

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an  
Oral History Interview with  
HENRY R. ZACH  
3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division, European Theater, WWII  
1999

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Zach, Henry R., (1918-2002). Oral History Interview. 1999.

User Copy: 1 audio cassette (ca. 60 min.): analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 audio cassette (ca. 60 min.): analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Videocassette: 1 video cassette (ca. 60 min.): ½ in., color.

### Abstract

Henry Zach, a Burnett County, Wis. native, discusses his World War II service with the 32nd Armored Regiment of the 3rd Armored Division and gives a vivid account of his experiences during the Malmedy Massacre at Baugnez (Belgium). He talks about armored training, fighting at St. Mere-Eglise and Caen, and his role as reconnaissance for his platoon. Zach comments on the organization and strategy of an armored reconnaissance unit including vehicle mobility, radio contact, and the problem of sniper fire. He touches upon encountering the “dragon’s teeth” and rest and relaxation in Paris. Zach was taken prisoner at the Battle of the Bulge and vividly recalls being captured and searched for valuables by German soldiers, the march to Baugnez, and his discovery of the Germans’ intent to kill them. Held in a field with a number of other American soldiers, Zach details being shot at by German soldiers, kicked to determine if he was still living, several instances of gun fire at Americans lying in the field, and being rescued by an American captain and two enlisted men. He returned to the United States and addresses medical care received, leg wound problems, and attempts to increase his disability pay.

### Biographical Sketch

Zach (1918-2002) served with the 32nd Armored Regiment of the 3rd Armored Division in Europe during World War II. He was captured at the Battle of the Bulge and wounded several times during the Malmedy Massacre.

Interviewed by Dr. James McIntosh, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Volunteer, 1999.

Transcribed by WDVA staff, n.d.

Transcript edited by Abigail Miller, 2003.

Interview Transcript

McIntosh: Where were you born Henry?

Zach: Township of Lane in Burnet County

McIntosh: And you joined the military in 1941?

Zach: Yes.

McIntosh: And were you a volunteer or were you drafted?

Zach: Well, I was drafted and then I volunteered to go with two of my buddies.

McIntosh: I see, and where did they go?

Zach: Well, we went to Camp Grant, and I didn't see them after that, they split us up.

McIntosh: And they did your basic at Camp Grant?

Zach: No, no that was just processing center.

McIntosh: Oh, I see. Then where did they send you?

Zach: They sent me way down to Camp Polk, Louisiana.

McIntosh: Then the 32nd Division then?

Zach: The 32nd Armored Regiment, the 3rd Armored Division.

McIntosh: And you trained there in Armor?

Zach: Yes.

McIntosh: What was your specific job?

Zach: My specific job? Well after I got a little rank, I became platoon Sergeant.

McIntosh: But did you have a specific duty or was—

Zach: I had 42 men under me, a platoon.

McIntosh: It was an Infantry platoon?

Zach: No, that was Armored.

McIntosh: You had a tank?

Zach: Tanks and half-tracks and armored cars. Usually I was in an armored car. A crew of four.

McIntosh: How long did you train there?

Zach: Well at Camp Polk, then we went out to the desert, Mojave Desert, then California. We was there about four months. The reason we went out there we were told was we were training to help Montgomery in North Africa, but before we were trained to go, they wound up he--you might say he won, he liberated Africa.

McIntosh: So this is still before the United States was in the war? In 1941?

Zach: Yes. Ah wait a minute--no, I went in in June of '41 and what was it December Japan hit Pearl Harbor, then we were in the war. It was about six months before the war I was in.

McIntosh: You were in the Mojave Desert, how long were you there?

Zach: About four months.

McIntosh: And then where did they send you?

Zach: Ah, then clear across the country East to Camp Pickett, Virginia. Was there bout all that winter, then we went to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, that's a military Reservation, too.

McIntosh: Was the training different there? Was it anything special?

Zach: No, no, its all the same. Its skirmishes and pretend.

McIntosh: You stayed in the same unit, the unit name didn't change.

Zach: Oh no. I was never in anything but the 32nd Armored division.

McIntosh: When were you shipped overseas?

Zach: Hmm, September of '43.

McIntosh: Oh you were in the United States quite a while?

Zach: Oh yes. Then we went to England. Then we stayed through all of '43, until D-Day of 44. See I had three full years of training.

McIntosh: Before you got to France.

Zach: Before we got to France yeah.

McIntosh: When did you get over to France? After the D-Day?

Zach: Yeah it was ah, about the 17th of June that we went through Omaha beach.

McIntosh: About two weeks late?

Zach: Yeah about two weeks after.

McIntosh: And where did you proceed to in France?

Zach: Well we immediately went up the line at that time, which was not very far inland.

McIntosh: Was that near Caen?

Zach: Yeah, yeah, St. Mere-Eglise and Caen.

McIntosh: St Mere-Eglise? The church steeple where the paratrooper was hung up on?

Zach: Yup.

McIntosh: So you formed there and kept the pressure on 'em in that direction?

Zach: Oh yeah we went immediately up the front.

McIntosh: And what was that situation like?

Zach: Well it was all new to us. We ah, we became combat wise in a hurry.

McIntosh: Were you in the tank moving in a unit, a large group or how did you fight that?

Zach: Well, you see, I was in reconnaissance of our platoon. And we mostly used armored cars, which was a light tank on wheels.

McIntosh: Not a half-track?

Zach: No, we had half-tracks, too, but ah, my main job was scouting.

McIntosh: In what size group?

Zach: Well, we went by platoon, but that we were split up. If necessary if there were more roads to reconnoiter and see what was down. Then two stayed together, two armored cars.

McIntosh: How many men in each vehicle?

Zach: Four.

McIntosh: Four men. You carried MI, rifles or did somebody have a machinegun?

Zach: Well we had a machinegun mounted on the armored car—

McIntosh: A 50 caliber?

Zach: Two we had a 50 caliber and a 30 caliber. Plus we had a 37mm cannon. Which was the same as a light tank at that time. Had the same armament only they had treads and we had wheels.

McIntosh: You could move pretty fast in that?

Zach: Very fast or very quiet if we wanted to sneak around a little.

McIntosh: How fast would that go, do you remember?

Zach: Oh, it was over 60.

McIntosh: Oh really, that's pretty good. If the roads were decent you could really move it.

Zach: Yeah. Put it in six wheel drive and you could go pert near anywhere.

McIntosh: Yes. I suppose you had the power. Did you get caught up in an ambush often?

Zach: Ambush, oh yes. Yes we, course you understand we didn't have the armament or the thick armor plate like a tank., as our Sherman tanks had, but we had enough that machine gun bullets wouldn't, even their 50s, wouldn't penetrate.

McIntosh: Were you caught by some tanks, I mean did you get into a firefight with any of the tanks of the Germans?

Zach: Well we tried not to--

McIntosh: I imagine.

Zach: That was the tanks were close behind us so whenever we run into something we couldn't handle we radioed to them to come up.

McIntosh: Were you in radio contact with them most of the time?

Zach: Our platoon leader had a radio that could get back to headquarters.

McIntosh: And how many vehicles was the platoon leader responsible for?

Zach: Well, about 4, I would say.

McIntosh: So you were never very far apart then?

Zach: No, no, we kinda went in twos, so one would cover the advance of the other.

McIntosh: I see. Did you do any map reading or mapping when you were on these reconnaissance.

Zach: We never drew maps, we just called back what we saw.

McIntosh: Ok, did you use field glasses?

Zach: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: Did you have to deal with sniper fire very often?

Zach: Yes, yes.

McIntosh: So you had to take cover.

Zach: Right, they didn't bother us too much after we got back in the vehicles.

McIntosh: But you left the vehicle from time to time to look over the terrain?

Zach: Yes, yes, and we had to get out of our vehicles to cut the wires of the enemy, so that they couldn't call back what was comin'.

McIntosh: Right, what about mines?

Zach: I never run into a mine.

McIntosh: And you were never jumped by a German counterpart? Another scouting vehicle of the Germans?

- Zach: No, no.
- McIntosh: So how did it go through France? Did you follow along slowly in the Paris direction?
- Zach: Well, it went slowly in the hedgerow country, very slow. It was very dangerous too. Of course we had our armored infantry and then we had the First Infantry Division with us all the time.
- McIntosh: You were with the First Infantry?
- Zach: No they were with us. They were taking about 30% casualties all through the hedgerows.
- McIntosh: Did you ever see one of those spade-like things that they fixed on the front of the tanks that dig up the hedgerow?
- Zach: Yeah, yeah, that was invented by a sergeant in the Army.
- McIntosh: Yes I know that. What was your rank at this time?
- Zach: Oh, I was a buck Sergeant then. I commanded an armored car, at that time.
- McIntosh: Did you get to Paris?
- Zach: Well I got to Paris on a R&R after we had gone through the Dragon's Teeth, the Siegfried line, there was two Dragon's Teeth about 20 miles apart. One was a right after Upen that was right on the Belgian-German border and then came the Dragon's Teeth about 7 or 8 rows of concrete teeth and then 20 miles past that was another one. It was between these two that we really had to watch for snipers.
- McIntosh: Did you blow those up to get the tanks through those?
- Zach: Yeah the Infantry did, ah the engineers did they had Bangelor Torpedoes.
- McIntosh: Now the Bangelor Torpedoes would take out one of those concrete things?
- Zach: Oh yeah. They used other methods to, to blow them up with dynamite.
- McIntosh: So when did you get to Paris?
- Zach: Well, after we went through the second Dragon's Tooth, then it came pretty much to a stop. Then they were letting us go back to Paris on R&R.
- McIntosh: You were how close to the Rhine river?



Zach: Well, I never go to it, but I would say I was in a hundred miles of the Rhine River.

McIntosh: So they gave you R&R, what was that a weekend? Or two days?

Zach: It was a three-day pass after you got there. So you had time going there and coming back with a convoy.

McIntosh: How did you get there?

Zach: Truck.

McIntosh: On a regular 6-by truck?

Zach: Yeah.

McIntosh: And where did you stay in Paris?

Zach: Oh we had, the Army had hotels fixed up for us.

McIntosh: Regular hotels?

Zach: Yeah.

McIntosh: That's was where the Germans were days before—

Zach: Yeah. We kicked the Germans out.

McIntosh: So how was that R&R, did you enjoy that?

Zach: Well, yeah it was fine. There wasn't a lot to see like in peacetime, but when I went to R&R we all had to carry our personal arms loaded. Because there were still German, snipers in the city.

McIntosh: Were the people nice to you?

Zach: Well, we didn't have much contact with the civilians.

McIntosh: I see. Where did you eat? Did you eat Army food or did you eat something French?

Zach: I don't recall going into any French cafes cuz they didn't have much to eat there. Unless you were an officer, then you could get better fare.

McIntosh: Did you fmd some nice French wine to drink?

Zach: Oh yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: Where would you get that?

Zach: That's kinda fuzzy, I don't remember where we got that. I imagine we went into these, they did have places where they dispensed, sold, liquor.

McIntosh: Oh yes, they had quite a few. What kind of money would you use? Do you remember that?

Zach: We had occupation money.

McIntosh: They took that?

Zach: Yeah.

McIntosh: So that was your one and only experience in Paris?

Zach: Well, the only time I got out to see the city, I was there on my way back through the Army--

McIntosh: Well back to your outfit anyway—

Zach: No, ah, it was I was evacuated to hospitals that I stayed in Paris one time., when I was going back to England. But I cannot recall going to England, but I must have flown from France to England during the time they had me, I was under anesthesia.

McIntosh: How were you wounded?

Zach: How?

McIntosh: Mm. Hmm

Zach: Well, I got a 20mm cannon shell through my knee here and I got a machine gun bullet through my hip here

McIntosh: And when did this happen?

Zach: Well this happened when we were out on patrol one day. Now how familiar are you with this book? Have you read this book?

McIntosh: Yeah, I know this book.

Zach: You do? And you know, the sixteenth of December the Germans broke

through our lines -First Army lines, south of where we were holding the line, around Buesbach and Tischoiler, where we were. Well, one morning, the seventeenth of December, early in the morning, our platoon leader, a lieutenant, told us we were going on a mission. And he said that this was a secret mission, and that's the only time in the seven months' of combat that I was in, that that order was ever issued- secret. At that time, I was platoon sergeant, I was third in command. And I knew when he said that something was [unintelligible]. Did you want me to continue?

McIntosh: You're doing fine.

Zach: We had breakfast early and left. There was four jeeps of us with eleven recon men, in these four jeeps. And we went back through the first dragon's teeth, twenty miles further west, we came to the Upen point, where the first line of dragon's teeth were. We stopped there and he handed me a notebook and a pencil, and he said, every time I raise my arm, make a mark. So, we went through Upen and turned south, which would have been towards where the Germans had penetrated our lines, although us enlisted men didn't know anything about that. We never knew that they had broken through our lines the day before. But, every crossroad, where any vehicle could go, he'd raise his arm. Well, I thought to myself, maybe, just maybe, we're going to be relieved from holding the line, and they were leaving a man there to guide us. We never knew anything about the breakthrough, or otherwise I would have known. But, we didn't know, and he said secret mission -it still bothered me, but we went south several miles. I don't like to say something about a man behind his back where he can't answer, but this officer, there was something lacking in him. He hadn't been with us long. He was not thoroughly acclimated to front line conditions, and he couldn't read a map worth a snap. He had a map there and he kept saying "where are we's at? Where are we's at?" But he had the map, I was marking in a book. I had the radio and the machine gun. I would have been busy, if they would have risen. I looked at the map, and of course the Germans were kinda smart. Sometimes they would pull up a sign and replace it with something altogether different and plant it somewhere else, you know. We kept going--

McIntosh: How many of you?

Zach: There was eleven of us. Just four jeeps. And that was another thing that bothered me. We got on a blacktop road, and were travelling west, towards England would have been west, wouldn't it?

McIntosh: Yeah.

Zach: It was foggy. This was called the Ardennes section of that part of the

country, which was a low-lying, wooded area. We couldn't see hardly over two-hundred yards ahead of us, very distinctly. We continued down the road. And the first thing we knew, we saw a line of tanks ahead of us parked alongside the road. It was so murky, we couldn't tell if they was ours or the enemy's. And we got up to them, right even with the first tank, a German tank, and their soldiers ran out and put their rifles to us. And we had such poor road savvy, I mean the lieutenant didn't bother to keep us at intervals, where if we would have been two- or three-hundred, or just within sight of each other, which when you're in enemy territory you spread out. But they acted behind us like they were on a holiday. No road discipline at all. So after they captured us they kept pushing right behind us, where if they had been two-hundred yards behind each other at least, at least the last two vehicles could have gotten turned around and away. But they kept wizzing up and coming up by us and the Germans captured us all. As soon as they got surrounded by German soldiers the first lieutenant that was in command of us he said, don't fire, don't fire. We all had our personal arms on us.

McIntosh: Didn't the Germans make you throw those down?

Zach: After the eleven of us got together there, they searched us, yeah.

McIntosh: Did they take your watches?

Zach: Not at that time. You see they was mostly all tanks, them personnel carriers, of theirs. After they captured us, I imagine we could hear them. Well, there was a German officer that could speak perfect English. Well, we were lined up there. On our steel helmets we had MGP in white paint. Now you what MP means? It means Military Police. Well our MGP we were Military Government Police. After we went through the second concrete barriers of the Siegfried line, Dragons Teeth, we didn't have much recon to do anymore. So they made us military police, military government of the whole German area we controlled, which was seeing that the German people stayed put, they weren't out on the roads, and we were looking for parachute drops at night by the Germans. We kept watching at night. We had certain areas to patrol. So that was what we did at that time when the war was stabilized. I understand that the armor and infantry tried to keep going, a hundred yards was quite a ways in that day.

McIntosh: So when the--drew up, then what?

Zach: Well, then they wanted our vehicles. So, the drivers of these vehicles stayed, of our vehicles, our drivers stayed there, and drove the vehicles.

McIntosh: For them?

Zach: They turned around and got in the column with the Germans. They took off, they were going East. Yeah. But they got off the blacktop road and started cross-country. And their tanks, the ground wasn't froze hard enough, they were churning it up and our vehicle, the one I was in, the lieutenant and I, something happened to the vehicle, the transmission went out or something, and the motor would run but the wheels wouldn't go. But the Germans still wanted the vehicles so they backed a tank up and hooked on with a steel cable. Then we got out and started walking -the three of us in there. And they had a German steer it. But we couldn't keep up with the tank column so they put the two lieutenants and I on a tank, about the second or third tank in a row. I was right behind the turret of the tank commander there, I don't know what rank he was. Then we kept going quite a ways, cross-country. But after the three of us got on a tank, I never saw anymore of my company. They were spread out in columns somewheres. But--

McIntosh: All of them behind you?

Zach: Yeah, they were one right behind the other. It didn't matter how bad the ground was chewed up, the tanks just [unintelligible]. Their tanks were much larger than ours. We went, as I said, a long ways, to me, it seemed like a long ways, and we came pretty close to another road and there were American six-by-six, we called 'em deuce-and-a-halves, six-by-six they were, two-and-a-half-ton trucks, they were going pretty fast trying to escape from where they came from, which was just a little ahead of us. These German tanks were firing on these trucks of ours that were trying to get away. They had captured, another German task force had, where several crossroads came together by a big, I call it a roadhouse, I think it was called Baugnez, or something like that. And when the outfit, the German column we were in, when I say we, I mean recon, recon men that were captured. They stopped and let us off and motioned to us to get in the other column.

McIntosh: Were your hands tied?

Zach: No. No, they just searched us good and that all they done to us, at that time. Then when we got to this other column they had infantry out there, they wanted our rings, our watches, our cigarettes and our clothes. That's all they asked of us at that time. Then they motioned us to a little field over to our right, where they had captured many American soldiers and they were putting them in this little field, south of this roadhouse. Now, we had a long line of tanks coming to this place and coming from that place was another long line of tanks, but we were not connected, we were two different outfits. So the Germans that captured us were not the ones that put us, well, they dropped us off and motioned us to go over into the field where this second column had captured some American prisoners. I

would judge, for when, we were all in the field recon, there must have been a hundred, close to a hundred Americans in this field. Just a little ways off of this road and south of this Baugnez roadhouse. So, do you want me to continue?

McIntosh: We're getting good.

Zach: This is going to be a hard part for me.

McIntosh: I know that.

Woman: We can take a break any time you want to.

McIntosh: Just do the best you can with it, please.

Zach: [Long pause] Well, they put us in the field, like I say, I judge there must have been a hundred of us. And this Second Lieutenant, there was two lieutenants of recon, a First Lieutenant and a Second Lieutenant. The Second Lieutenant kinda kept with me and he understood, his name was Lieutenant Imes. He understood German, and he heard them talking and he turned to me and says "Zach, they're going to kill us." I didn't understand much German. I just nodded to him, as I didn't know what was going to come off, it didn't look good. But I had seven months of frontline. I wasn't afraid, but he was. It wasn't long after that they pulled two, what we would call half-tracks, but they were personnel, the Germans used as personnel carriers. They had machine guns on each one and they drove apart a little bit and then turned and faced us out in the field with their machines. Then in a little bit they started firing at us, there was four rows--they had us in four rows out there. I was in the last row. When they started firing it took a little while to--anyway, when the bodies, the Americans in front of me started being blown backwards towards me, I thought it was time to hit the ground. But they kept firing long after they thought we were all dead. Then they moved out, they left some German soldiers there to guard us or, there was nothing to guard anymore, but they stayed there. I learned later, the majority of Americans captured were from an artillery observer battalion which was, they had never been in combat, before. And they was screaming and yelling, and--

McIntosh: Did the Germans say anything? We're the Germans yelling at you at this time, or did they never say a word, just kept shooting?

Zach: Just kept shooting. It was these artillery men that were doing all the shouting back and forth to each other and those that were close to me I yelled at them to shut-up and wait 'till dark, but they wouldn't and that caused the Germans to come in the field and personally shoot everyone that they thought was alive.

McIntosh: With pistols?

Zach: Yeah. They had a method that was sure proof to tell if you were alive or not. They would try to kick us in the testicles and if you jumped, they knew you was alive. But fortunately when I fell, hit the ground, I was laying face down. When they come kick me in the rump, I didn't move. But they stood right next to me and shot my lieutenant. I didn't know it was my lieutenant until it got dark and I looked around and saw it was him. He had pretended he was dead, the same as I, but he didn't fool 'em, I guess, cause I heard 'em kick him, and they made him get to his feet, but I'll give that lieutenant credit -he was a man. He knew what was going to happen, but he never begged or whimpered or anything. They just shot him in the head and when he fell backwards he touched my feet. The first time wasn't enough for these artillery men, they still kept yelling back and forth, so the Germans came back a second time and went through us all.

McIntosh: How much later? I mean fifteen minutes later, ten minutes?

Zach: Oh, I'd say about fifteen minutes later the second time they came down amongst us shooting. I must have been a good actor cause they never touched me the second time even.

McIntosh: Was this when you were wounded by the shooting?

Zach: I hadn't got wounded yet. I was unscathed by that.

[End of Tape 1, Side A]

Zach: Then, after the second time they left, I think all their infantrymen went with them. Then came another column of tanks and they met them at this crossroads. And they are the ones that fired on our supposedly dead bodies. They raked us with machinegun fire.

McIntosh: Third time now, isn't it?

Zach: This is the third time that they tried to kill us. And I know as I laid there in that afternoon I know four times they did this. They would be tanks or half-tracks or something come along and they would machine gun us, rake the field there. And that's when I got this little wound here, and shortly after that another German outfit went through and I got a machine gun bullet in my hip. By that time it was getting dark. So I waited a while longer, and I looked, I was curious who they'd shot right next to me. It was light enough that I could recognize him; it was my lieutenant. Just before dark, a person came into where we were laying on the ground there. He had an American uniform on and he had a Red Cross band on him. I asked

him if he was American, he said yes. He started bandaging one fellow laying there. He soon run out of bandages, this medic. He got up and looked at me and said, I'll be back. So he took off and a couple minutes later I heard some shooting back from the direction he'd come from, by this roadhouse. But I'm getting a little ahead of myself there. When we were laying out in the field, after the first time they fired at us the first time from these armored cars, some of these men, these field artillery men, got up and made a run for it, and instead of running into the woods they went and run into this house, a barn by the roadhouse. Well, the Germans, well they wouldn't come out, so the Germans set that on fire. Some had run into the roadhouse itself, and they set that on fire and waited until they came out. Then they shot them also. And this is where during the afternoon I could smell the smoke and then when as it got dark, I could see the flames from it. It was pretty well burned down by the time it was dark. There was snow on the ground. I was getting a little cold laying there. This must have happened about, oh, I'd say between twelve and one o'clock in the afternoon. And it was getting dark. It was dark when I moved out from, I call it the field of dead there. It took me quite a while for them to get where this building was burning. I couldn't use my left leg at all, it was just hanging by a little muscle on each side of the, it was, my bone and my foot was dragging, so I had to sit down and back up and push with my leg here. It wasn't my right leg, but it was shot through with a machinegun bullet, but it hadn't hit the bone, so I could use my hip and leg to push with. I reached behind me with my arms and pulled myself, or pushed myself.

I finally came to this building that was burning. It had burnt pretty well down by this time, but I tried to get as close as I could cause I was wet and cold. I had some beams that had fallen off the house, the roadhouse and they hadn't burned. But along side of them the roof must have had some of this corrugated steel. So I got by this beam and I put two of these corrugated sheets over me- leaned it up against the ground and the beam, and I got in underneath that. I wasn't thinking of keeping warm so much as being hid, in case more Germans were around there. But I laid there all that night. I was getting pretty weak, I was bleeding quite a bit. I didn't have my first aid kit with me, cause that was on my pistol belt and the Germans took that away when they first captured us. So all I did was lay there. It was a long, and into the afternoon of the next day, then I heard some voices. I was a little woosy, I don't think I was--had all my faculties about me. But I knew that if I laid there, I'd bleed to death, I would die. If I called out and it was friendly, fine if it was German they'd kill me. Six one half dozen the other. So if I'm lucky I'll die. It's an American Captain and two enlisted men; they were looking the situation over there. They came and they'd came in a C and R car -command and reconnaissance car which was open sides, a Captain directed these two soldiers to pick me up as a litter and put me in the command car and they took me, I'm not



certain, but the book said it was to Malmedy. And that's the way I was rescued.

McIntosh: Anybody else?

Zach: Rescued? Not then, but just before dark, after this medic took off, I saw two soldiers get up from this pile of dead there and they put their arms around each other and staggered to here and there and holding up to each other they left this field towards this fire, where I had seen. I knew they weren't any of my men because they had overcoats on and we didn't have any overcoats with us that day. So, I was rescued and they took me to what they say is Malmedy, and I was so bled dry that -they didn't have whole blood, they had plasma at that time. They just added water to it. If I remember rightly, they put three units of that in me as fast as they could get it in there. By the time they got that last one in me, I was ready to go back up to the front and fight again. I was revived. But the doctor told me, son your war is over. [Cries] excuse me.

McIntosh: What hospital did they send you to? When they took you off the field?

Zach: I don't know.

McIntosh: Was it France or-- ?

Zach: This first place they took me was-- it was a tent outfit, a M.A.S.H. outfit later on it was called.

McIntosh: At the M.A.S.H. unit did they put your leg in a splint?

Zach: Yep.

McIntosh: They sewed it up what they could and--?

Zach: They couldn't do much, and put it in a cast.

McIntosh: Were you air-lifted back to England?

Zach: Like I say, I must have been too far gone and I was taken out of there before I woke up, and the first I remember I was in England again.

McIntosh: How long were you in the Hospital in England?

Zach: I went to a couple of them there. I don't know, well it was in December, and all that winter, and then when I got ready to evacuate home, they flew me up to Scotland, to Glasgow. It was Scotland, anyway.

McIntosh: Then you went home from there?

Zach: Yeah, the Queen Mary was the English had converted it to a hospital ship. They took about, I understand it took three days to load us. That's a big ship. Somebody said there was thirty thousand of us on that ship.

McIntosh: Could have been. We've been aboard that, we've seen that.

Zach: You did, huh? It was a mighty big one. I didn't see it when I loaded. They had German prisoners loading it.

McIntosh: Have you kept in contact with any of the people you were with?

Zach: No. I never did.

McIntosh: No reunions of any of your comrades?

Zach: I've gone to reunions, but there was never any of them

McIntosh: Nobody To your knowledge, those two guys that you saw running and yourself, were those the only survivors you know of?

Zach: That's the only ones I could swear to.

McIntosh: Right. Have you read about any other survivors?

Zach: The book mentioned some of them.

McIntosh: That there were a couple, yeah.

Zach: There was a couple from my outfit that run, got up and run.

McIntosh: Did your unit get a unit citation for this, I assume your [unintelligible]

Zach: Not for this action. We got a unit citation for the Battle of Malms, which was much more bloody than this one. I didn't get hurt in that one.

McIntosh: That was a couple of months earlier?

Zach: Yeah.

McIntosh: That was just a steady combat back and forth without much territory?

Zach: You mean at Malms?

McIntosh: At Malms, yeah.

Zach: At [unintelligible]. Yeah, that's right. It was, recon was outposted, and about the middle of the night what we learned later was the shattered remains of two German armies that we bypassed coming up from the beach. They were trying to get back into Germany to--the Germans couldn't throw us back in the English Channel. On Omaha beach they were whipped and they had looted all the guns and field artillery that was protecting between these two dragon's teeth. They tried to push us into the Channel and they couldn't do it. So, we just kept bypassing them and they were trying to get back into Germany, but the only way they could do it is at night. They had to hide in the daytime.

McIntosh: To get though your line.

Zach: Yeah.

McIntosh: Did you enjoy any air-support during this time? Airplane support?

Zach: Uh, what time are you-- ?

McIntosh: Well, when you were in battle with the Germans, did you have a lot of American support, P-47's and the like?

Zach: Oh yes. P-51's we had.

McIntosh: They were a welcome sight?

Zach: Oh yes. Yes, I [unintelligible] task force and those P-51 's shootin' around up there and just ahead of us. They'd see something and waggle their wings and they'd come back and just ahead of me if I was heading the task force, just before they were overhead they'd drop their bomb and you'd swear that bomb was going to hit me, but it just glided right over and busted a couple of hundred yards ahead of me.

McIntosh: Yeah, they were pretty good at that.

Zach: They could flip a tank they got so good.

McIntosh: You could keep in radio contact with them?

Zach: I never had radio contact with them, but I'm sure the task-force commander had.

McIntosh: Sure, because he would direct the action wherever. After the war were you in the hospital long?

Zach: A year and a half.

McIntosh: In Illinois? Where was that?

Zach: Well, after I got back to the states, they shipped me to Texas. I guess it was the best place for bone orthopedics.

McIntosh: Did they put a bone graft in your leg?

Zach: Yes.

McIntosh: I imagine they did.

Zach: They-- all my bone at that time, though.

McIntosh: They take some from your hip and put it in there?

Zach: No. No. They just kept breaking bone and filling in my own bone. They told me that bone would grow if you got it about that thickness apart it would grow a fuse together; you lay it in there. But it never, never really, they call it osteomyelitis, that disease and I never got over it and I've still got it to this day.

McIntosh: Still got the infection?

Zach: Oh yes, I bandage my leg everyday. Smells like rotten eggs.

McIntosh: Are you under therapy now for this [unintelligible] of the ear? Locally area or veterans hospital?

Zach: No. I have been to therapy up in Superior with a group of World War II. But I haven't been there for quite a while and Jim Sunquist, our veterans officer is fixing me up with someone from St. Croix Falls, I have to have some more therapy.

McIntosh: More [unintelligible].

Zach: Yeah.

McIntosh: I know you have a hundred percent disability so they'll pay for everything.

Zach: Well, I don't have a hundred percent, yet.

McIntosh: Oh really.

Zach: I've had eighty percent for years.

McIntosh: But you can't walk on that leg?

Zach: No.

McIntosh: I don't know why that isn't a hundred percent.

Zach: Well, Jim's fighting for it.

McIntosh: Yeah, I would think so. Well, sorry to run you out here.

Zach: Okay, whatever you want to know yet.

McIntosh: Well, if you're tired and want to hang it up, that's fine.

Zach: No.

[End of Interview]