

**Donald M. Genthner
Veteran**

**Bill Payne
Interviewer**

**Interviewed on February 21, 2006
American Legion Post
Saugerties, NY**

We are here at the home of Mr. Donald M. Genthner and it is February 21st, 2006, shortly after Mr. Genthner's 91st birthday.

Q: Now you served in World War II correct?

DG: Right.. Right

Q: Were you drafted or did you enlist?

DG: I enlisted

Q: Where were you living at the time you enlisted?

DG: My mother and father's house on Main Street.

Q: Main Street right here in Saugerties?

DG: Yeah

Q: Why did you join the service?

DG: I don't know I thought I could do something I guess.

Q: You joined the Army, right? Why did you pick the Army as a branch?

DG: I don't know, probably because I never liked the water too much! (laughs)

Q: So the Navy and the Coast Guard was out and the Marines too probably.

DG: Right!

Q: Do you remember what your first day in service was like? Where did you go?

DG: Camp Upton in Long Island. It was very rushed and everyone was trying to find out what the hell was going on. Nobody knew nothin'! just waiting for the chance to get out so we could go somewhere else. It didn't take long before we were on the road either.

Q: Now you mentioned to me you went to Fort Meade, Maryland. Is that right?

DG: Yeah, that's right. We joined the Infantry Division there.

Q: What was your training like?

DG: Well, there was combat infantry training.

Q: Was it a challenge? Were you able to get through it okay?

DG: Yeah

Q: Do you remember your job assignment? You were a private in the infantry right?

DG: Yeah

Q: Were you in combat at all?

DG: No, I wasn't in combat, I just trained for it.

Q: Were you in the States the whole time or did you go overseas?

DG: No, I was in the states the whole while.

Q: Do you remember anyone getting hurt during this time period in your unit?

DG: We had a couple instances. One kid had gone into the range and jumped up and when he did the sergeant had let off the trigger and had shot the kid through the throat and then they called us off the range for that day. Another day, when we were dressed in fatigues a field rifle was going up this range and this little guy from Brooklyn, I'll never forget him, boy, there were potholes in the range filled with dynamite and they told us "stay away from those, as far as you can or you're going to get messed up" Well, he was eager beaver he kept right on going to and he got along side of one. Plop! The whole damn thing went over. Christ what a mess he was!

Q: Did it kill him?

DG: No, he was just a mess though. All mud and muck.

Q: The fellow that got shot that must have killed him.

DG: Yeah, Boom. He was dead running, he hit the ground.

Q: How did you feel about those experiences?

DG: Well, I don't know. It kind of makes you think mind your business, do what your sergeant says, and follow instructions.

Q: During the time you were away from home how did you stay in touch with your family?

DG: We wrote letters back and forth.

Q: Did you get any furlough?

DG: Oh yeah, I had furlough and we used to get three day passes.

Q: What was the food like?

DG: Not bad, I was pretty lucky. It was pretty good.

Q: Did you have enough supplies?

DG: Yeah.

Q: Did you ever feel homesick or stressed?

DG: No, I never had that feeling.

Q: What did you guys do to entertain yourselves?

DG: The guys in the barracks would try anything; kick the ball around, throw the ball, do anything to stay busy.

Q: Was there ever any entertainers like USO shows?

DG: No I don't remember seeing any entertainers.

Q: Do you remember where you were when you found out the war came to an end?

DG: We got orders to load up. We were gonna load up the whole damn division and go to a camp in Oregon, but we never made it there. We ended up at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and we were there until the end of the war when they dropped the two bombs on Japan.

Q: How did you feel when the war came to an end?

DG: Good, about time!! (laughs)

Q: How did you get along with your fellow soldiers and officers?

DG: Good!

Q: After you got out of the service what happened?

DG: I came back here to Saugerties.

Q: What did you do during the first days and weeks after the war was over?

DG: I remember getting things cleaned up around here and with the garden and going to work for the telephone company in Kingston. I worked there for thirty-three years I guess it was and then I retired.

Q: Did you keep in touch with any of the guys you worked with in the service?

DG: I made some friends, but I never really kept in touch with anyone afterwards.

Q: Did you join a Veterans organization?

DG: No, I never did. I was kind of a loner.

Q: How do you feel your military experience effected your life?

DG: It didn't affect me too much.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add at all?

DG: I don't think so.