

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an  
Oral History Interview with  
SCOTT STEVENSON  
Infantry, Army, World War II  
2000

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**Stevenson, Scott.** Oral History Interview, 2000.

Master Copy: 1 video recording (ca. 37 min.); ½ inch, color.

User Copy: 1 audio cassette (ca. 37 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

**Abstract:**

Scott Stevenson, a Tomahawk (Wisconsin) veteran, discusses his World War II service with the 300th Infantry Regiment and later with the 1st Division in Europe. He talks about special service training at Fort Benning (Georgia) including courses in flying gliders, map reading, and assaulting pill boxes. As a member of a mortar crew, Stevenson comments on weapons techniques, carrying ammunition, and his role in charge of the mortar tube. Stevenson mentions training for the D-Day landing, coming ashore at Omaha Beach in the first wave, heavy enemy fire, and being hit in the face with shrapnel. He comments on moving through France, receiving severe injuries to his arm and his back, medical treatment by a hospital corpsman, and high casualty rates among officers. Stevenson was evacuated to a hospital ship and mentions treatment, return to the United States, discharge from service, and attending radio school using the GI Bill.

**Biographical Sketch:**

Scott Stevenson was born in Tomahawk (Wisconsin) in 1922 and served in the European Theater in World War II. Stevenson enlisted in the army infantry in 1942 and was trained on glider landings and was a member of the mortar crew. He was part of the first wave of D-Day and was severely injured while most of his company was killed. After D-Day, Stevenson was transported to England where he received treatment, and then back to the United States for further treatment. Stevenson used the GI Bill to attend radio school and owned his own shop in Tomahawk for over forty years. He was also an active member of the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) and VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars).

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2000  
Transcribed by Matthew Sorensen, 2010

## **Interview Transcript:**

McIntosh: Okay. We're off and running. Talking to Scott Stevenson. Where were you born, Scott?

Stevenson: I was born in Merrill, Wisconsin.

McIntosh: And when was that?

Stevenson: On July the 6th, '22.

McIntosh: Did I send you one these slips, by the way?

Stevenson: Yeah, you sent me a slip. I didn't fill much out there because I just— everything is on my discharge.

McIntosh: Right. This just saves me questions, that's all.

Stevenson: I didn't fill it out.

McIntosh: Okay. Well, we'll get to it. Okay. When did you enter the military service?

Stevenson: We signed up in July, and we entered in September.

McIntosh: Of what year?

Stevenson: Of '42.

McIntosh: '42. You were enlisted or did you volunteer?

Stevenson: We enlisted.

McIntosh: You enlisted. And what service did you enlist in?

Stevenson: We enlisted in the Cavalry, but we didn't make it there. They discontinued the Cavalry about that time, yes, so we got put in the infantry.

McIntosh: Right. And where did they send you first?

Stevenson: Camp Atterbury, Indiana for basic training.

McIntosh: All right. And that lasted eight weeks or twelve weeks?

Stevenson: About twelve weeks.

McIntosh: Twelve weeks. It's different with different—

Stevenson: Yes, and from there we went to Fort Benning, Georgia.

McIntosh: And in Fort Benning, you had more training there?

Stevenson: More training there.

McIntosh: What was involved there?

Stevenson: Well, we were training on gun gliders, and that was supposed to be our main objective, going in on gliders, but we never—but then on the stormy weather they switched us over to boats so we never got to use the gliders.

McIntosh: Tell me about that glider training. What did that consist of?

Stevenson: Well, that was just small teakwood gliders, and they pulled us off the ground with—I can't remember the name—

McIntosh: DC-3s anyways.

Stevenson: P-52's [?] I think. They pulled us off the ground, and we circled around for generally an hour, and then we landed.

McIntosh: How many were in that glider? Was that a Waco glider?

Stevenson: Yeah, thirteen. There were two types—one thirteen and one seventeen.

McIntosh: Yeah, those are Waco gliders.

Stevenson: Yeah, they were teakwood gliders. They were real—

McIntosh: Pretty slim stuff.

Stevenson: Yeah. [both laugh]

McIntosh: Jeepers creepers! Did you do any air jumping?

Stevenson: No, we jumped off the towers. That's as far as we got. We were supposed to make one jump, but we never got—the weather was bad so we never got to make our jump. We jumped off the 600 foot tower. That was—they pulled us up and leave us floating down—

McIntosh: That's the only jump you had then, was off the tower?

Stevenson: Off the tower, yeah.

McIntosh: And what was your unit?

Stevenson: We trained with the 300th Infantry. 300th Infantry was our unit in Georgia.

McIntosh: 300th, was that listed as Airborne or not?

Stevenson: No, that wasn't listed Airborne. That was Special Services.

McIntosh: What special training—besides learning to enjoy riding on that piece of plywood—did you get?

Stevenson: Well, our biggest work was with maps. We were expert in maps and hand grenades. That was our big thing. Our job was to blow up pillboxes.

McIntosh: It was intended that you would land behind the lines—

Stevenson: Behind the lines and come in from the back.

McIntosh: But you'd still be in uniform so you wouldn't be shot as a spy?

Stevenson: Yes, still be in uniform.

McIntosh: So that made a big difference, didn't it?

Stevenson: Yes, it did.

McIntosh: Because they could just line you up and shoot you without—

Stevenson: Shoot you without—

McIntosh: Yeah, any word if you were not in uniform.

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: So you were in a uniform and then you would plan to jump in a glider full or several glider fulls into Europe.

Stevenson: Several glider fulls. We were supposed to land close—I think one hedgerow behind the beach. That was our main objective. That's what they told us—

McIntosh: On D-Day?

Stevenson: On D-Day, but then they changed—the weather was bad so they changed us. With the boats we went in.

McIntosh: Let's back up a little now. We're getting from Georgia to D-Day a little fast here. I want more of the story. You were in Georgia for how long would you say?

Stevenson: I was in Georgia until April of '44.

McIntosh: And your training consisted of learning to get in and out of a glider?

Stevenson: A glider, and we had some boat training, but very little.

McIntosh: What about weapons? Did you carry any special weapons?

Stevenson: I carried—my weapon was just a Colt revolver, and I was specialized in the 81mm mortar, too. That was our—

McIntosh: But you didn't carry a rifle.

Stevenson: We didn't carry a rifle.

McIntosh: 81mm mortar team was, what, four guys?

Stevenson: Four guys.

McIntosh: And you were the baseplate man, or you handled the tube?

Stevenson: I handled the tube. I was the gunner.

McIntosh: You were the one who said move it this way or that way?

Stevenson: Yes. [Jim laughs]

McIntosh: You get pretty good with those?

Stevenson: Very good. We could—we had nine shots, and we would have our ninth one in before the first one hit the ground. So we were real good, yeah.

McIntosh: Wow! That's a good team you had. That's takes a lot of practice.

Stevenson: A lot of practice. We shot many, many rounds.

McIntosh: Generally, what was the range of the 81? If you were shooting at something—how far away?

Stevenson: Generally ours was less than a quarter of a mile.

McIntosh: All something you could see?

Stevenson: All something you could see.

McIntosh: I was wondering whether they gave you some coordinates that were beyond—

Stevenson: Beyond the sight, but it was all within—we generally shot over hills, you know, that we couldn't see it, but the rangefinder would see it.

McIntosh: That was generally the distance that 81 was designed for was a quarter of a mile, or—

Stevenson: I would say so, yes.

McIntosh: That was a pretty big shell. Compared to the 61, that really dug a big hole.

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: What type of shot did you shoot? Was it anti-personnel or white phosphorus or what?

Stevenson: Generally anti-personnel.

McIntosh: So it fragmented instantly?

Stevenson: Instantly, yes.

McIntosh: But you didn't do any of the white phosphorus?

Stevenson: No, we didn't do any of the white phosphorus.

McIntosh: That's nasty stuff.

Stevenson: That is nasty stuff.

McIntosh: I took care of a lot of guys on my hospital ship who were burned with that. The Koreans, you now, took our ammunition and shot it back at us.

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: Bad stuff. Okay, and who handled the explosives? Was there somebody brought up to your team, or did one of your men have to go get it?

Stevenson: Generally one of our men had to go get it, yes. We were trained—we were the pack mules too. We had to pack everything. We had no—on the

invasion of France we had no suppliers at all. Just what we carried, that was what we had.

McIntosh: You didn't have any mules along then.

Stevenson: No, no.

McIntosh: [laughs] Other than that guy next to you.

Stevenson: Yep.

McIntosh: Okay. From Georgia you went to England then I assume.

Stevenson: Went to England.

McIntosh: About what time? How long before the invasion?

Stevenson: We got there—I would say about—there was snow on the ground when we left, so I would say we got there around the first ten days of April. And we practiced until—then I got put with the 1st Division.

McIntosh: Oh, you changed units?

Stevenson: Then I changed units.

McIntosh: How'd that come about?

Stevenson: Our job was just for the invasion of France, to blow up the pillboxes. And then from there on we were supposed to get reassigned, but—

McIntosh: But the pillboxes were right on the beach—

Stevenson: Right on the beach, yes.

McIntosh: So you couldn't get behind them very easily.

Stevenson: No, but that was the idea with gliders, to get to the pillboxes really—but then we had to switch over to boats on account of nasty weather.

McIntosh: So when it came down to D-Day, you were planning to glide right in and then overnight or just before it changed?

Stevenson: Oh, it changed about almost a week before, yes.

McIntosh: So they put you in a Higgins boat?



Stevenson: They put you in—it was a British boat. We went out to a British ship, and the British took us to shore.

McIntosh: Which beach did you land on?

Stevenson: Omaha Beach.

McIntosh: You did? Oh, I was thinking of the British—you landed on one of their beaches.

Stevenson: No, no. We landed on Omaha Beach, and we were on the far left. What was confusing, uh, we practiced—we had practiced in England. We had the maps where we were supposed to land, but we never got landed where we were supposed to so nothing was—everything was strange when we got there. It was—we knew where—we were supposed to know where every pillbox was, but we didn't know when we got there.

McIntosh: It was totally strange when you arrived?

Stevenson: Yes. We were—

McIntosh: How do you suppose that happened?

Stevenson: Well, when we went we were supposed to—there was no way you could get in the water; it was just boiling with ammunition going in. So they stopped it, and then we went the shorelines. We see a Navy ship that was firing, and we got underneath the Navy ship and went—

McIntosh: So you slid along until the beach looked safe?

Stevenson: Safe, yes.

McIntosh: The coxswain who was driving that boat, I'm sure, was very concerned about that.

Stevenson: He was quite concerned—

McIntosh: Yeah, but he wanted to get back out.

Stevenson: But he got killed before we hit land.

McIntosh: Oh, my!

Stevenson: Yeah, he got shot before we hit land.

McIntosh: Did the boat tip, turn over?

Stevenson: No, no it didn't turn over. I don't know what happened. What, what hit it, it seemed like there wasn't much damage to the boat. But all our officers were in front, and they all got killed before we stepped off. And I know nobody knew how to turn down the ramp, and most of us jumped over the side and got out.

McIntosh: Jesus Christ! What a mess!

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: How deep was the water?

Stevenson: Oh, golly, it was over—by our chin, yes.

McIntosh: That's better than some.

Stevenson: Yes, it was.

McIntosh: I know a couple guys in boats, and they said everybody jumped over, and they were in twelve feet of water.

Stevenson: Water, yes.

McIntosh: And they said almost everyone in his boat drowned because they were weighted down with this sixty-seven or seventy pounds of stuff. You must have carried a rifle then.

Stevenson: No, no rifle.

McIntosh: Still didn't have rifle?

Stevenson: I had seventy pounds of hand grenades [both laugh], and my pistol. But then I got a hold of a rifle shortly—I got hit in the face going in.

McIntosh: Oh, you did?

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: With a piece of a bullet do you think or a piece of shrapnel?

Stevenson: I, I think it was shrapnel. I think it was.

McIntosh: Just didn't break the bone—

Stevenson: Yeah, it took part of the bone off. It's artificial here.

McIntosh: Oh, my goodness. But that didn't knock you out?

Stevenson: It didn't knock me out.

McIntosh: A glancing blow. That's why—

Stevenson: Must have been a glancing blow.

McIntosh: If it hadn't been it would have gone right into your head, and you wouldn't have been here to talk about it.

Stevenson: It took part of my ear off here too on this side. But that was a bullet I think.

McIntosh: When you hit that beach there was nobody ahead. You were on the first wave.

Stevenson: We were on the first wave, yeah.

McIntosh: So there was nobody there to help you or direct you or anything.

Stevenson: No, there was nobody there. Our main mission—we were supposed to hit a hedgerow and then stay there and wait until, uh, until three men got here. The rest of the mortars crew—they put one part of the mortar crew on every boat, three different boats so—

McIntosh: Did all three of your boats make it to shore?

Stevenson: No, we never got our mortar crew to shore at all. All we had were our hand grenades and the—

McIntosh: Geez, the whole deal was screwed up [laughs].

Stevenson: The whole deal was screwed up, yeah.

McIntosh: Tell me about walkin' when you got, you know, on the shore. Could you walk? Was it too rocky to walk, or was it sand and okay?

Stevenson: No, you didn't walk at all. You crept on your hands and knees because there were tracer bullets overhead all the time. So you wouldn't dare get up very high. You just—

McIntosh: So the best you could do was to get in underneath the bluff there?

Stevenson: Yes, and it was okay when the Navy boats were firing. Then everything was quiet, but as soon as the Navy boats would stop then they would start hammering back at us.

McIntosh: So you managed to get into that bluff?

Stevenson: I managed to get into the—

McIntosh: Pretty lucky.

Stevenson: There was a—I don't know what they call it, a concrete shore, shore space—

McIntosh: Abutments there, yeah.

Stevenson: Abutment there. We stayed there for—

McIntosh: So that gave you some momentary protection.

Stevenson: Protection. And then we waited—we stayed there until I'd say another two waves of soldiers came, and then we took off from there.

McIntosh: What was your rank at that time?

Stevenson: Corporal.

McIntosh: So you had something important to do now.

Stevenson: Yeah, I was a squad leader, see, yeah, squad leader.

McIntosh: And your squad was intact?

Stevenson: No, it wasn't intact. In fact, out of the whole company where I was with, that I trained with, I haven't seen one person since that time. Not on the beach or afterwards.

McIntosh: You mean the ones you trained in England. You never saw 'em again?

Stevenson: Never saw any of them. I tried to get in touch with them, but I think I was the lucky one of the whole boat, the load that come in with our squad, yeah.

McIntosh: Jeepers! It sounds that way. So you tried to assemble with a bunch of strangers and tried to figure what to do.

Stevenson: Yeah, I ended up with, with E Company of the 1st Division, and that's who I stayed with—but I was only there, must have been a day and a night and probably part of the next day, and then I got taken off.

McIntosh: All right. Okay, now stop there for a moment and let me run a check here okay? Just to make sure that I've got this the way it's supposed to be. [Approx. 1 min. and 20 sec. pause in recording] Okay. So, at that point then, what did you do?

Stevenson: After we left our shoreline—

McIntosh: How many did you have in your group now?

Stevenson: I would say we had about six, and then the—

McIntosh: So you're gonna try to get up on the bluff?

Stevenson: Somebody was—some of the later boats that landed on our left, they got up ahead of us. They hollered for more men to come, so we followed them. And I think, uh, this was about, I would say about, 10 o'clock—remember we had no watches because our watches all stopped from being in the water so we had no time. So, uh, we had to go through a little lowland, kind of a swamp, and then we had to start going up the bluff. There was one fellow, he was, uh, he was a tracker that could take tracks where the Germans walked because it was mined on both sides. We had to find out where the Germans walked. So that's the path we took, and we crept on our hands and knees—

McIntosh: Followed the footprints?

Stevenson: Yes. So I would say I was about an eighth of a mile from shore when I got hit again with my, uh, broke my arm, and then—

McIntosh: Oh, my!

Stevenson: That's the farthest I got.

McIntosh: Because of shrapnel?

Stevenson: That was shrapnel. That was—they were putting 88 millimeters—

McIntosh: Had you been hit in the face, be first?

Stevenson: Be first, yeah, going to shore, yeah.

McIntosh: Right. Well, that's amazing. How'd you keep going with that?

Stevenson: Well, that didn't bother me.

McIntosh: Oh, my goodness!

Stevenson: No, it didn't. The only time it bothered you it was when you crept over a hedgerow that was high, and then you had to go down, and the blood keeps running in your eyes. But that's the only time—I never had no pain with it whatsoever.

McIntosh: Did you put a bandage on it? Or you didn't have a corpsman there?

Stevenson: No, then the corpsman—they said when after I got hit in the arm—I told him I couldn't creep no more because my arm was—and he said the corpsman come and bandaged me up, and then the corpsman told me I was to stay there. I was losing a lot of blood.

McIntosh: From the arm and the thing?

Stevenson: From the arm and the thing.

McIntosh: Your ear had been hit then, too?

Stevenson: Oh yeah, my ear—that was just, that was nothing. And then he said I was bleeding from the back, too. I got hit in the back, too, and then—

McIntosh: Oh, really? Geez, with all that stuff in your back—

Stevenson: Yeah, I was just lucky because—

McIntosh: You must have had a bag full of grenades there, didn't you?

Stevenson: Well, the grenades were gone at that time because we used our grenades as soon as we took off. There was one pillbox there; we took that out when we went. And we gave each of the guys two grenades so we wouldn't be so heavy. By that time I found an M-1 rifle on the way out. So that's—but it was hard to find anything that worked because it was such a sandy, wet sand.

McIntosh: Even the rifles you found on the beach were useless?

Stevenson: Useless, yes. All the ammunition—the cases were all filled with sand. It was a high wind. A really high wind.

McIntosh: I've interviewed several Omaha Beach people and no one has ever mentioned that.

Stevenson: Yeah, we had such high—the wind would become a gale. It would blow and then stop, blow and then stop, and it was—

McIntosh: And added to your woes already.

Stevenson: Yeah, and I think being underneath that Navy ship, wind blowing at—everything smelled like rotten eggs and it was all yellow, the air, with sulfur, yeah. And it seemed like it never got real daylight. It was always, I suppose, the smoke and stuff. It always seemed like it was half dark.

McIntosh: The wind and the smell of sulfur pervaded everything.

Stevenson: It does. It was—it really smarted your eyes.

McIntosh: Oh, really? I'll be darned. And the noise? It must have been deafening.

Stevenson: The noise was bad, yes.

McIntosh: I mean, there was machine guns—

Stevenson: Machine guns, always.

McIntosh: Explosions and—

Stevenson: Explosions, all the time.

McIntosh: And big guns out in the bay.

Stevenson: Bay.

McIntosh: Wasn't difficult to communicate, one to another?

Stevenson: It was hard to communicate, but it wasn't that bad because you generally learned to communicate with your hand signals. Our biggest problem was we had no officers left. There was no officers. The most one I ever seen was—the highest officer we had that was leading us was a buck sergeant.

McIntosh: All the commissioned officers were gone?

Stevenson: Were gone, yeah. They all got killed on the—they were out on the front of our boat.

McIntosh: Or at least wounded anyway.

Stevenson: Yeah, wounded, yeah.

McIntosh: So getting up on top of Omaha Beach, that took some time?

Stevenson: Took some time, yeah. We were quite bogged down. In fact, when we got half way up there were other crews that—they landed in different places—that were on top of the hill already. And then—

McIntosh: Did you use a Bangalore Torpedo? You maybe didn't have one—

Stevenson: No.

McIntosh: But did somebody else have one?

Stevenson: They had them there, yes.

McIntosh: That helped to get through some of the stuff, didn't it?

Stevenson: That helped through the wire. That was the only—cause they had wire all the way up the hill. Rolls of wire, rolls of wire, rolls of wire.

McIntosh: But of course you didn't bring any of that stuff with you.

Stevenson: No, no. All I had was the pistol and the hand grenades.

McIntosh: You must have run into an engineering group who had those Bangalores.

Stevenson: They must have had them. Must have been an engineering group that come in on the sides of us.

McIntosh: Was that at a time that you were thinking that this isn't gonna work?

Stevenson: Yes. Well, you know, you were up against, you were up against the best the Germans had with just a pistol and hand grenades. [Laughing]

McIntosh: Sounds unfair, doesn't it?

Stevenson: Yes. [Laughing] And it was—nothing goes according to schedule.

McIntosh: Certainly didn't.

Stevenson: No.

McIntosh: So by the time you managed to get on top of the hill and sort of get a little confidence in what was going on, what time was it?

Stevenson: You know, I would guess about 4 o'clock in the afternoon.



McIntosh: In other words, *all* day long.

Stevenson: All day long, yeah.

McIntosh: It took you to go about a hundred yards—

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: Or maybe not that much?

Stevenson: Because when it got really dark we could hear 81mm mortars, so there was shooting from the beach over the hill at that time, yeah.

McIntosh: So when you got a little better organized and things quieted—did they quiet down then after awhile, after about 4:00 in the afternoon?

Stevenson: No, it didn't quiet down the whole day, and even up until that night she stayed there.

McIntosh: The Germans, all the pillboxes were not knocked out yet?

Stevenson: The pillboxes were knocked out.

McIntosh: They must have been—came around behind—

Stevenson: But there was—it was all heavy artillery they were hitting us with then from back farther.

McIntosh: So how'd you deal with that? Just dug a foxhole and waited?

Stevenson: That's what we—we just waited. We found ourselves a hole and waited it out.

McIntosh: Obviously you needed extra help to deal with those big guns.

Stevenson: Yes, we were supposed to have tanks there to help us, but them tanks all went under, sunk.

McIntosh: Yeah, that was—the worst of the planning were those tanks.

Stevenson: Yes, that was bad.

McIntosh: Those flotation devices were zero.

Stevenson: Not at that—those high waves, you know, that was—

McIntosh: And, yeah, they shipped water in 'em so they would have sunk anyway.

Stevenson: Yes. That was very poor engineering, that was—

McIntosh: Right. So did you sort of settle down, or—

Stevenson: We settled down—

McIntosh: Or did you just keep on moving? In the evening, I mean.

Stevenson: No, then—well, that evening then the corpsman came, and I got bandaged up. I would say it was after dark. He used a flashlight, and then he told me to stay there, they'd get me out of there, but I didn't get out until the next day sometime.

McIntosh: So you just sort of sat there and—

Stevenson: Everything was going one way. Nobody was going the other.

McIntosh: I understand. Did they have any hospital set up by that time up there or just—

Stevenson: No, there was no hospital. I don't remember getting out of there at all. I must have—they give me a couple shots out in the field, and I must have went to sleep. I woke up in a hospital ship in the English Channel.

McIntosh: You don't remember getting off the beach?

Stevenson: No, I don't remember getting off the beach.

McIntosh: Boy, they really gave you a heavy shot.

Stevenson: They sure did [both laugh].

McIntosh: Must have gave you a quarter and then somebody forgot that and gave you another quarter.

Stevenson: [laughs] Yeah, every time somebody come, you know, they give you a shot.

McIntosh: I think you were over medicated [laughing].

Stevenson: I think I was [laughs].

McIntosh: [laughs] Otherwise you—a quarter morphine isn't gonna take away your memory, but if you have three or four it will.

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: Oh, my goodness. So then the next thing you remember was that you woke up on a hospital ship.

Stevenson: Hospital ship, yeah.

McIntosh: In the bay.

Stevenson: In the bay, yeah.

McIntosh: And you were askin' "What's goin' on?"

Stevenson: What's going on. And they gave me, I got surgery on my arm right in the hospital ship in the bay.

McIntosh: Right then?

Stevenson: Right then, yes.

McIntosh: Do you recall what they did?

Stevenson: They took off a piece of shrapnel.

McIntosh: That's all?

Stevenson: That's all. My arm was broken in a sling.

McIntosh: Your upper arm or your radius?

Stevenson: My arm right underneath the elbow I got hit. Right here. They took a piece of bone out of there.

McIntosh: Well, the joint wasn't affected. You were lucky.

Stevenson: No, no my joint—I can't straighten it all the way, but it's still—

McIntosh: Yeah, but it's still useful.

Stevenson: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: They had you in cast after they took the shrapnel out. What did they do about your face?

Stevenson: Well, face—I got sent back to the States, and I had plastic surgery on my face.

McIntosh: They didn't do anything about your face in England.

Stevenson: No, no.

McIntosh: Well, there wasn't much to do, was there?

Stevenson: There wasn't much to do, no.

McIntosh: The skin wasn't damaged terribly? Did they sew that up or something?

Stevenson: They sewed it up. They kept growing skin on rollers there until they had enough, and then they filled it up. I got a piece of plastic in there.

McIntosh: Sure, but I mean in England they didn't do much?

Stevenson: No, they didn't do anything.

McIntosh: Just put a bandage on?

Stevenson: Bandage on, yeah.

McIntosh: There wasn't a loss of skin then?

Stevenson: No, there wasn't that much loss of skin, no.

McIntosh: So it didn't require anything special.

Stevenson: No.

McIntosh: Okay. So then from the hospital ship, where did you go?

Stevenson: I went to a ship in England. I went to a hospital in England.

McIntosh: How long were you there?

Stevenson: I was there—I come home in July, so I was there a month. And after they flew me back to Camp Atterbury—

McIntosh: When you were in England in that hospital in a month, any special treatment?

Stevenson: No, I got an infection real bad, and they killed the infection.

McIntosh: In the face or the arm?

Stevenson: In the arm.

McIntosh: Well, they were giving you penicillin on a regular basis.

Stevenson: They gave me penicillin on a regular basis. From there they shipped me to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, and I stayed there until the following April. I had plastic surgery on my face.

McIntosh: Now on your face there was a loss of your malar bone here then.

Stevenson: Yes, lost the bone, yeah. Some bone, yeah.

McIntosh: Yeah, that's the bone.

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: Then they reopened that wound and put a piece of plastic, or did they take bone from somewhere else?

Stevenson: No, no. They opened the bone and put a piece of plastic. It's still a piece that I can move it once in awhile.

McIntosh: Oh, really?

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: When you have nothin' else to do?

Stevenson: Yes [both laugh].

McIntosh: How many procedures did it take before they did that? They finally finished that?

Stevenson: Three procedures.

McIntosh: And you got along okay in Camp Atterbury?

Stevenson: Very good, very good.

McIntosh: Yeah, there's a good hospital down there.

Stevenson: Very good, yes and I had some shrapnel taken out of my back.

McIntosh: Oh, the "unknown" shrapnel that you—

Stevenson: Yes. I had pieces there I didn't know—I was lucky there because it lodged underneath my spine. It come in through the side and aligned underneath the spine, but it never hurt my spinal cord.

McIntosh: That was shrapnel?

Stevenson: That was shrapnel, yeah.

McIntosh: Boy, they really had you targeted.

Stevenson: They had me targeted. [both laugh]

McIntosh: Then you were discharged?

Stevenson: I was discharged in—let's see, that'd be April the sixth of '45. So a lot of training for just two days.

McIntosh: Very busy days, though.

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: It's funny how everyone's job that you end up doing, you know, in spite of whatever you're trained for, it often isn't at all—

Stevenson: It isn't—no, not at all, no.

McIntosh: What you thought it was gonna be or what they thought it was gonna be. Well, that's good. So after the service did you use your GI Bill?

Stevenson: Yes. I went to a radio school, and, uh, I was in business. [**End of Tape One, Side A**] I started my radio shop right here, and I was there for forty years.

McIntosh: In Tomahawk?

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: Oh, my goodness. And that worked out okay?

Stevenson: Real good, real good.

McIntosh: Well, that's nice. And you were married when you were in the service, or no?

Stevenson: No, no. I got married in 1949.

McIntosh: Have you joined any veterans groups?

Stevenson: I belong to the DAV [Disabled American Veterans] and the VFW.

McIntosh: Are they very active around here?

Stevenson: The DAV [Disabled American Veterans] is real active. I was treasurer there for nine years.

McIntosh: They're certainly active in the mail. I get a request for money—

Stevenson: For money! [laughs] And literature [?].

McIntosh: Almost, it seems almost every week.

Stevenson: Yes [laughs], one or the other.

McIntosh: So I have to keep a list, and then the months that I give because otherwise I'm gonna be sendin'—because I can't remember the last time. So I've said, now the only way I can do this is every three months, you know. I send 'em ten dollars about every three months, and I have to mark it down because it just sort of overwhelms with these requests.

Stevenson: They sure do.

McIntosh: And have you kept in contact with any of the fellows you trained with?

Stevenson: Never seen a one, never seen a one. I try to keep in contact—I don't think any of any of them that are alive, that I trained with.

McIntosh: Wow!

Stevenson: Yeah, never—I had one fellow that I was real close to—because, see, they split us all up. They had them from our regular company that we trained with in the States. They sent us to, uh—they only kept four. Four of us went together in each company overseas. They didn't want us in a bunch, and so the ones I trained with overseas I never got to know that well. That was just a matter of six weeks.

McIntosh: I forgot to ask you if you had any glider training when you got to England.

Stevenson: No.

McIntosh: They had given up on the gliders by—

Stevenson: They had given up on the gliders when we got there.

McIntosh: And when you had some training in the Higgins boat? In the landing boat?

Stevenson: No, we had no training in the boat. That's where our biggest trouble was, was seasickness. We got so terrible seasick.

McIntosh: I don't know of any training that would change that.

Stevenson: Probably not [Jim laughs]. I thought with all the—

McIntosh: But I was thinkin' that they had trained a bunch of 'em at Slapton Sands [Devon, England; site of the ill-fated Exercise Tiger, a rehearsal for the D-Day invasion], you know, and then they lost a lot of people they were training because the German E-boat snuck in there and sunk an LST who was carrying these guys who were training in England.

Stevenson: Oh, I didn't know—

McIntosh: Yeah, they lost about 700 men.

Stevenson: Oh, gol—I heard about that one time, yes.

McIntosh: That was a big boo-boo.

Stevenson: Boo-boo, yeah.

McIntosh: 'Cause they weren't alert enough to that possibility.

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: Slapton Sands, yeah, it was just a training thing that went wrong.

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: Well, anyway. So I don't know anything else to ask you. Did you get along all right in England? Did you enjoy the English at all?

Stevenson: I enjoyed the English. I even got to like their warm beer after awhile.

McIntosh: Did you?

Stevenson: Yes [laughs].

McIntosh: I was gonna say, your time in the hospital, you probably got to know them quite well.



Stevenson: Quite well, yes.

McIntosh: And they took good care of you?

Stevenson: Real good, very good.

McIntosh: The nurses I know are very good over there.

Stevenson: Yes, they are. They were very good. But we were in an American hospital, although the English come over. They always come over with cookies for us every day, and biscuits and tea.

McIntosh: Oh, really? Well, that was nice to be spoiled.

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: Did you have some time to go into town or anything?

Stevenson: No, we never got to town. No, never got to town.

McIntosh: Well, they were so busy giving you penicillin I don't think they'd let you get off that much.

Stevenson: No.

McIntosh: Because at that time you had to have penicillin every four hours.

Stevenson: Every four hours, night and day, yeah.

McIntosh: They didn't have the long acting stuff.

Stevenson: No, no.

McIntosh: So you couldn't get very far away from that hospital.

Stevenson: You know that was the first time I ever heard of penicillin was over there. I think that was something new at that time.

McIntosh: Well, it first came out in 1943.

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: So it was very, very new.

Stevenson: Very new, yeah.

McIntosh: Well, it saved a lot of lives, and I'm sure it saved your arm.

Stevenson: Yeah, I'm sure it did, yes.

McIntosh: 'Cause the only alternative was to cut your arm off. It was the only way you could save your life.

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: Like in the Civil War, you know. There were so many amputations in the Civil War because all they could do to save—

Stevenson: Take em off [?].

McIntosh: Yeah. Well, very good. You received a disability from the Veterans—

Stevenson: Sixty percent.

McIntosh: Sixty?

Stevenson: Yes.

McIntosh: That's pretty good.

Stevenson: Yes, it is.

McIntosh: That's surprising. If I told this to a lot of guys I've interviewed they'd scream and holler because I know a lot of guys who had more disability than you that got two or twenty percent.

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: And of course they're hollerin', but nobody's able to—

Stevenson: Well, they give you sixty, but they only pay you for fifty anyway, you know.

McIntosh: Oh, really?

Stevenson: Yeah, the way they—if you have sixty percent on one thing you'd get sixty percent, but you have a certain percent on little things.

McIntosh: Other things.

Stevenson: Then they don't—

McIntosh: Oh, they gave it all for your arm, or some for your face, too?

Stevenson: My face and arm and my back.

McIntosh: But you didn't have any disability with your back, did you?

Stevenson: Yeah, I had a lot of disability for that. They took a lot of muscle out of my back. They cut it out.

McIntosh: Oh, well that does count.

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: Well, I would think sixty percent is too low.

Stevenson: Oh, no [both laugh]. It ain't that bad, but it is weakened because I can't—I don't have much bending.

McIntosh: Can I ask you what sixty percent disability pays you per month?

Stevenson: Now, I think it pays \$625.00, something like that.

McIntosh: \$620.00?

Stevenson: Yeah.

McIntosh: Don't they up that every year with a percentage—

Stevenson: Yes, it used to be sixty dollars a month for many years, and then it gets up and up and up.

McIntosh: Right, a COLA, you know, that cost of living—

Stevenson: Yes, yes.

McIntosh: That we all look forward to, all of us on—in the Medicare age, you know, we get from Social Security. The first of the year they up it a couple of bucks [both laugh]. Good, and any other disability or any other retirement that you get? That's all other than your Social Security?

Stevenson: My Social Security and my few investments, yeah.

McIntosh: All right. Very good. I can't think of anything. Did you forget to tell me anything?

Stevenson: No, I don't think so.

McIntosh: The story went along just fine.

Stevenson: Yeah, you have a good memory. It was only a day and a half. That's all it was.

McIntosh: But certainly the busiest day and a half I've ever heard of [laughing].

Stevenson: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: That's fine, excellent. [Clock chimes]. Thank you.

**[End of Interview]**