

TRANSCRIPT—WILLIAM LEONARD

Interviewee: WILLIAM LEONARD

Interviewer: SAMUEL BAKER

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SAMUEL BAKER: Hello, good afternoon. Today is March 25th, and we're here at The Citadel for the Veteran's History Project. And today I'm going to be interviewing Mr. William Leonard. Would you want to start off by telling us about your childhood here in Charleston beforehand?

WILLIAM LEONARD: Let's start by that I guess. I was born in Charleston, 97 Tradd Street, in May 17th, 1925. I was born into a family, two sisters, older sisters, and one brother, and I was the youngest in the family. And my mother was from the old, one of the old families of Charleston. And my father was what we call a maverick in Charleston. He was a fella that was born in Alabama—Birmingham, Alabama—and he came here when he was two years old in 19—in 1896. And he was never a Charlestonian. But he married into a Charleston family so that made him be, be, in. He always—my father doesn't like Charlestonians.

SB: Very well, fair enough.

WL: But anyway, made him a little [bit of an] outsider. I went to local schools. And ended up by going to a school in Mt. Pleasant because they started a new school over there, and they had girls in there, and I was 16 years old and was quite interested in girls. Graduated from over there in 1943, and immediately my father put me in The Citadel. And I, uh, went to

summer session here at The Citadel. It was the first summer session that they ever had. I, uh, left in September and was called into the Army because they couldn't do without me.

SB: Fair enough. So you were drafted sir?

WL: Yes, I was drafted; but then I volunteered. I volunteered in the paratroopers. And the paratroopers were a very funny outfit. You volunteer to get in, but you can't volunteer to get out.

SB: Fair enough.

WL: They put you in the stockade if you don't, don't do what they gonna tell ya. But anyway, that was my young life. Then I got introduced to the Army. They took me up to Fort Jackson, and Fort Jackson—I decided I wanted to be a Marine, because I wanted to, uh, fight the Japanese 'cause my brother graduated from The Citadel in 1940, and he was a prisoner of the Japanese. He was taken, he was taken prisoner in 1942 when the Americans refused to send anybody over there to rescue him. And I wanted to fight the Japanese. My father and my mother didn't want me to fight at all, because my brother was over there and they wanted me to stay home. But then they found out I was colorblind.

SB: They found out you were colorblind?

WL: Colorblind. So I couldn't get into the Marines. So then they decided—I was a fairly small fella—that I'd make a good pilot. So they took me, set me up on that, and then they said that well, wait a minute, you're colorblind; you can't be a pilot.

SB: Damn it. (Mr. Leonard laughs.)

WL: So then they decided I'd make a good infantryman; so they sent me over to Camp Wheeler in Macon, Georgia, to take basic training. Got over there, and I took basic training. And

about after we been the about ten-twelve weeks, these two officers came by in these sporty outfits and these sporty boots and all this kinda stuff and, the first thing I thought about that is: Man, that thing is going to attract women. So I volunteered immediately for the paratroopers; and my best friend, whose name was Robert Matson, from Charleston, he volunteered, too.

When we finished up with the seventeen weeks, they sent us up to Fort Benning where we took parachute training. Now, parachute training is very different from any other training: All instructors wear nothing but white T-shirts. And they, you never—there's no rank in this school. You go to school with, beside colonels, and everybody wears a white T-shirt. And you can't tell anybody's rank. But they (laughs) but they're pretty tough on you. What you do, the first thing they do is: You never walk, you run everywhere.

SB: You're running everywhere?

WL: Everywhere you go. You get up at five o' clock in the morning. You run for five miles before breakfast. Then you get—you'll have breakfast. You'll exercise all day long. You run. You do everything all day long. Then they put ya— (Laughing.)—They have a thing that was 50, 40 feet up off the ground you had to go up a ladder to get there. It had a cable that came off.

SB: Okay.

WL: A cable. Must have been 100 yards long. Not a hundred yards but, but two or three hundred feet. Of course, you get up on this 35-, 40-foot thing. You're dressed in a harness—no parachute on or anything—you're dressed in a harness like a parachute and you hand these (risers?) to this instructor. And this instructor hooks them up, supposedly, and you get in the position, and you jump out of this thing, this tower, and you drop 35 to 40 feet. Then this cable

grabs ya and you go down this cable trying to make this fall, practice fallin'. Well, it seems that the fella in front of me didn't get hooked up.

SB: Wow.

WL: And he jumped outta this thing, and he landed on the ground—big fella. And I was sittin' there with my mouth wide open; 18 years old, didn't know anything—thought I knew it all. But anyway, this fella gets up and he says, "Hell, this is too tough an outfit for me."

(Laughs.)

SB: He was done.

WL: He quit. They locked him up, and they finally brought him back and he finished up. But they were pretty tough. But anyway we—last week you jump out the airplane and also put you up on 250-foot towers with your parachute wide open with a steel ring around the parachute. So, if something happens, that steel ring is going to kill ya. But, anyway, when you get up on top of that tower and look down and that 50, 50-foot tumblin' mat down there looks like a postage stamp.

SB: Yeah, I'm sure.

WL: Right between your feet. You hang in the parachute, and they release it. And where they release it, they got a PA system up there, and they say: "Are you ready?" And you drop a piece of paper when you're up 250 foot to see how the wind's blowin', to blow away, to get away from the towers.

SB: Right.

WL: It doesn't matter what you say, yes, no, or whatever.

SB: You're jumping regardless.

WL: They goin'. But anyway, you drop the paper, like you're told. And it pulls you to the tower and scares you to death, and then you're supposed to pull on these risers and get up. Then they pull you up about another 20 feet.

SB: Okay

WL: And when you get up to another 20 feet, the bounce starts, and that gives you a heart attack 'cause you think you're comin' off the tower. And, then, then they release you. Then you come down this (suit?) and pull away from the tower. And then when you land on the ground, you practice falling, and all your classmates run and pick you up, bring you back. But that was very interesting.

The most interesting part—five weeks of school it was—officers and enlisted men, all wearin' white T-shirts go to class every day. Of course at the end of the day, officers go back to the officer's quarters, and the enlisted men go back to the enlisted quarters. We were in the Alabama area, and we stayed in tents; the officers stayed in the barracks. But anyway, let me tell you some interesting things that happened.

SB: Okay.

WL: They had a place like your uh— (Points out the window.)

SB: Barracks outside.

WL: And they'd exercise you in this thing.

SB: Right.

WL: And (Laughs.) this a—you sit out and exercise about an hour doing all kinds of exercises, and these instructors would come around if you weren't doing it right you'd have to give 'em 15 push-ups. Used to do 25, but they cut it down to 15. But [if] you don't do 15, you've got to get up and give 'em 25 more. But I was a small fella. I wasn't pretty strong and all this: I weighed 126 pounds—one of the smaller fellas. And they pick on ya if you're small, you know: "We'll fuck you up," and all this stuff.

SB: Right.

WL: And it irritated me to be called small 'cause I thought I was ten-foot tall. But anyway, (Laughs.) this went on for quite a while. Uh, lost my train of thought.

SB: It's alright.

WL: But anyway, then, uh, we were exercising. And this fella, older man, got up, and he spit in the sawdust.

SB: Okay.

WL: This fella came up—he was a sergeant—and he said, "Did you spit in the sawdust?" He said, "Uh, yeah, I'm a doctor, and I got some sawdust in my mouth, and I spit out the sawdust." He says, "Sir, we have to put our faces down in this thing." He says, "I don't care if you're a doctor or who you are—you shoulda known better than that." He says, "Don't you think you should be punished for that?" He says, "Well, look. I'm a Colonel in the Army; I'm a doctor." He says, "Well, you shoulda known better." He says, "I want you to run around this triangle," [which was] 'bout as big as this one here, "and you stop at every corner and say 'I have been a bad little Colonel, and I promise I'm not going to do this anymore.'"

SB: Wow, a bad little Colonel.

WL: This fella says, "I'm not gonna do anything like that." And he says, "Sir, will you please step out line? We're flunking you out, sir."

SB: Wow! Flunked a Colonel.

WL: The Colonel says, "Wait a minute—we'll talk this thing over." He says, "No sir, there's no talk about it." He says, "You're out."

SB: Gone.

WL: And that's how tough they were. They were tough on everybody. But they were tough, no doubt about that.

But the last week you packed your own chute.

SB: Okay

WL: They taught you how to pack it. Two fellas packed a chute, yeah. You put it out on a long table, about 50-foot long. From your toe, to the top of your head, to the top of that chute is 60 feet.

SB: Wow, that's a lot of folding,

WL: You folded all the stuff up and stacked it on the table. Then, after you finished packing the chute, you could go to town. So everybody's in a hurry to pack their chute. And of course all these jokes came along: You'd get your chute stacked on the table, and he'd come along and push your chute off the table. And of course everybody'd get mad at him (Both laugh.) because he's holding you up and you want to go to town.

A lot of these fellas would just pick up the damn chute and stuff it there and fool around, and it's done. I was always very careful with mine.

SB: Well, you've got to jump out with it the next day.

WL: I never been up in an airplane or anything. Only time I'd ever seen Paris is in movies. But then, the next morning, we'd take up (unclear words), and we would stand in line. Only 18 men could get on a plane; we were in C47s. 18 men (in a stick?); they'd take you up. On the side of this building, they had 10,000 (unclear words) where everybody had a box. "I made a jump this morning. It was darn fun." Next would say, "It was horrible; nearly killed me." All these things, on the side of the building, which you read.

SB: Before you went.

WL: Didn't encourage you too much. I always thought about what if the shoot didn't open? But I went up, made a jump. Four daylight jumps and one night jump, and of course, everybody's scared to death. And everybody doesn't want to show that they're scared. They don't want this fella sitting beside him to think they're scared. 'Cause everybody's scared.

What you do in the plane: you stand up; you hook yourself up, the fella in back checks the back of ya, you check the back [of the man in front of you]. You stand in the door—you stand up with the red light to do all of this. And the man stands in the door, and you make a quarter left turn when you go out the door, right foot out. You turn, and you go under the tail. You slow down the plane and all this stuff. And the prop blast coming off that big engine is blowing like a hurricane. And you jump with a static line. That static line's about 40-foot long; that static line pulls the chute up. You drop, then all the sudden everything gets dead quiet. You swing up there in the swing.

SB: Outside of the plane?

WL: Outside the plane, swinging out. And the chute pops open, and the chute pops open and everything gets dead silent because you've been sitting in there with that engine for an hour, and so your ears hear nothing. When you're swinging up there in that swing, it creaks. The risers creak, and you can hear 'em. It feels like another world all the sudden you've come into. And then, a funny thing happens. You're not falling anymore, no sensation of falling, at all. You are in a swing, swinging back and forth.

Now you wanna come in swinging forward, so you can make your maneuvers and spread out all of your body to keep you alright. But the funny thing about parachutes—sometimes you take a step off the parachute like stepping off a step and not even fall down; next time you hit the ground so hard you feel like somebody's driving you through it. And the funny thing about it is, you gotta check your chute and all and make sure you don't have a (unclear). It's like a paper sail at the top of the shoot or something to do all that. Funny thing about it is, you're not falling; all the sudden the ground comes up and hits you.

SB: Yeah, I'm sure.

WL: And lots of times it'll catch you by surprise. Getting all in formation and, bomp, you're on the ground.

Never had a real bad jump. Fell down in the plane in Normandy and I got back up. Never had a bad jump.

But, then, after the jump school, they let you go home.

SB: That's nice.

WL: Two weeks. Then they bring you back, put you on a boat, and send you to England.

SB: You were in England first?

WL: Yeah, wait, well, my outfit was the 82nd airborne division. I was in the 505 Parachute Company—no, not Company, Regiment. It was the oldest regiment. Now, they didn't have paratroopers in the Army until the Germans got the big parachutes; so we got the big parachutes. They jumped, used it against the British quite well. In 1941, I think, about 41, they took an Infantry Company—Regiment—which was the 82nd and made it into a Parachute Company. You had to volunteer to get into it. And that's the way that worked.

But anyway, they sent me up to Boston and we got into boats, forgot the name of the boat, with 5,000 men. And we went over by ourselves, five days. Landed in Glasgow, Scotland. I'll tell you a little funny thing about that.

SB: Okay.

WL: A little funny. Got onto this boat—been in boats all my life, never been on the ocean. Got on the boat. Put me down on D-deck, which was down next to the heel on the bottom, with 600 men in this section.

SB: In the bottom?

WL: On the bottom with 600 men. And they have a bathroom that's, probably, ten times bigger than this room, with salt water that's running through troughs all the time.

SB: Okay.

WL: And you had these folding bunks that came off the things, and you had about this much room (spreads his arms a bit farther than shoulder width), maybe three feet, maybe not three feet. And you had to go down this line and the bunks would come down and you would have to get in it; it was like a casket.

SB: Okay.

WL: You couldn't sit up in it. And I was very lucky; I got the top bunk—you could sit up in it.

SB: So you could move around.

WL: It had more room, and it had a PA system there.

And the boat took off, got out there. And of course, everybody got seasick.

SB: I'm sure.

WL: And you ate twice a day, but you had to get in line for four hours to eat, so you get there during your time to eat. You gotta go around the ship and all this. I went to two meals then someone went and got throw-up on me, so I said, "To heck with that." Got in this bunk and started reading these big books—paperback books. And I had a light there; I was about the only one that had a light. They came with a smoking lamp lit and all this kind of stuff, and I never went back out on deck again; I just stayed. Didn't know night from day, and I didn't get sick. And that trough was full of people puking all day long; it was terrible, but I didn't get sick.

So we were on there for about four days. (Laughs.) And I was eating K-rations. Y'all don't know what a K-ration is; looks like a box of Cracker Jacks.

SB: Oh, sure.

WL: But it had chewing gum in it. Dinners, breakfast, whatever. I didn't give a damn what the food was. I didn't wanna get mixed up with all that.

SB: All that mess upstairs?

WL: Yeah, (Laughs.) All that mess. We're down below D-deck, and all the sudden, the (ak ak?) guns on this (damn plane?) opens up. And the (ak ak?) guns were so up there, they shook the boat. Six hundred men hit the floor and tried to rush up the steps like this (Crosses his hands.) going up there. I got to the steps, and these fellas were grabbing each other and pulling everybody off and trying to get up on deck. So I said to hell with this—I'd rather drown. So I turn around, got in the bunk, and it comes over the PA system that they were just testing the guns. (Laughs.)

SB: So you were right all along.

WL: They were testing the guns; the Army does everything hurry up and wait.

Anyway, we came into Glasgow the next day. Took two days to unload the ship. They also—you carried—you had a pack with a pair of shoes in it. You carried all that on your back. You also carried a bag, which was about that long. (Spreads his arms out about a foot past shoulder width.) It all went into the bunk with you, and two weapons: You carried a rifle and a Tommy gun. Different weapons, BARs, all of it had to go to (unclear words). All of this you had to carry off. And when you got off the ship, you gave 'em the guns. You didn't carry the guns anymore. They just used you to carry the guns over for them. The, the bags went on the truck and

you went on the truck and they carried us off to Glasgow Scotland, no not Glasgow (Bristic?). Anyway, went up there (Laughs.) and there's a funny thing there I'll tell you.

They put us all on a field like you got out there (points out to The Citadel's parade deck). Just a big field, a big wide open field, and these Sergeants would come out and call out your name. And you'd go to the Sergeant and say, say, this fella about six-foot tall shows up calls my name and says, "Godamnit, I got a little one." And, oh God, I was mad. I was about 5' 7" tall. But anyway—and I thought I was ten-foot tall. I jumped out of airplanes and have done all these damn things and these fellas are fighting me all the time, trying to make me quit all the time. I would of died before I quit; but anyway, you can't do this and—But anyway, so I got mad, red in the face, and everything, and this fella looked at me, and he says, "Big Leonard! Big Leonard!" This big six-foot fella—'bout 6' 7"—came up there and looked like the First Sergeant. Turns out his name was Leonard Funk.

SB: Leonard Funk?

WL: Funk. F-U-N-K. And he was the First Sergeant. Turns out later, he was the most decorated man in the whole, whole division.

SB: In the paratroopers?

WL: Yeah. And he says, "Let me trade you. We'll have little Leonard for big Leonard. His first name was Leonard; his last name was Funk. My last name was Leonard, you see. But this fella says, "Hell no! Ain't nobody want to trade with you, Floyd. You must be crazy." But this fella got the Congressional Medal of Honor.

SB: Big Leonard did?

WL: Funk. Funk did, six months after he came home. After the war was over they gave it to him. But anyway, he's on the Wall of Honor over there at Patriot's Point, He's dead now. But anyway, that was one of the funny instances. So this fella turns to the sergeant, and he says, "You know, I was just kidding you. You know that I'm the only person in the world that can keep you alive." I asked him what he means: Can you keep me alive? He says "People don't fool around with replacements; and if I don't teach you, you gonna die." You see? So I sobered up very quick. He won the Congressional Medal—he won the Silver Star, in Normandy for knocking out two tanks.

SB: This is your Sergeant?

WL: This Sergeant, this Sergeant, I was with him when he won it. But anyway—well I'll tell you something about him. First Sergeant, he ran the squad. Five of us came back out of Normandy, walking. He was one of them. He, uh, we had a parade, like you have parades. He was asked to step out. They called his name up. He made the four men with him step up. Went up on the parade, and he was presented the Silver Star. He refused it.

SB: Wow.

WL: He said that, uh, "These men deserve it as well as I do." Eisenhower was there. He says, "Give them all silver stars." Never showed up on my record. (Both laugh.) But that's the kind of man he's was. He was killed in Holland by, by a German officer, with a burp gun. Cut a vein in his neck and uh, he dropped his Tommy gun, turned around and walked back by me, and I knew the fella was going to step out from behind the wall to finish him off. And he got alongside me, and I said, "Medic back there." The fella stepped out, and I put three rounds in his

butt, before he could make a shot. But anyway, but he bled to death. No blood on the outside. He was a real soldier.

We stayed in—I'll tell you about the parachute jump.

SB: One second Mr. Leonard—I'm going to check this camera real quick.

WL: I forgot about something.

SB: It's alright; it's alright.

WL: But anyway, I'll tell you about the jump. It's very interesting. I, uh, of course, this was my first jump. Combat jump. We don't count practice jumps. And, uh, but anyway, we went down to the plane, and they lock you in the airport. The parachute guards are inside, the American guards, and you don't go anywhere, you just sit in the bunk and wait for them to call you. You don't know what's going on; you don't know anything. You, you're separate from the Air force; you're in a barbed wire place. You can't write any letters; you can't do anything, see? You're like in the middle of that field out there. They've got (unclear) parts out there. No running water, bags of water, temporary things.

We knew we were going to jump at night. So, when the next day came, we knew we weren't going to jump, see? We were going to jump at night. When they called us, we went up, went up to the plane, and we started loading everything up on the plane at 10 o'clock at night. We took off at 10 o'clock. Let me explain something to you: 10 o'clock over there's still daylight. They had this triple daylight savings time. And when we were in camps over there, we'd go to town. The pubs over there close at 10 o'clock.

SB: Okay.

WL: And it would get dark at 12 o'clock—okay—so you'd have to be back at camp by 12 o'clock. It doesn't get dark till 12 o'clock, understand?

SB: Mmm-hmm.

WL: But the pubs closed at 10 o'clock, and, I mean, they closed. Now the pubs were a family affair. The whole family went to these pubs, and they'd sing and drink beer and, you know, these kind of things. And everybody goes Friday to get the girls drunk so they can screw 'em, or whatever you wanna do. And these girls were drinking beer since they were five years old so you had no hope. That's another funny story.

But, we went and loaded the plane. You have to—they put about 150 pounds of stuff on you, especially if you're small, because you could get out the door with it.

SB: Right.

WL: And they have to help you on the plane, because you can't get up there with all that on there.

SB: With all that weight.

WL: With all that on there, right. But you can stand. And we sit on benches, not like you do in airplanes, now, and you got nine men on each side. Now, sometimes, you drop one man every 20 minutes, but those three can't hook up. They gotta stand up there where the pilot is, and then that cable doesn't go back that far. So what happens is those three fellas, they've gotta hook up in that ten seconds that you goin' out the door. And this cable is jumpin' up and down like this. (Moves his hands in a climbing motion.)

SB: And you've gotta hook it.

WL: And you get up to that door; you push the cable forward. It leaves you, you see. There's a jump master on the other side, and when you jump out the door, he pulls over your shoulder. And you go out the door and there's a hook up that can pull your arm off. And you fall down—go off under that tail, and they drop the plane down to about eight miles an hour. But that prop blast is real strong, and it blows the chute up. But the last three men they put in there—usually there's only about 18 men—and its dangerous because if that doesn't open it, there's no way to open it. There's an emergency chute, but usually that emergency chute is a lot smaller than the others.

But anyway, we took off at 10 o'clock. First thing that happens is that Floyd comes by, and he says, "Billy, I want you to put this box on the side of your leg." I said, "What the hell is this?" He says, "This is 25 pounds of TNT." I says, "I don't know anything about TNT; I haven't been trained in this." And he says, "Oh, but just carry it for us." And we had ammunition we had to carry; we had a rifle. We learned not to put the rifle in the (container?) because it was hard to get ready when you got on the ground. We wanted it ready to use. And we stuffed the barrel with all kinds of things and all.

The jump was loaded with all kinds of things: hand grenades, all kinds of things. So we get on the plane, and Floyd comes by, and he says, "Here's a detonator"—little damn metal things about that long. He says "put em in your bag." I says, "Fine." He says, "Where you think you outta put that?" I says, "I'll put it right up here." I didn't know they were setting me up for a joke.

SB: Okay.

WL: A dangerous joke. I was being set up, see? So I get in the damn thing, and a fella comes up to me, and he says, "Where'd you put those detonators?" I says, "I put them right there under the strap there." It comes over like this and goes over your leg. He says, "That's pretty dangerous." We're on the plane going—we took off, you see—and he says, "That might blow your thing off." You know, I was just 18 years old. I just found out how to use it. But anyway, I spent the whole damn four hours trying to get this damn bag from under this damn thing. And all these fellas were watchin' me: You can't talk in the plane cause the damn engine is so loud; you have to holler. And I was trying to hide it—I didn't want anybody to know I was taking that thing off. But it turns out that it was a big joke. (Laughs.) That took up most of my time.

But anyway, we got out of this – we went around the Cherbourg Peninsula and came in the back door. Because in Sicily—I wasn't there—but in Sicily, the Navy, the United States Navy, was shot down—21 of our planes—22 men in every plane. We were scared to go over the Navy this time. That's why we were up four hours. Could gone straight up the channel and been over in an hour and a half. But we came in behind Cherbourg and, of course, we had all these pilots that were very proficient in what they're doing. We came in fairly low; I think we came down at 800 feet. The (ak ak?) was pretty strong. And I've never seen (ak ak?) before—looked like the Fourth of July with stuff coming out of the barrel. We stood in the door. I was about the fifth man back. And they have an electrical switch right there by the door, it's metal, has these flippers you flip, and you put a piece of (ten oil, all four of them?). The number five man, when he comes up, he hits it like that. When you hit it, it drops the bundles out from under the plane. But what I didn't know was, when you drop those bundles, that there plane gets so much lighter it jumps.

SB: Okay.

WL: So I went down.

SB: You were the fifth man?

WL: I was the fifth man. I went down to my knees, and I couldn't get up. And the people behind me, they wanted to get out of the plane.

SB: You had all that weight on you as well.

WL: I had all that weight on me, see; one of the big fellas grabbed me, pulled me up. I went out the damn plane. Chute opened up, checked the chute, and all this stuff is coming up at us and all this kind of stuff. But, it looked like it was far away. That's just the problem. So you wear a (unclear word) vest underneath your harness. But you don't want to use it under your harness because if you pull it, it's going to kill your chest. You go this harness on you, and that harness ain't going to give. So the idea is you get out, you get in the chute, you sit in the chute, you drop in water—was the idea. Our idea was that's going to cave your chest. So I get out, and they say, "You fall out in two foot of water, you gonna drown cause you can't get up."

SB: With all that weight.

WL: With all that weight. (Laughs.) So I'm coming in with the chute and I run in water about this deep (thigh deep). And of course I swam all my life and all this kind of things; and I stumbled right in the water but I didn't go down, and my chute went over a tree.

So I got out of the chute in pitch black dark, couldn't see your hand in front of your face. And I thought I was in the river. That's what I thought. So, I was trying to drag my feet, not to make any noise. And so I could feel the bottom. And so finally I did this, I got over. But what I didn't know was that the Germans flooded all these fields out there.

SB: So you were just in a field?

WL: I was in a field; I didn't know.

So I got up into this hedge grove on the side. All these French fields looked like checkerboards up top when you could see them in the daytime because they all got walls built around them and rows—and these hedge rows. But we didn't know all of this. But anyway, we got up to this entrance, there's a road inside this entrance with woods on each side, big trees. And got in this (unclear words), got my rifle out, and got all this stuff, left my damn chute out in the water.

But anyway, I'm sitting down in these trees and I'm thinking to myself, "What the hell am I going to do? I can't speak the language. I don't know where I am. I don't know nothing." And—and, I heard a noise. And being the replacement and not having any experience or anything I thought, "Oh my, I'm gonna kill me a whole platoon of Germans." I threw up the rifle and kept listening and kept hearing the noise and hearing the noise. Finally I emptied this clip into this noise, and something fell down and something was carrying on a little bit, but it wasn't hollering.

So just about that time, somebody grabbed me by the shoulder. And he says "Leonard, what the hell are you doing making all this noise"—Floyd, the Sergeant. And I says, "Well, hey man, I just shot a whole damn platoon of Germans." And he laughed, "A platoon of Germans?" "Yeah, right over there. I put a whole clip in there." And he says, "I heard your clip; I heard your clip." And he says, "Lemme go over there and take a look." So he goes over there and he says, "Goddamn." Pitch black dark out there, nobody can see anything. And he says, "Goddamn, you

know what you did? You just killed a French female.” I said, “A French female?” And he says, “And She’s got the biggest tits I ever saw.”

I got all upset—you know, sad—so I go over there and fall over a damn cow. (Laughs.)

SB: You shot a cow.

WL: I shot a cow. (Laughs.) And I say, “Floyd, don’t tell anybody I shot the cow.” He says, “Alright.”

So we went off in the attack on Sainte Mère Église, which we were about twelve-fifteen miles from. But we went off on the attack—this is 2:00, 2:30 in the morning. And we kept pickin’ up fellas as we went along. And I don’t know if you saw the movie, where John Wayne played out our battalion commander.

SB: Really?

WL: I think it was called *The Longest Day*, he called it. But anyway, he messed up his ankle in a jump, and they had to carry him around in a cart. But anyway, we finally got to Sainte Mère Église, and we took this town in daylight. And that was the first town liberated in France. And I don’t know if you saw the movie *The Longest Day*, but Red Buttons played the part of John Steele. John Steele was a fella who hung from the church steeple. I don’t know if you saw that.

SB: I don’t think I’ve seen it.

WL: Well, he was from Wilmington, North Carolina, and he hung up there. F Company dropped on Sainte Mère Église, and that’s the worst place to be. Because the Germans they were fighting the fire out of the middle of this town, and these (croaks?) went around and chopped up

all these paratroopers who got caught off buildings, churches, and other things. And they'd chop you up with a Tommy gun, what we call a burp gun. They get onto you and they can literally chop you to pieces like that; it fires thirty rounds in thirty seconds. It'd just chop you to pieces. And you were helpless in the chute because you couldn't get out of it 'cause everything is pullin' down on you, see.

But anyway, we lost a lot of good men. And he had a grandstand seat 'cause he played dead up there, and they thought he was dead.

SB: On the steeple?

WL: Yeah, on the steeple. And we helped get him down—and he's still hangin' from the church steeple. They got a mannequin up there—they made a tourist set out of Normandy—the Sainte Mère Église. But he died at about 67 from cancer. But that's one of the things we did together.

Then we had to go to higher ground on the other side, and we took it. And we fought over there 28 days, in Normandy. And ended up by Cherbourg. And then they sent us back to England, which was the land of milk and honey.

SB: Right.

WL: 'Cause that's where the girls were. And every girl wants to come to Charleston—I mean, the United States—you see? But anyways, we stayed there. Then, [come] August, they decided we were going to jump on Brussels, in Belgium. They took us to the airport, and it rained. They had themselves an open place, like this campus, we stuck holes in the camp and (unclear) so water would go through. That's how wet we got. Finally, they decide that they had

already taken the airport or something and we weren't going to have to jump. So they said, "you all gotta do a practice jump." So we went up and did a practice jump, and a funny thing happened there.

I don't know where we were for the jump, but the wind was peculiar: it blew you off course at night. And what you do is you land, and if you can't find anybody or anything, you go to the nearest road. You bring your chute with you, and you sit on the side of the road. They gonna send trucks out, pick everybody up. That's the idea. And of course the British roads are very narrow and very small. But I'm sittin' out on this road and there's a thatch-roof house right across the street, one-story house. And there were some funny lookin' soldiers sittin' outside, and I was sittin' out there and it was cold and a little wet. And I pulled the chute around me. Two soldiers came over and started checking me out, and they didn't speak much English. But, uh, so I explained to them I was waiting.

So they went back over to the house, it was getting close to daylight, but it wasn't daylight yet, and a light came on in the house. And I think it was a lamp, but I'm not sure; I don't think they had electricity. But anyway, I was sitting there, waiting for the damn truck to come by, and the two soldiers came back over and said, "The ladies of the house would like you to come in and have a hot tea with them." So I went over there. Wouldn't let me carry my rifle; I had to put my weapons down and all this stuff. And I didn't like that, but I wanted some hot tea. So I went in there and had some hot tea with them and they gave me little biscuits and stuff. And one of the ladies—they were about 55, 60 years old—one of them spoke perfect English; one of them spoke hardly any English at all. And when I got ready to leave, I was telling these ladies about my boots, and they asked me where I was from, and I told them I was from Charleston. And I said, "The paratroopers are very touchy about their boots. We won't allow any other

troops to wear our boots. We fight in 'em and take 'em off and all this kind of thing, and we are very proud of our boots.” And she says, “Are you superstitious?” And I say, “Very much so.” So she left; and then she called me back when I was getting ready to leave; she says, “I have something for you; [I] want you to carry it for luck.” And I said, “Alright.” And she handed me a coin, just about as big as our silver dollar. And I thought it a half a crown coin, which is what the British have. And so I put it in my pocket and I says, “Thank you very much ma'am. I'll carry it for luck.” When I got back to the truck, the barracks, and all, I never told anybody 'cause I was very suspicious about what was going on. An, uh, I pull out this coin. And this coin was a Dutch coin. And this lady told me when I went out she said, “It's got my picture on it.” And I thought it was a joke, you see? But it did have her picture on it. (Pulls out coin and shows it to interviewer).

That's the Queen of Holland.

SB: Wow.

WL: She was about 56, 57 years old.

SB: So you had hot tea with the Queen of Holland.

WL: I had hot tea with the Queen of Holland. And I told this story when I came home, and every young girl said, “What did she give you?” (Laughs.) I say, “God, I was 18 and she was 57—older than my mother.” But, yeah, that was one of the interesting things.

Alright, I'll tell you about (Marky? Unclear). That's another interesting thing. On September the 17th, which was about a month later, they decided that (Unclear words) all the materials and everything (unclear) going into the Germans that way. I didn't know anything about any of this; I was a Private. I didn't know anything about this at all. I did like I was told.

So, we were under the bridge; this was a British operation. But the 82nd Airborne and the 101st were going to be, the 101st were going to control the road and the bridges. And the 82nd Airborne was going to take Nijmegen and the bridge at Nijmegen. And the British, which had 15,000 troops, and, uh, paratroopers, were going to take it on. Well, we took the bridge; lost about half of them up there. This 101st did fairly well on these roads. They were supposed to be there three days and took six, seven days to get to us. But anyway, they did pretty well. But the British lost half of their people—more than half, ‘bout 1,100—and they didn’t take their bridge.

We stayed up there months, about a month or two. We got there on the seventeenth, and we left in the middle of November. There was a horrible disaster for the British. The British were very good defense fighters, but they weren’t very much on the offense. They wanted everything to be just right before they go. The Americans would—I’ll tell you a funny story.

The bridge at Nijmegen was a major bridge to take, and we fought a battle there. We did take it, and we lost about 40% of our people taking this bridge. And we got the British tanks that come up the road. We got ten of them across the bridge, and they refused to go any farther.

SB: British tanks?

WL: British tanks. The idea was to get ‘em up there so we could go save them from this German division. American division, British paratroopers—because they were gettin’ slaughtered, and they were 12 miles up the road—12 miles. Major Cook was in charge of this thing. He went up to the head tank and this fella got out, and he said, “Sir, we need to get up the road 12 miles to save your people.” And he says, “We can’t go—we gotta wait for the infantry to come by first.” He says, “Those are my orders.” And he says, “Sir, we will get your tanks and ride with you. Your people are getting slaughtered up there.” And this fella says, “No, I gotta

obey my orders.” And he says, “But you don’t understand. Your people have already lost half of their people, and the Germans are cleaning them up there. We can get up there in most, probably four or five hours with my people, see”? He says no, and Major Cook got mad as hell, and he says—and he pulls out his 45 and he says, “You son of a bitch. I lost half my men, and you don’t wanna go up there?” And he says, “Get out that damn tank. I’m going to take over.” This fella gets in the goddamn tank then locks it down, see? But that was a big thing. The English got mad as hell at us because we did all that. Only about 1,200 men came back out of that alive, ‘cause they was all chopped to pieces. But we stayed up there. Floyd was killed up in that town, too.

SB: That was you sergeant?

WL: Yeah. Lot of little funny things happened. But then we—they—sent trucks up there and sent us down to Reims, France, on about November the 15th. And we didn’t know this, but the people in Holland were starving to death. Because we were holding the Germans on their lines, and we were going out there and shooting cattle and things like that cause the British weren’t giving us anything to eat. They were treating their troops, but weren’t feeding the American troops. Give you one can of bully beef a day and this kind of thing. So we were bringing—all the sudden people were coming into town, and they were taking the feet of the cattle, and they were starving to death. We didn’t even know it, see? People—when you fight in the war—they leave their homes, and get away from the fight. They don’t want to get killed; they don’t want to do anything. And they abandon their homes. And they all go out and live with cousins or something out in the country or something. A lot of people up there died; there was a big stink about it. I’m talking about civilians. We left about the 15th of November and went to (octoridge?) camp in Reims, France, and we rested there and got reequipped, and all this kind of thing. And we were sending people off to Paris for the weekend and stuff like this.

Then the Belgium Bulge broke out, and it broke out on the 17th of September, and it was a Sunday. I remember it very well. We were let in a movie, in one of these big rooms. And they're showing movies to about 50 to 60 people. And this fella came out—cut the movie off—and said, “All officers report back to your sections.” And they broke it down to the Sergeants; and we all knew something was going on. I had KP stance that next day. KP. And I went up went to bed about 10 o'clock, I guess. KP—you gotta get up at two o'clock in the morning.

SB: Okay. That's a watch, I'm assuming. KP is like a night watch of sorts?

WL: No, KP is you go help in the kitchen, help cook the food, all that kind of damn thing.

SB: Okay.

WL: Peel potatoes, all that kind of thing. And my Sergeant got pissed off at me and put me on KP. I got in a fight with a fella, in the barracks, because he was bullying a little kid around, a little Italian kid who was smaller than me. He got a lot of stuff; stuff came in early for Christmas. And he got a lot of sausage and all this kind of dry food and all. And he was a little shorter than me. And he and me were talking, and he gave me some of the sausage and stuff like this, and this fella tried to come up to him and bully him to get him some of the sausage and pushing him around and all. And I got pissed off, and I was fussin' with him, and he and I were about to get into a damn fight, which you don't do with anybody in the outfit, see? And the damn Sergeant walks in while we were in the middle of this thing.

SB: Almost.

WL: Almost, see. And he says, "What's going on?" And I say, "Nothing's going on. We're just having a little discussion about a disagreement." And the kid picked up and he says "He was trying to protect me." And he turned to this big fella, and he says, "Are you crazy? Do you know that only these fellas in this room can keep you alive?" He says, "If you make this boy mad at you, who do you think is going to save your butt?" He says, "He ain't going to shoot the German off of you. You see that fella that you fighting with? He's shot two fellas off of me down in Holland. You think he's going to want to help you?" And this boy turned green. I says (as he extends his hand for a handshake), "We fight together." But anyway, that happened.

Then they came down us that morning. They got us up at two o'clock, and they said, "We're going up on the line." So we went and got trucks, tractor-trailer trucks, but they're open on top, and they had aboard on them about up to here (puts his hand to his chest). They threw some hay in them, and we sat on them. And it took us all day to get up there. And we got up there before it got dark. Then we realized that we didn't have any equipment, no ammunition, no grenades, no machine guns, and all this. So we start stopping all these people that are going, running, and they'd all raise hell cause they wanted to get away from the Germans. And we say, "We don't want to stop you. Give us your ammunition, your weapons. You see, we don't have any weapons. They ain't going to send you back up here if you don't have weapons." So, hell, they gave us their weapons. Then we went up to a town called spa, S-P-A, that was first Army headquarters or something up there.

And we went into the attack on the Germans; and these damn tanks were coming at us pretty strong. And paratroopers don't have anything to fight tanks; you've got to get up on the tanks to fight 'em. That ain't much fun—everybody's shootin' at the tanks. And Floyd was

pretty good at that. He got the Silver Star for knocking out two tanks, and I helped him. But he taught me how to do that.

What you do is you get alongside the tank. Everybody's hittin' the tank with everything—and those Germans had some big tanks. What you gotta do is get somebody to open up that hatch on the top. He can't see anything. They're about completely blind in that tank. And every time they get hit with something, they don't know what they've been hit with and they don't know how bad they're hurt. So he's gotta stick out his head to look.

So what you do is you sit there and you listen alongside those tanks, and usually he goes up there—usually it's the top officer. And the tanks open up like this with head protection. It makes a noise. And when it does that, two men get up on the tank. When you hear 'em click, you stick your rifle in it. You can't get shot. Then you fire a couple rounds and they bounce around in there. The second man picks up the tank, throws a grenade in there. And that's simple, but the idea is to get off the tank.

SB: Right, pretty quick.

WL: So you do that; the bazookas wouldn't hurt the German tanks.

We fought in the Belgium Bulge, too. Well, I think the Belgium Bulge ended about the 15th or 16th of January. But it was the worst battle I've ever been in. It went down to six degrees at night. You lived in a hole in the ground—no houses, no fire, no nothing. And we had summer uniforms. And we had so much snow, and so much everything up there, freezing, they couldn't get equipment up to you. They couldn't get ammunition up to you, and the planes couldn't fly. And it was miserable. When you got hit, I'm saying you got shot or something, you looked like you were on fire. The blood would come out, and you were on fire. And if you didn't get to a

medic quick, you'd freeze to death. No doubt you'd freeze to death. And it was so miserable, people were shooting themselves to get off the line. Don't shoot yourself in the foot cause it's got so many bones in the foot you can't repair it. Shoot yourself a little bit up in the leg and all this kind of thing. It was just miserable.

But a lot of funny things happened up there. And then I got hit—that was about February the first.

SB: That was after you were out of the battle of the bulge?

WL: We were in the attack, running after the Germans.

You know we didn't beat the Germans. Everybody says, you know, you all won the battle. That's a bunch of crap. The Germans gave out of gas. They couldn't operate the tanks so they had to turn around and run.

SB: Fair enough.

WL: You see? See what I'm talking about? They gave out of fuel; they didn't have enough fuel. Those big tanks the Germans had, they gave three miles to the gallon. They only had fifty-gallon tanks on 'em.

SB: So eventually they had to turn back.

WL: Yeah, their equipment was much better than our equipment, there's no doubt about that. German soldiers were good soldiers, there's no doubt about that—excellent soldiers. The SS were mean as hell, but they were good soldiers, big, tall, strong fellas.

Spent three months in the hospital, then they wouldn't send me back to my outfit. They said I was limited service—

SB: Where were you shot, sir?

WL: I was shot twice, but (unclear words). What happened to me was, I was in a hole with four fellas. And what you do is—it was in February—and everybody takes a turn. Two fellas were watching—for a (stake?)—it was a big hole, and I went to sleep at I guess about twelve o'clock; and I went down and got into the bottom of the hole and that's the last thing I remember.

Next morning I wake up—and I'm still in the bottom of the whole, about frozen to death—and I can't feel my legs; I can't feel anything. And I have body parts all over me, blood all over me. So I start hollering, and I couldn't get up. So I picked my butt up with my hands, and I tried to move a bit. And finally these fellas came and dug me out. And there were four of us in that hole. Well, I was the only one that come out alive. A funny thing happened: they think the shell came and hit the edge of the hole. And I was on the bottom, so it didn't get me. And I didn't bleed any but had frozen—had my foot frozen. So they hauled me back, took me back to Paris. Hurt.

Then this guy tried to steal my boots. (Laughs). And—and, that was a mistake. (Laughs.) What you don't realize is that the fellas in the back stole everything. They steal all the cigarettes and sell 'em, do all that kind of damn thing. Big black market. And they sold (unclear words), big operation. And a lot of deserters and all, and they'd steal everything in the back and sell it, see? Back at The Battle of The Bulge, we couldn't get any equipment because it was being sold,

you see? I had had my boots, had tied em. The medic told me before I left, “You better hide your boots.” He says, “They gonna steal ‘em from you.”

So I was going into Paris by train. They called me up there to Paris Hospital, and I still had my wet clothes on, couldn’t change my clothes at all, you see? And when you’re on the line, you never completely—you never get enough sleep. Because there’s two men in a hole and one man’s gotta be awake all the time cause the Germans’ll cut your throat while you’re sleeping. You gotta remember: somebody’s trying to kill you every minute of the day. So you have to be alert all the time.

This fella was sittin’ on the side over there and said, “These fit me, I think I’ll take these.” I said, “Hey, fella, leave my boots alone!” I said, “I jumped in Normandy; I jumped everywhere. These boots are my lucky boots.” He says, “Aw, hell, you don’t need ‘em. They gonna cut your foot off anyway. Look how purple it is.” I says, “Don’t do it, fella. Please don’t do it.” He was pulling on my boots, couldn’t get them on. I said, “Look, you son of a bitch, if you don’t quit, I’m goin’ to kill your ass.” He says, “Go ahead and kill me then.” I reached in and got my P38, and I was going to shoot his ass. Then the damn nurse says, “He’s gotta gun!” (Laughs.) They grabbed me, stuck something in my arm, and knocked me out.

I—I—they got me inside, and they next thing I know I was in the damn bed and didn’t have any clothes on. And, and, the nurse came in and says, “You were out when you came in here.” Nice lookin’ little nurse. And I said, “Where’s my gun?” And they say, “We’ve confiscated it.” And I said, “I carried that gun the whole damn time I was in the service.” And I said, “How ‘bout my boots?” And they said, “Oh, we’ve got your boots.” I carried that gun, and I said, “I want my gun back.” And they say, “You can’t have your gun.” Two days later, the gun

was sitting with the boots: She went and got em for me. The gun is worth now on the market about a thousand dollars.

SB: You still have it?

WL: I still have it. My son-in-law took it away from me. I was sick in February. I was throwing up and couldn't stop for two weeks. And I figured I was about ready to go; so they went and stole my gun, told me they wanted to clean it. They thought I might shoot myself. I'm not going to shoot myself.

Well, I'll tell you another little funny story. They put me in the Inspector General's office, 'cause I could type, in Marseilles, France. And they set up a repo depot there.

SB: This was after?

WL: This was after the war was over. This was in May. And I was mad 'cause I thought I outta go home. Then, they set up an area outside of Marseilles (unclear words). And they had a fella named Lieutenant Cauden—Colonel Cauden. I was a Private, but he took a liking to me because I was the only combat soldier he had. So he gave me—put me in charge of issuing all Jeeps and passes; I could sign his name to the Jeeps and passes. Then, later on, every outfit that came through the repo depot had to come through the Inspector General's office and get them to sign off before they could go. And he didn't want fool around with all that. So he gave it to me; and I didn't go down into the office until about ten o'clock in the morning. And I issued Jeeps for officers, Jeeps for everybody.

So this was in May. I stayed there, and I was raising cane, and I went down to the personnel office and I said, "Look, we're sending these boys home with 85 points." I says, "I've

got a 160-something points. How come I'm not going?" He says "We don't have any records on you." I say, "What do you mean you don't have any records?" He says, "We don't have any records on you at all. As far as we're concerned, you're in the German Army."

SB: Wow.

WL: I says, "Look, man. I've got all these things." He says, "We have no records on you. They never forwarded your records." So I went and told the Colonel 'cause I figured he could help me. He says "No. There's nothing I can do about that." He says, "By the way, they're going to transfer me to Tokyo. They want me to set up a repo depot in Tokyo, and I'm going to take you with me." I said, "I can't go." I said, "I wanna go home."

But anyway, you couldn't write that you were in Germany, which I like 'cause my mother never knew where I was, and I didn't want to worry her. But anyway, I got to thinking about this thing, and I thought I'd be in the damn Army the rest of my life. So I wrote a letter, and all these fellas were coming through my office all the time. (Unclear words) [I'm assuming he struck up a friendship or encountered someone he knew] So I says, "I want you to do me a favor when you go home. You going home?" He says, "We're going home. We're going to take off and go to New York." This is about November the 15th. I says, "I want you to mail this letter for me." You didn't have to have a stamp or anything, just put free and put your name on it. All soldiers sent mail free. He says, "What's going on?" And I told him the story. And he says, "Damn right I'll send the letter."

So when he got to New York, he mailed it to Dad. My father got—first off—his best friend was a senator from South Carolina named (unclear words). So he called him and they went up with my mother to the Pentagon and, somehow, they got in to see General Marshall. I

don't know how. And General Marshall tells Daddy, "What your son is telling you is not true. We don't have that (unclear words) in the service at all." And Daddy got mad. And Dad—he's a big fella, and he goes—he didn't lose his temper, but he came close—and he said, "My other son, you killed off six months ago and you didn't tell me about it for another eight months until after the war was over. This other one, I want home." And he says—he told 'em, "My son doesn't lie. He's been over there fighting for you and you haven't paid him." He says "I don't give a damn whether you pay him or not." He says, "I got plenty of money, but I want him home."

So Marshall wrote a letter—I don't know if you've ever heard of it, but it's called an immediate-action letter. It's taped in red all the way around. And what happens is any officer—anybody that handles this letter—has to write a letter saying what they did with it.

SB: Okay.

WL: Understand?

SB: Yeah.

WL: Well, it ends up with this Lieutenant up there, and he calls me up to the office and tells me that I've illegally done this and that they could put me in jail for this—a thousand, ten thousand dollar fine. You know, I was nineteen years old, I didn't know what was going on, but I was scared to death. And he says you follow this (unclear words) and send this back. But if you put one thing in there that's wrong, 25 years from now we can put you in jail—which is a bunch of lies.

So, I filled this thing out, and I came out to about 128 points. You got five points for every medal, one point for every month you served overseas, and another point for when you first came in the service. It was all the fellas with the medals that went home first. February the 15th I went home; then I got up to Fort Bragg. They put me on a boat from Marseilles to New York. Then I came down to Fort Bragg. They said, "We've got to keep you here about two weeks." And here I am within a hundred miles from my house, and I ain't been home for three years. I says, "Why?" And he says, "We gonna give you a pension." I says, "I don't wanna pension; I wanna go home."

All these fellas outside were getting on the Greyhound buses to go home, and I got on the bus to go home. (Laughs). Called my mother at two o'clock in the morning; my mother didn't even know that I was coming. Came and picked me up with my sister, and I go home and my father is in bed, and he says, "You know they're going to put you in jail, don't you?" I say, "You know they do much more than they did before, Dad."

I get discharged six months later. They're telling me they owe me all this money. I didn't go back. Get a letter from the Red Cross telling me I'm going to get a pension the rest of my life: 13 dollars and 50 cents. I told them, "Just keep it."

SB: Well, sir, I know we've been talking for a while. Is there anything you'd like to add, any other stories you'd like to tell?

WL: I'm very proud of the 82nd airborne. I did the best I could. I'm not perfect by any means. The things I'm more proud of is my parachute badge, which I got 50 dollars for a month. And my combat infantry badge which I got 10 dollars for a month. I served with some real

heroes—there's no doubt about that. Personally I'm not a hero at all. I did what I had to to stay alive.

Your typical example is I went into Normandy as a machine gunner, trained in heavy machine guns, but used a light machine gun, cause paratroopers don't have heavy machine guns. Then I found out that everybody shoots at the fella with the automatic weapon. So I became a rifleman and stayed in the hole. When I was in the Battle of the Bulge, I was in charge of nine men. And this Major comes up to me and he says "We're going to make you into a Lieutenant," and I said that I don't wanna be a Lieutenant because those officers had to move around, and I didn't want to move around. I stayed in the hole. I wanted to go home.

Got in trouble with the Red Cross out there. You never got enough sleep, and I'm sittin' in the hole, and these two replacements come up, and they say, "We heard they got a coffee wagon serving hot coffee." Not one of us had washed our face, eaten anything hot for months. But I didn't drink coffee, never did drink coffee, so I says, "I'm not going." They say, "Come on. We're scared to go up by ourselves." (Unclear words) And there's the damn tune-up wagon, looks like a damn Greyhound bus. I say, "You all get the coffee, I'll go to sleep here." I said, "Just bring me a doughnut. I don't want any coffee." I get falled back asleep and the kid comes up, kicks me on the foot, and says, "They won't give it to us." I said, "What do you mean they won't give it to you?" They say, "Because we don't have any money, and you have to pay 35 cents." I say, "They have to give it to you. It's for the line." So I go there, and this woman is about 35 years old, and I say, "My men haven't had anything hit in a (unclear words)." And the woman says, "You going to have to pay." And I say, "You're going to have a hard time getting any of this stuff back." And she says, "Why?" And I tell her, "Because I'm going to shoot these back tires out if you don't give my men some coffee." She says that she'll report me to my

officer, and I say, “I don’t give a damn if you report me to my officer. My people are going to have coffee or you are going to have two flat tires. So she takes my name down and my people get the coffee.”

Pretty soon I get a call from a Major saying that they have a report on me threatening her. I says, “I didn’t threaten her; I threatened the truck.” I said, “This is stupid. This woman is crazy, and she’s lucky that someone didn’t hurt her bad.” He says, “Alright. Don’t do any more of that. The Red Cross raises hell.”

Now I’d tell you what I’d like to do. I would like you to come out to lunch with me one day, and we’ll go down to the Carolina Yacht club and have lunch. I’d like to show you how the old hats live.

SB: Alright, sir. Well, I’d appreciate it.

WL: When you get the chance to do that, you give me a call. And we can either go to dinner or lunch.

SB: Okay.

WL: You can bring a young lady.

SB: I’m not afraid of that, sir. I appreciate it.

—END OF INTERVIEW—