

**Franklin Clum
Veteran**

**Interviewed on August 2, 2005, 10:30 AM
American Legion Post Saugerties NY
Saugerties, New York**

Q: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

FC: I was drafted around 1945. In fact it was about seven weeks from the time I graduated from high school and I was in the army. I went in and go out of state 1945, it was just near the end of World War II, but I shouldn't say more to you until you ask me these questions.

Q: It's fine, any time you want to jump in...

FC: I took training at Camp [unclear] in Georgia and we took what was called Japanese combat training because we were going to be in the invasion. I would have been in this, probably the second wave which would have gone in about February 1946 and that would have been some blood bath, but Mr. Truman had the bomb dropped so that canceled that out. I had 17 weeks of Beijing. 5th battalion [unclear].
[Laughter]

Q: After that, did you go to a boot camp? Go on with your story.

FC: After boot camp I came home for a what they call a delay in route in December of '45. I was home for like four or five days and then I left for Camp [unclear] in Virginia and from Camp [unclear], Virginia I was shipped overseas. I got on the boat January 3rd, 1946 and I arrived in LaHavre, France in one of the cigarette camps. They were named after cigarettes -Chesterfield, Camel, Lucky Strike- I don't remember to this day which one, I'd like to think it was Chesterfield because maybe I used to smoke a Chesterfield every once in a while. [Laughter] This was in LaHavre, France and from there I went to [unclear], Germany which was called to be a replacement debo or as we say in the army "Reppel Seppel" and I contracted scarlet fever. When I got out of the hospital in Marburg I was assigned to third division signal headquarters in a place called Bad Wildungen in Germany which is a resort town, even nicer than Lake Georgia at the time and I'm not making comparison, I don't mean it that way. Bad Wildungen was located 30 miles southeast of Kassel, Germany and Kassel was in the northern part of the american zone and I was there for a few months. I had a good duty there. They had mineral [unclear], people used to walk down the street with a glass and a glass straw sucking on a mineral water. Beautiful hotels.

Q: During the occupation army in Germany?

FC: This was occupation army, but I was...

Q: Were you ever near the front with the Soviets?

FC: No, I was in the American zone which was to the west, the west would be south of Berlin. I have to say I had another assignment I haven't really finished because I was in two different outfits and I got out of the Private First Class. I've never attained any rank further than Private first Class because I wasn't in any outfit long enough and from Bad in Germany I went down to Frankfurt, Germany and I was in the G5 division displaced persons Bureau. I worked in the IG Farben building which at the time was the largest office building in Germany and I was there for a few months and from there I did a lot of traveling, I was lucky. I went to Switzerland for a week, I have a book there. A beautiful book, it's a little bit beat up but brings back a lot of memories. I went to Paris a couple of times and I ended up bunking with a fellow that I graduated from high school with. He was the son of the superintendent of school's Randy Moore's and him and I ended up together.

Q: Randy Moore has a son?

FC: Do you know Randy Moore?

Q: I know just the school and some of his pictures, that's about it.

FC: In his office on the back wall was a indelible phrase that I'll never forget "If you don't make excuses that good". We're not out of Frankfurt. I went to rest camp in [unclear] and I went to another one up on the Zuiderzee. [Pause] That's about it for Frankfurt. So now we're in December of 1946 and I got on board a ship, the general class ship in Bremerhaven, Germany on the North Sea. From there we sailed to the United States. I forgot to mention that, going over I was on the USS Sea Tiger. It was converdict Liberty ship, it had guns up on deck and I slept on deck a couple of times but that was a smaller ship than the general place. [Pause] Now I'm coming back home and I arrived home December 24th, about 24 minutes to midnight, I just made it Christmas Eve. I got in the United States the 24th in the morning and I got home that night, I was really lucky.

Q: When you were in Germany, did you keep contact with your family?

FC: Yes. I have the letters that I wrote to my parents. I have a ton of letters my aunts and uncles and friends so forth sent me. They're probably going to end up in the woods biscuit tradition. It just seems like a shame. Of course they are personal but yet if there's a history...

Q: To compile them in a book and we'll put it in the museum you want to go.

FC: I've read the letter. Now we're home christmas time. I was overseas eleven months and one day. January 23rd until December 24th, 1946. The minute you get on the boat and you go out of the territorial waters you're overseas. That's where they count it. After Christmas I went back to Fort Dix, sometimes it's called camp dix. I could never figure out which but I think at the time it was Fort Dix, it is the same place but two different names. From there I got my discharge and I had leave coming, 30 days leave so they sent me home and I got my discharge in the mail.

Q: So you made it home and here you got your discharge?

FC: Yes, I've been here ever since. I'm just getting used to the neighborhood and I kind of like it here, I've been here for 42 years. [Laughter]

Q: When you come home, did you take courses on the GI Bill?

FC: No I didn't. I thought about going to college but by then, 1947, I was discharged in January 30th, 1947 and I went into business with my father down at Main Street. I married in July 18th of 1947 and I thought about going to college. One thing I always regret was when I was in basic training they called the battalion out one day, about a thousand men, and they said we have a list here of twenty men that are eligible to go to officers training school and anybody of these twenty that wants to, to just step forward. Not one of us stepped forward. I was one of the 20, but we wanted to get out. I also had the chance to be sent to school to learn Japanese. I regret very much, that I didn't do it.

Q: When you were in Germany, did they do anything for good luck? Did you see any entertainers?

FC: No, we never had that. I noticed that. We had a USO club in Bad Wildungen and we had shows in the Palmengarten in Frankfurt, Germany, but they were local people, most of them.

Q: Did they do pranks? Did anybody do anything humorous or stuff like that?

FC: There are some things we can't even talk about, but not real pranks. In Bad Wildungen I lived in a German doctors house, three stories. He got the first floor and we had the next to next floor occupied. We did not have a vet jacket or anything. I was a clerk typist at that time but when I went to Frankfurt when I worked for displaced person, I mentioned before I didn't get the rank because it wasn't fun, but I was doing Staff Sergeant work and I had a girl working for me and she was a buck sergeant, American girl. She had a field right to command troops and she was working for me. [Laughter] When I left to go home she mailed a lot of stuff in boxes and in fact I still have some of them.

Q: You have quite a bit of memorabilia here on your table.

FC: Here's the dog tags. Of course we know what's on the dog tags. It has your name and your surveilling number. A is the blood type and then there's t45, but I can't remember what that was for. From the Lutheran Church I got this. [Pause] It says "In case of need notify Lutheran chaplain, National Lutheran Council". You remember when I mentioned the barrel, do you? I made it out of a lot of Boy Scout that whole deal and I have an opinion on that. I was a scout first class in 238 and I firmly believe that being a member and training with the boys scouts of America is very important to anyone during a military service. To this day I still know the scout oath and I'm going to say it on camera. I will do my duty to God my country to obey a scout boy to help other people at all times to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight and the scout boy is a scout that is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. I

think they shouldn't have reverent. I said to myself shall I say that or not, they're going to think this is corny.

Q: No. There's an item there, something for on the shoulder...

FC: I know, I can't remember what it was called, I just pulled it down the last minute. I just want to mention this. This is my third division pageant. I was very pleased that I was in the third division because that's the one that [unclear] Murphy was in. This one is a flaming arrow division. This was a headquarter, a headquarter for United States forces European theater... Then you mentioned these things that you put over your shoulders. I'm thinking of the word...

Q: It's a french name. It's a ...

FC: I heard of it, with an oat leaf cluster or whatever. I even have a combination scorebook, this is from when I shot with my rifle on a record. I don't know how many I got, I read through them yesterday. But it's interesting, looking at an M1 rifle, but we also trained with a carbine. We also trained with a Browning automatic rifle, the Thompson submachine gun and did the flamethrower, we did the bazooka. Just keep your head out of the way with the bazooka or you won't have any head left. I remember firing images and an old tank. We shot rifle grenades too off our ramps, usually we put that on the instep of our foot and aim in general direction and fire.

Q: Did you keep in contact with anybody that you were in the service with?

FC: You know, I regret so much that I didn't. Because there are names of people I know [unclear] Walters, Rudy Morleno, there's folks at a summer camp up there, and some other guys. There was a fella from [unclear]. I just thought of his name, Bruce Casey is his name. I think I've seen him a couple times since then.

Q: Did you join the veterans organization?

FC: Yes, I've been a member of the Legion for 50 years and my card doesn't say so, but there was a glitch that time and it got broke. I also joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the US, in fact I had my Legion cap on the chairman. I'm proud of the Allegiant Air, you probably noticed when you came in the front porch.

Q: Have you gotten in any reunions or anything like that?

FC: I've looked up reunions and I never found anything. Probably because of the fact that I was with those outfits such a short amount of time. Let's say an average of five months for each one and overseas eleven months.

Q: What did you do for your career, for your life after your service?

FC: I went to work for my father in 1947 and that's how I scratched 27 years on Main Street and after that I was excited to do something else. My father wasn't too happy about it, but I ended up working for the county of [unclear] in the division of purchasing as a supervisor in central services.

Q: Did your clerk typist come in handy later on in life?

FC: Not really. Maybe a little bit in the business but I've been retired 15 year, 78 years old and I lost my wife Madeline February 15th 1989 and since then I've been here alone, so 16 years. But my daughters in Peru, Christine and Carol are very good.

Q: Is there anything you want to add that we haven't covered in the interview yet?

FC: I think I said everything... When you leave I'll be like oh jesus why did I not mention that. Oh yes there is one more thing. I mentioned the boys scouts but my darn here forgot. Before my service we had an observation place called [unclear] hill. I have a card here and I was just a kid. I was five foot six and I am five foot ten now, my weight was 117 pounds and now I way a lot more than that, but it doesn't say what year, so sometime during the war and here's the patch that you would wear on your arm. A little bit moffy but you can still read it.

And then we have these books to identify the planes -Japanese, German- recognition tutorial. That was during the second World War and here's a later edition and chances are that was the Korean War because I also served in the Korean War that started in July 1950. Anyhow that's that. What else... [Pause].

Q: What is in your albums? Letters and stuff?

FC: I've got weekend passes, bus tickets, train tickets. I saved everything. I've been really tracked by days.

Q: That's good. Most people don't even have anything, not even close to what you have.

FC: From a very little clothing the only thing I have... these go up on your collar. [Pause] I don't think I have any more over here.

Q: I'm surprised you kept a lot of stuff, a lot of people don't even have half, not even a tenth of what you have.

FC: Chances are this stuff will go over to the American Legion, if they want it.

Q: Some stuff we just don't have it because of the room. I'm in the process of getting another book shop. Alright then, thank you very much.

FC: Thank you.