got a corpse in the hole with me. I really—and I think like covering the foxholes up, you know, I did that all the time, all the time. It would keep the damp weather out too, you know what I mean?

McIntosh: Yeah. You never were overrun?

Lucas: No, well we, I don't know what you mean by "overrun," but they penetrated our defenses, but we did fight with them hand to hand on

one occasion that I know of. But there weren't a lot. Our artillery and mortar fire cleaned them out pretty much.

McIntosh: Yeah. All right. So, how long were you in Korea?

Lucas: Well, let's see. Up at Wonsan-ri I got a nick from a piece of shrapnel, and they sent me back to a hospital in Tokyo [**End of Tape 3, Side B**]. While I was in the hospital in Tokyo my unit was moved back to Beppu, Japan because we took a lot of casualties.

McIntosh: Right.

Lucas: And I was in the hospital in Tokyo. I got hit up here. It went through my helmet, and it came out the other side.

McIntosh: It was under your skin.

Lucas: Well, a little more than under the skin.

McIntosh: Did it crease your skull?

Lucas: Yeah, you could see a hole in it. There's a hole there. They dug it out. I didn't even know I had it. The blood ran down, but I didn't know what it was like, you know, like that. One of my buddies said, "Gee, Lieutenant, what the hell's the matter? Why aren't you bleeding?" And I'm going like this. I couldn't find anything, and so I reached up to take my helmet off, and God, cut my hand.

McIntosh: The bullet was still there?

Lucas: No, it wasn't a bullet, a piece of shrapnel.

McIntosh: Ah, well, that was still there?

Lucas: Yeah, and it had gone through the steel helmet. It had gone through the liner, and into my head, and it was still there. So when I touched it, the sharp piece, I took my helmet off, and I went down, I walked down to the aid station. The guy said, "Oh, I don't know if you got any more in there." He said, "We better send you down to the next level of hospital." And they x-rayed it, and they said, "Well, we'll send you to Tokyo." And they said, "Well, you might be back in a couple of days." Well, then my unit moved out while I was there, and they moved down to, oh, I don't know where they hell they went, to Pusan or someplace, and they got on a boat, and they moved them over to Beppu, Japan. That's on the island of Kyushu. Beautiful little place, a little fishing village. I think it was the 26th Infantry Division was there in that camp,

Camp Chickamauga they called it. When the Korean War started it was one of the first units in Korea. So I joined them there with the artillery, you know, and it was down, and we had mountains. Down there in Japan it's sixty-five percent mountains, and we were out in an area they call a mori (??) area, and it's broad hills. And we'd go out on fire missions, you know, two or three days in that rainy season. You'd be wet for six weeks, you know. And I got a call one day to go to battalion, and I went up there, and they said, "Lieutenant, we've got a possible reassignment for you if you want it." And I said, "What's that?" And they said, "Well, you have a profession psychiatric social work [laughs]. That puts you eligible for assignment in a medical company." And they were up on the side of a mountain in a nice—it used to be a TB san [tuberculosis sanatorium] or something. I said, "Gee, the medics [laughs]." I said, "That sounds great." So I went up there, and I was executive officer [laughs] of a medical company.

McIntosh: A medical company?

Lucas: Yeah. I was the executive officer, and I was company commander for I think for three months. The company commander left, and they sent him home, and they didn't have anybody else. They had a major there, I don't know what he was, a surgeon, I 'spose.

McIntosh: You must have been a captain by this time?

Lucas: No, I was just a lieutenant.

McIntosh: Still a first lieutenant?

Lucas: Yeah, I got first lieutenant in Korea. I never proved I'd been on any duty. When I got my commission until I went to Korea [laughs].

McIntosh: They sort of missed a certain segment.

Lucas: Yeah. So anyhow, I never thought, you know, I went to ROTC to get the money, and I was working, you know. I enjoyed the drills and that, but—

McIntosh: So this helped to get you home?

Lucas: Well, one day they came down, and they said, "Your duty's up, and you're going home." They shipped me home in February. February is a bad month for me [laughs]. Everything happens to me in February [laughs]. You called me in February. My wife said, "What's that?" I told her you were calling. She said, "Well, how do you feel?" I said, "I

really don't need that." I said, "I've been called before." I said, "If Jim hadn't called I don't think I'd have gone down." I really don't.

McIntosh: Well, thank you. Okay, we're running out of steam.

Lucas: Okay.

McIntosh: Greatest interview of all. This is terrific. You experiences are so broad, I can't believe it. I don't of anyone who's had a variety of—

Lucas: Just don't call me [laughs] to be on TV.

McIntosh: Right. No, but it's incredible how much experience that you've had and survived, don't you think?

Lucas: I've been thinking off and on that I might go down to Janesville and make that 140th jump. But I sat down, and I talked myself out of it. I said, "You're a goddamn crazy fool" [laughs].

McIntosh: Good. Sure as hell you'd fall on that leg and break it.

Lucas: No, I'm in pretty good shape.

McIntosh: Is it?

Lucas: Yeah, pretty good shape. I've never had a broken bone in my life.

McIntosh: You weren't inspired to go out and jump on D-Day in England?

Lucas: No, I don't want to go back. Yeah, some of those guys, the 82nd Airborne Association, I get their book. I send them ten dollars a year when I get the book. First thing I do I look in the back and see who are dead. That's the first thing I do.

McIntosh: [laughs] Of course. I do that with the newspaper.

Lucas: Yeah, see how many friends you lost. I had a roommate. I had a bunkmate in England. His name is Tony Fierra [??]. And Tony and I went—he joined us before Holland, and we went into Holland together. And Tony and I used to go out on patrols together, and we sort of buddied around. I got a bulletin. They're having a reunion down in Kentucky, in Mitchell, Kentucky, or something like that. And I went through the advanced registration, and I think his name is there, Tony Fierra (??) He's from Boston. I am thinking about going down. Now, I have never—

McIntosh: Gone to any reunions? [End of Interview].