

## Taped Interview

Dallas Reunion 2006

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### George Cason F Co. 409<sup>th</sup>

I was in F Co. 409<sup>th</sup> Second Battalion, Third Platoon. I carried an M 1. I was associated with Camp Fanning. We have an organization of people who took training at Camp Fanning. It is a big organization. I was president of it for five years. They had asked me about the story of the bridge in Telfs, Austria. It is real close to Innsbruck. We had decided if we had to take Innsbruck by force we needed to take it from both sides of the Inn River. There was a bridge across the Inn River at Telfs. We found out that the bridge was loaded with charges ready to blow it up. There were guards on each end of it. We went down there with the Company, but the Platoon went down the mountain. When we got there, we thought it would be better to sneak up on it. So we took one squad. We took my squad. I was a scout in the squad. It was my position. We went along the river staying out of sight until we got to the bridge. My squad leader, Philip Elbert could speak fluent German. We got real close to the bridge where we could see the guard. Elbert and I went up to the guard real quick. He told him the Krieg; is pretty, the war is pretty much over. The guard looked at him and said Gott

sei Dank! (Thank God!) By then the guard on the other side of the bridge came over to see what was going on. He saw that we were American so he stopped and opened fire. Meanwhile, we had sent people from our A and P Platoon over the side and underneath the bridge to cut the wires to the explosives. We saved the bridge. There was a big home nearby that we went into. We took cover there. That is what the article is about. *What happened to the guy who opened fire?* He kind of got fired on. He did not last too long. *The first guard was ready to quit.* When we went to this house, they opened fire on us from across the river. We had a little bit of a firefight there. The rest of the Platoon came on up to help. It all worked out real good. We never did cross the bridge. We got the bridge open so that it could be crossed. I think some of the company went across but we didn't. We went back. We entered Innsbruck. We did not have to fight our way into it. We rode the tanks into it. It was declared an open city. We didn't have to fight going into it. *I remember they were out cheering and throwing flowers. It was like liberation rather than conquering.*

I had an interesting story that I was going to tell you. I was wounded in December of '44. I was sent back. I was in a hospital in Paris. I was operated on there. From there I was sent to Cherbourg. I spent time there recuperating. After I was able to get up and walk around a bit they wanted

to send me back to my outfit. It was early in January. I was in the hospital about a month. They sent me to a Replacement Depot down below Paris. I forget the name of the town. They called me in and told me I had been reassigned to some other outfit and we are getting ready to send you to that outfit. I said, "I'm sorry, but I have seniority. I have been in that outfit too long. I am going back to my regular outfit. I am going back to the 103rd." They said, "We don't know where that Unit is." I said, "Try to find out." They went off and got into a meeting. They finally came back and said, "We just can't find it. We don't know where it is. Do you think you can find it?" I said, "Sure, I can find it." So they went and got all my paperwork and my equipment, gave it to me, showed me the door and said, "See you later and good luck". They turned me loose. I could go home because I had all my papers and everything. But I went out and started hitchhiking and I caught rides in these two and one-half ton trucks. Every time I would get in one of them I would ask them if they ever heard of the 103<sup>rd</sup> Division in the Seventh Army. I kept getting a little bit closer, and a little bit closer. Finally, one of them said, "I know where it is." So they took me to Division Headquarters. I went in there and told them who I was and what Company I was in. They said here is a cot; rest awhile, go to sleep. So I made myself at home. About 10 o'clock that night, they came and got me. They said,

“While you are here we want you to stand guard.” That figures, you know. They showed me this trailer out there and said to go stand guard by that trailer. I said, “OK.” So, I started parading back and forth in front of that trailer. After awhile a guy came out of it, an officer. He called to me and said, “Hey soldier, come over here and sit by me.” I said, “No sir, I can’t do that. I am on guard duty.” He said he could take care of that. I said, “OK”. I went over and sat down by him. He was a general that had just been assigned to our outfit, named McAuliffe; “nuts McAuliffe.” He had just been transferred out of the 101<sup>st</sup> and in to our outfit. We sat there, had the nicest conversation, and got to be good buddies.

After that, I went back to my regular squad. *When you were at the repple depot and they were going to send you to another outfit, you said “No”. What rank were you then? I was a PFC. But you insisted that you wanted to go back to your regular outfit. Yeah. And they relented. That was unusual.* I know it. I told them I had seniority and I had been with my outfit too long. I had been with them in the States. I said, “I am just insisting you send me back.” They had no idea where it was. They just turned me loose. I could have come home, no problem. *You could have gone to Paris or anyplace.* You met McAuliffe just when he was assigned to the 103<sup>rd</sup> in January ‘45. He was a real nice guy. *Others have said the*

*same thing. One of our members met him in New York. He was a head of a corporation like twenty years after the war. When he told the secretary he had been with the 103<sup>rd</sup>, she was not going to let him see McAuliffe. It was a big business office. McAuliffe heard him say "103<sup>rd</sup>" and said, "Let that man in here!"* He recorded the conversation, wrote it down for me and I put it into the album. *After you got back to F Company what happened?* We just went back in the line. Same old routine. It was up around Climbach. I need to write it all down. *That is what I have been doing, writing down stories from the various guys. Some wrote it in their own handwriting. Some had their daughter type it. Then your grandkids can transcribe it for you. They could put it on a computer.* I have a neighbor who has been asking me to write my memoirs so I wrote a few of them. Nowhere near all of it. *When did you join the 103<sup>rd</sup>?* I joined the 103<sup>rd</sup> at Camp Howze. I was not in the ASTP. *When did you enter the Army?* It was early in '44. I was 18. They sent me to basic training at Camp Fanning in Tyler, Texas. From there I went to a camp in Mississippi, just north of Baton Rouge. I was living in Baton Rouge while I was stationed there. We were waiting to be assigned. Then I was assigned to the 103<sup>rd</sup>. I had a good friend at Camp Howze. He was my roommate. We were sitting and talking to me one day. He said, "I sure wish I had brought my guitar." He was from Tennessee. I said I would

go find him one so he could play it. I kept looking in the barracks until I found one. I asked if I could borrow it for a little while and they said, "Sure". I took back and gave it to my friend, Jack Dickerson. He laid there and played and played. He was very good at it. When he got through he said, "You better take it back." I took it back where I got it and was fixing to hang it on the wall. A guy said, "Don't put that up there. It doesn't belong in here." I said that that is where I got it. They would not let me put it up there. I went all through all the rest of the barracks and could not find anyone to take it. I took it back, gave it to Jack, and said, "You got to keep it, I guess." So he kept it all the way. He played it on the ship going over. We were on A deck in Guard Duty Company. We got over there in that little camp up above Marseille on the plateau. We had pup tents. He would lay down on his back in that pup tent with the guitar over his head and play. When we left there in route march, we met some civilians on the road; he gave it to them. We really never found out who it belonged to. It was a nice guitar. Jack was from Tennessee. I don't know what happened to him. He got wounded before I did and I lost track of him. His name was Jack Dickerson. He was from over near Chattanooga. I tried and tried to find him but no luck. *Mel Wright has a master roster; three different rosters I will*

*see if I can find him for you.* When I got back to the Company in January,  
he was not there.