

Taped Interview
Nashville 2009

Glen E. Crain, Medical Detachment 411th

My name is Glen Edward Crain. The record states two dates for my date of birth; April 14th or April 15th. I use the latter. It occurs at a busy time of year, being tax season. I was born in a little village called Fay, Oklahoma which was founded in the early days of the settlement of Oklahoma. When the railroad came through everybody picked up their buildings and moved about four miles to their current location. My father was a farmer and my mother was a housekeeper. I was born in the same log cabin my mother was born in. In the early years of the Depression my Dad went broke. He was under capitalized at subsistence farming. My grandparents moved from Waynesville, N.C. to Oklahoma in 1993. There are a lot of Crain's in Texas; I am related to only a few of them. Most of those to whom I am related moved from Oklahoma to Texas after WWII.

I was a senior in high school in Blackwell, Oklahoma when I heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I knew it was a very serious matter, an unpardonable insult. Most of the younger guys who were eighteen or so, knew this would involve us directly or indirectly. The Oklahoma National

Guard was placed on active duty in 1940. Very few guys made any serious preparation but a few enlisted in the service organizations of their choice or made a service commitment, I should say. Two joined the Marine Corp, one joined the Paratroops. Several joined the Air Force; at least three joined the Navy V-12 program. Most of us recognized our immaturity and stayed in Blackwell waiting to be drafted.

In school I had been a second string athlete. There were some boys in my hometown of Blackwell, who were outstanding athletes. BHS had a very strong football program, and an outstanding wrestling program. The coaches were named Bill Ledbetter and Harold Cotton. Although I took wrestling class for two years, I was never good enough to wrestle competitively. When I was in San Antonio, we were on break outside the building, talking in a big group, and I mentioned my football and wrestling experience. I guess that seemed so incongruous because I was such a skinny guy, but it followed me for a long time. When I got to Camp Robinson, I was maneuvered into being the wrestling coach for about eight or nine guys who wanted to wrestle as a recreational exercise. I felt a little pressured about that because I hardly knew the vocabulary of the sport. In those days, you did it whether you knew all about it or not.

I finished high school and worked in a warehouse at a glass plant in the summer in order to save money to attend Northern Oklahoma Junior College. I had one semester of pre-engineering in college before I was drafted, entering the Army January 19, 1943. I got my uniforms and shots at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. After being there for about a week, a bus load of us were sent to Camp Barkeley near Abilene, TX to the Medical Training Facility. About the only thing I can recall about the mess hall was being introduced to fried oysters about once a week, which I loved, and how chapped my hands were as a result of cleaning my mess kit in that barrel of hot water. I kind of enjoyed basic training; I got into condition quickly making it easier for me than some of the others. The new uniform made me feel important and honored. I use to go to all the shows that were brought to the immediate vicinity there. I think I went to at least one show a week, which were usually very small shows. They may have sent me to the Medical Training Facility because I had Latin in high school and I had small hands. Maybe they sent me because I was a good human being, but I doubt it.

My cousin George Shanley, a man name Wally Faucher, and Leo Jarrett trained with me. I sure missed this girl I had just met at NOJC. That turned out to be mostly daydreaming! I was at Camp Barkeley for about a

month when they promoted me to Technician Fifth Grade (T/5). Then I was sent with a bus-load of men from Camp Barkeley to the Brookes Army Medical Center located at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas for training as a Dental Technician. I was there for three months, where we studied what constitutes a good mouth structure. We carved three or four teeth from soap as models. Later we produced, as part of our projects, a splint for teeth for a broken jaw. We used a vinyl compound to construct the splint. We learned how to fill cavities in teeth, using mercury amalgam. We also learned how to make full upper and lower dentures. For about a month we had some training in a clinic in the main hospital. San Antonio was an excellent place to spend your off-hours touring. I enjoyed the missions, the Mexican food, and the fancy movie theaters. The Aztec and the Majestic theaters were like palaces. Many theatres were like that in those days. I think we saw the early war movies and musicals.

When that training was finished they collected a bunch of guys that had come down on the bus from Camp Barkeley and some other people at the train station. A train car full of us was sent to Camp Joseph T. Robinson, located in North Little Rock, Arkansas as cadre for the 55th General Hospital. That was another very comfortable, enjoyable situation. During this training time, I was feeling under utilized and maybe a little bit too rank

conscious for my abilities and experience. I was in charge of a detail of dental technicians that would go from our Company area to the Camp Robinson Dental Clinic. While we were there we were learning to do actual dental work. Some of the guys were assisting dental officers filling teeth and other typical dental work. There were eleven men in the dental group of the 55th General Hospital. Four of these guys were assigned to me to go to the dental clinic. There were some others who went to a different place. I remember one man was being trained as an assistant to a dental surgeon; heavier stuff. Hal Lenintine and I were initially assigned to be dental hygienists. Part of my rank consciousness prompted me to request transfer to the laboratory. That took place in June. I continued to train there with the 55th for a couple of months. I think it was in August that a bulletin was posted that they were accepting students in the Army Specialized Training Program in preparation for their becoming noncommissioned officers and officers. The rank of Second Lieutenant was my goal. I applied for that. In the meantime, I had become special projects guy in this small group that I was with. We were planning to build five dental cabinets for the dental practitioners when we got to our destination in the field. I took measurements from the existing dental cabinets and drew up plans. The cabinets were going to hold dental instruments for regular dental practice.

They were about chest high, contained six or seven drawers and were to be made of wood. In September we went on a bivouac for about a week of training up in the hills at Camp Robinson, in Arkansas. It was pretty country, with pretty heavy woods, and I enjoyed it. When we returned to camp, half of us were given a two week furlough. I went home. All of us enjoyed that quite a bit. I was back in camp when the other guys finished their furlough.

I had been back in camp about a month when I received orders to conduct a group of men to Arkansas State University at Jonesboro, Arkansas. We traveled by train. It seems like it took over a day, but it was only a couple of hundred miles if that far. We stayed there nearly a month mostly doing physical training and close order drill. The obstacle course was very challenging. You ran up to a 24" log placed at the edge of a dry stream bed about 5 ft. deep. You jumped over the log, stepped halfway down the cut, took a step on the bottom and then halfway up the log wall about six feet high. It was easy if timing was good, disastrous if not! I was the highest ranking individual there. There were a few PFCs. I was the only Corporal, two stripe guy. I realized then, that maybe this is not what I thought it was going to be. I wasn't feeling very optimistic about the way things were going.

Part of us received orders to proceed to the University of Oklahoma. We traveled there by train also. When we got there we were quartered in the basketball gymnasium, where about one hundred cots were set up. We had a cot and a barracks bag of our very own. After a short time we moved into two-man rooms in some very nice brick dormitories. There were about sixty of us in a building. We started taking pre-engineering classes or medical training. I think University of Oklahoma had ASTP men there for about one semester before I got there. I took English, Algebra, Trigonometry, Chemistry, Physics, Military Science, and Geography as well as two hours of Physical Education three to five times a week. We attended classes 8-5 week days and 8-12 on Saturday. I figure it was the equivalent of 27 college hours, but there were no labs.

I was introduced to the game of soccer. Pardon me, but I was pretty good at it, considering I had never played before! In those days I had so much self-confidence and was in such good physical condition that I would do things that other people might not do.

I was one hundred miles from home, so while I was there those three months (we arrived there the first week of December.) I went home for Christmas, making me the subject of much jealousy. That was 1943 and I was nineteen. I became twenty in April, 1944. I went home a couple more

times while I was there. My two brothers, who were younger than I, had dropped out of high school. Both of them were in Wichita, KS, working. My parents were not formally well educated. My mother had six years of school and my dad had eight years in a one room school house. He always advised me to get as much education as I could. At the time I was going home I had two sisters and my parents living in the same house. My parents had three boys, then three girls. The older girl, when she was about eight, contracted a serious intestinal illness. Her recovery from that took a year or two. She ended up living with one of my Aunts who did not have children but loved children a great deal. My Aunt was in a better position to give my sister the care and training she needed.

At the end of my first semester the ASTP program was terminated nationwide because the war effort in Europe needed manpower. In early March my friends and I were sent by bus to Camp Howze, located near Gainesville and assigned as privates to various units with the same MOS's (Military Occupational Specialties) we had been assigned originally, in nearly all cases. My striving for advancement had simply accomplished a demotion, in fact. I was more than a little disgruntled about that. I felt like, really for the first time, complaining about how the Army treated me. All this time I had felt that I was being under utilized. There were thousands of

other guys who could make the same statement; I suppose. I worked in the Dental Clinic with Capt. DeMatteo from early March to early September when the 103d shipped out. I think it was in April, a bunch of us ASTP guys were given a four week basic training refresher which gave me a total of two months of Basic Training. I went on one three or four day bivouac while I was with the 411th and working in the Dental Clinic. I went home about every two months. I would walk out of camp and either hitch hike or catch the bus to Oklahoma City and on to Blackwell.

In early September, we got our shots and took a train ride up to Camp Shanks New York. *(I didn't mention my stellar performance on the foxhole and tank training back at Camp Howze. That involved digging a foxhole and having a tank run over us. I dug through about three or four inches of earth; everything was going great. Then I hit solid rock and couldn't remove anything but dust, no matter how I hammered on that thing. The tank was coming down the hill straddling the row of holes. The Sergeant said, "get in your foxhole and get as low as you can." He watched to see that I was not crushed as the tank just slowly crept over me, getting me use to the motor and the fumes.)* At Camp Shanks we went out on a routine training hike with full field packs and then climbed these rope cargo nets up into the simulated ship. I started up that rope ladder and I realized what poor

condition I had allowed myself to get into. I wasn't getting any physical work in the clinic.

A clerk in the Medical Detachment and I rode a train into New York one night. We walked around and went into one of these two-bit dance places for about an hour. One of the girls in there said, "You are a lot different than these other guys." I didn't explore that but I asked her what time she gets off work. Four AM was too late for me! We went to the Stage Door Canteen, a famous place. A day or two later we rode the train down to the ferry to Staten Island, where the docks were located. I think that trip took from 6am to midnight. I boarded the *Marine Devil* as the Red Cross handed me coffee and a doughnut.

We had a two week boat ride to Marseilles. The Atlantic was pretty rough for a few days. My bunk was at the top up near the front. During rough weather, the ship would go up and crash down; it seemed like it dropped twenty feet. It would just about rattle you out of the bunk. I didn't enjoy the mess hall on that trip. My favorite place was up on deck, when that was allowed, but I didn't get seasick until we passed through the Straights of Gibraltar. I got seasick one time and I can't prove whether it was the nearness of Marseilles or the still water that got me upset. But within two hours of passing the Straights of Gibraltar, I was hanging on the

rail. I don't recall doing calisthenics on the ship. (Once on the train ride from Texas to Chicago to New York we stopped and for thirty minutes to an hour we did calisthenics.)

One morning we docked at Marseilles or some place east of Marseilles. We walked right through the city. A lot of my companions were waving nylons and candy bars at the girls that came out to watch us. I didn't have that foresight. We marched carrying our full field packs and barracks' bags until 1 or 2 o'clock that night. We were instructed to pitch our two man pup tents in a row out on a plain, where we spent two or three weeks. I shared my tent with a man named Bill who was the company clerk. On the ship, we were allowed only a salt water shower followed by a fresh water rinse, about once a week. A portable shower was set up while we were bivouacked. We were able to bathe two or three times a week, maybe. I assisted Dr. DeMatteo in filling teeth during the several days we were there. We had a very picturesque apparatus to set up in the open field as a dental clinic. There was a fold out chair that the patient could sit in. The dental drill was driven by sort of a revised sewing machine. There was a linkage of three leather sewing machine type belts which linked up to the drill, which ran on various low speeds. We would pump a pedal with our foot. No matter what condition you were in it became hard after eight hours. I don't

remember whether Captain DeMatteo used Novocain on those fillings or not, but he probably did. We used soap and water to try to stay sanitary. I don't think we always washed between patients in the field. I don't remember having a patient that did any bleeding. Dr. DeMatteo was the only one groping the patient anyway. My job was to operate the drill machine, mix the mercury amalgam for the fillings and clean the instruments. Dr. DeMatteo used Isoeugenol as sort of a palliative for any soreness in the tooth. He could also use gentian violet to paint the gums for gingivitis.

I think we were there for close to three weeks before we got orders to motor march north and join the war. I made most of the trip in the back of a 2 ½ ton truck. We didn't see much. I remember driving north on that road out of Marseilles on a road with sycamore trees a yard from the pavement arching over the pavement. There were vineyards. I remember the houses in the distance as being very quaint. This would have been late October/early November of '44. We drove north to Lyon and then up to Dijon. It seems in Dijon portions of the Division were committed to the battle. This would have been the first few days of November. I remember sleeping in an apple orchard in Dijon. The 411th was held in reserve. When we weren't moving I was hanging around the regimental medical station not doing much. Capt.

DeMatteo was medical officer in one of the battalions and Capt. Priest was medical officer for the 1st Battalion, 411th Regiment. Lieutenant Gordon was a medical officer for the company clearing station.

I remember we had a couple of pretty cold nights in the forest as we moved up. One night, although we had some pretty nice foxholes to spend the night in, it got so cold we were so stiff we could hardly get out of the holes. One of the medical detachment men, whose name was Burgess, was so cold and stiff, that we had to support him under his arms. We had to feed him hot lemonade to get him thawed out and limbered up a little bit. I think he got a Silver Star, later.

I was hanging around the regimental aid station, they had made me medical detachment runner for the day. I met the executive officer of the 411th. I don't remember his name. He was a West Point graduate. The medical officer had sent me with a message up to the executive officer. His instructions were very explicit that I deliver the message exactly the way he said it to me. Which was to the affect: "The Regimental medical detachment now has a functional operating surgical light; the 1 ½ ton truck is missing a headlight." The executive officer asked me to repeat myself about four or five times. That night the temperature was in the low 20s, with about four inches of snow on the ground. That was the first snow we had. I saw a

couple of guys lie down in their overcoats in the snow and just go to sleep. I was unsure about that; I didn't want to freeze to death. But, about two AM, I lay down also. A day or two after that the 1st Sergeant ordered me to get my stripped back pack and my raincoat, and proceed up to A Co. to take charge of a litter squad there.

We were assigned to accompany a platoon from A Co. and spent a couple of days patrolling a heavy woods area, just outside St. Die. One evening right at dark we were still wandering around. One of the infantrymen sprained his ankle, so we put him on a litter. We carried him around in the forest for what seemed like two or three hours, not really going any place. Then the lieutenant in charge of the group asked me if I recalled where the cave was located that we had seen. I said I thought I did. He said they were going on ahead, and I was to meet them there. We went around to where the cave was located, looked around for troops but we did not see any, so we just lay down and went to sleep. I thought it was a ruse to get us out of the line of fire. At daylight Private Joe Powaga went over to where headquarters was located and got a jeep to come back and pick up the injured man. The driver took the injured man back to the Regimental aid station, and then he came back and took us to the outskirts of St. Die. The battle was essentially over. The jeep took us to an intersection where there

was a large round stone. He told us that was as far as he could go. We walked just a short distance and there was a sergeant who had taken refuge behind this large stone and he could not move forward. He was just frozen up. I tried to talk him into leading us into St. Die to give us cover. I frankly did not know what to do. I did not know where A Company was. I did not know if there was just a lull in the battle or what. I told the guys just to spread out and follow me. We headed down that road.

We went into St. Die and found SSgt. Glenn Wick who was in charge of Medical Detachment enlisted men and had set up the 1st Battalion Aid Station where he was coordinating the medical activities and he directed us to A Co.'s location. To get there we crossed a narrow, flooded river about 15 ft. wide, across which the Engineers had constructed a bridge of overlapping 2"x12" planks tied with a rope. When we reached A Co., nearly everyone was taking cover behind an eight or ten foot vertical cliff. Sgt Clark told us there had been some KIA's and five wounded, three of whom had been taken to the Battalion Aid Station already. We carried the fourth man to the Aid Station but had to wait until dark to get the fifth man who was isolated in the cemetery on top of the cliff. When we had far to go, we needed four men to carry the litter but when we crossed the river only two men were needed. Crossing the bridge was tricky because one had to hold

the litter away from his body in order to see when one stepped across those ropes. As we returned to A Co., we saw a wounded German infantry man lying in a ditch, pleading for help. No one was paying any attention to him and I didn't know what we were supposed to do, but I knew it wasn't right to leave him there. I got an infantry man to cover us while I made sure he was not booby trapped. We put him on the litter and took him to Battalion Aid Station. When I reported to Captain Priest, he said "alright, we will take care of the S.O.B.!"

After it got dark, we went up into the cemetery and retrieved the fifth man, who had been shot in the abdomen. We carried him down to the plank bridge at the stream and saw Sgt. Webb and many others standing around. Sgt. Webb instructed me to allow another man of the 411th Medical Detachment who was of very small stature to take one end of the litter. BIG mistake! I should have talked him out of it! We started across the bridge with that man holding the back of the litter. He had to hold it away from himself so he could see where to step on the bridge. The man did not weigh enough. We got halfway across that bridge. He started yelling at me, "Don't go so fast!" The litter got away from us. When I realized that we were going to drop the patient I opened my left hand in order to spill him upstream, then jumped in after him. I grabbed him by the collar and grabbed

onto the bridge. We dragged the man out of the water, took him to the aid station and I reported to Capt. Priest to inform him we had dropped this casualty. I felt, of course, that this was a very bad thing for a person shot in the abdomen. I described the situation for Capt. Priest: "This is Corporal XXXX, who has had a very bad day. He was shot early this morning, lay in that cemetery all day, shot through the abdomen, and while we were carrying him in, we dumped him in the river. He has not complained a word. He has a real belly full of guts." The corporal bolted upright with a look of alarm on his face! It was one of those things one wished he had not said. What I had intended to convey was that he was a strong, courageous, and patient man.

Capt. Priest sent me back to the Regimental Office where they had a stove going and I undressed and lay down on the floor. My clothes dried somewhat and sometime in the morning the medical records Sgt. sent me back to A Co. It was still dark. I think I just lay down on the ground for a while. Early the next morning people were running around so I got up. It seems like we spent a day there at St. Die. It seems like it was afternoon of the next day we started moving. We motor marched up north some place. We spent a couple days moving very slowly, and went into a village. An officer took a bunch of us inside a building which may have been a power

plant or a manufacturing facility. It was a building within a building. The interior building had a very low sloping roof. We were instructed to lie down on that roof to get a little rest. We were awakened about 4 AM or 5 AM the next morning and we moved up a hill into a forested mountainside, moving pretty much single file. The litter squad was more or less hanging around Battalion CP. We got a call for the A Co. litter squad to pick up somebody. The litter squad followed me up a hill to where the Battalion Aid Station was located; not more than 100yds. Lt. Gordon told me that there was a wounded man up front. He advised us to be very careful; to keep our heads down and not spend any time looking around. [Sergeant Harold Fields, a T-4, who I thought was the regular medic for A Co., the man I thought I was replacing, had been shot in the forehead.] We followed through on that: we picked up our patient, started back and were overtaken almost immediately by an infantryman with four or five prisoners. He insisted that these prisoners would carry the litter, which I finally agreed to, in order to avoid a debate there in the open. (It was a BIG mistake.) Somebody noticed that we were headed in a wrong direction. I said to stop while I located the trail we needed to take. When Leichtwiese and I returned, this infantryman had decided, on his own, to proceed down the mountain without waiting. Don Leichtwiese and I went looking for them

and we walked into a bypassed German sniper. He was extremely well hidden in a clump of bushes in a small grove of trees. As we approached this guy he said something but I could not understand him and I stopped saying, “what did you say”? And he opened up on both of us with an automatic weapon. I think he made a sweep from his left to the right. He caught Donald Leichtwiese first, hitting him in the groin. I had just enough time to make a dive to my left. I had my hand on my canteen. One of the bullets got me in the wrist and made a hole in my canteen. I am not sure whether it was that bullet or an additional bullet that got me in the left buttock. It was a penetrating wound that went all the way through. Don yelled for a medic. I managed to get a bandage on my left arm which was “jumping around” from nerve damage. I got up on one knee to see what I could do to help Leichtwiese. The German shot again so I took that as a signal that I was to lie down. I “squirmed over to see what I could do for Leichtwiese without getting off the ground. Pretty soon one of our squad, Tom Burns, came crawling up through the grass and he was crying. He said, “It should have been me instead of you.” He was talking to me. It really gave me guilt feeling because I had made a mistake; I had gotten two of us wounded. I had ten months to think about that while I was in the hospital. It was a screw up. Burns thought he could not get both of us out so he went

back to the aid station for help. He and Emil Putt came back. They supported Don under the arms and we walked to the aid station. The sniper was still there and I was concerned he would shoot again, when he saw I could walk. At the aid station Lieutenant Gordon and Emil Putt bandaged my arm, and noticed blood from my buttocks on my pants, which they bandaged. At this time the prisoners had come up with the original casualty. Leichtwiese was bleeding internally. (Emil told me later at one of our reunions that he didn't think Leichtwiese would survive the day.) Later, I walked down and Don's litter was carried down on the front of a jeep to the 410th Regimental Medical Station. Capt. Gordon had given me a message to give to Capt. Priest to send up some bandages and medicines. When we got to the 410th, I said "I have to go to the 411th." They said they would call Capt. Priest over, where I gave him Lt. Gordon's message. We were later moved to the evacuation hospital. They took our uniforms off and I could see Leichtwiese condition. His scrotum was filled up with blood so much that it looked like a big cantaloupe. That is probably what saved him. It limited blood loss. We were there for several days where they checked my wounds. After the second day I was there I was able to take a sponge bath. They checked my wounds. We may have been there for three or four days. At that point Leichtwiese and I were separated and I never knew what

happened to him. I was moved from there to a field general hospital in Besansone. It seems that I was there for 2 or 3 weeks. I remember one of the meals we had there. It really impressed me. It was very salty. I got out of my bed and peg legged back to the food service area to get another serving of ham. I had another operation on my arm while there. The surgeon at Besansone was possibly the most admirable man I have met in my entire life. He was handsome, tall, very intelligent, sensitive and professional.

I remember a Moorish soldier at the hospital who had been wounded. He was in a bed diagonally across from me. He would sit up in bed cross-legged with his sheet wrapped around himself like he was out in the desert someplace. We didn't exchange a word because I did not know the language.

There were female nurses and a female social worker, a very striking individual, who came to write letters for me. She took what money I had to buy some gifts for my sisters. She brought back three souvenirs bracelets with medallions of the provinces of France linked together. At that time my sisters were about six, eight, and twelve. That was a pretty fancy gift for them.

From there I was classified as “walking wounded”. I had received treatment for the wound on my left buttock. The surgeon took a scalpel and opened a trench to expose the bullet hole canal so it could heal from the inside out. That incapacitated me. From then on my hip was the problem wound; I could not sit down. They put a bunch of us on a French train to go to Paris. There was no place on that train, either on the seats, on the floors, in the aisle or anywhere on which I could lie down. I think that train ride was over two days to get from Besancon to Paris. I was feeling fairly abused by the time I got there; my arm and butt hurt and I was bone tired. There were other walking wounded people who were able to sit down.

We stopped at some point and we got off the train to have mess. There I was, with a stiff leg and a useless arm. They gave me a cup and a mess kit and filled it up with food. They gave me the utensils and something to drink. I had to carry them using only my good arm. There was no place to set the mess kit down. I had all this food but very little ability to eat. Anyway, I made it to Paris.

I checked in and was given a bed. A French nurse came over to give me a sponge bath. The only English she knew was, “It is time to bath the baby.” I had been there a day or so before I heard a familiar voice coming from the other end of the ward. There were about a dozen guys between

myself and the person that spoke. As it turned out, it was a neighbor of mine at home who had a very unique voice. He had been brought in with a sprained knee, and was sitting there with his leg stretched out having a great time. We were able to have a visit long distance. I was only there for a few days before they put me on another train. One of the most deliberate, demanding and serious things I had ever said in the Army was that, "I am not walking wounded." We went by train to Le Harve and by ship to Torque, England. I think it was on the train ride from Besanscon to Paris that I heard about the Battle of the Bulge, when the breakthrough had occurred. This was either the 15th or the 16th. I think it was Christmas week that I was transferred to Torque. I had two or three surgeries on my arm while I was there.

One of the first surgeries involved cutting a centimeter of bone off the distal end of the radius. They broke it into pieces to fuse the radius to the metacarpals in the back of my hand. You can see a lump on the back of my hand now. That made the wrist stiff. But prior to that surgery it would hang down, really painful. A 4x4 inch skin graft was taken from my left thigh for my right arm. The graft area was covered with Vaseline saturated gauze. The plan was to remove that gauze in a week's time, but having a very good immune system in those days; my skin had grown a good sized little

mushroom through each one of those openings in the gauze. When they were removing that gauze I had a very sympathetic nurse hold my hands while the doctor removed the gauze; one mushroom at a time. That was kind of painful, even the nurse felt the pain! Both of us had tears! After the skin graft my arm was in a cast. I was transferred in late February to the docks to board the Marine Wolf. We had a comfortable two week voyage across the Atlantic back to Kilmer, New Jersey. On that ship was a man from my medical detachment who had been shot in the right shoulder. He had been the best buddy of Harold Fields. That guy walked around with the happiest grin you could imagine. He was very happy to be going home. He planned to join his father in business operating a dairy farm. I believe it was in Ohio. Until the end of my time in England it was my buttock that was giving me the most problem. We had a very comfortable trip back to the U.S. aboard the Marine Wolf to the hospital at Camp Kilmer in New Jersey. Another patient who was there at the same time had a really tragic story. He had been in his bivouac area when an aircraft came over and jettisoned the fuel tank. It exploded near him and burned off the ends of his fingers; his nose, his ears, his eyes and mouth were almost sealed. They had to surgically open the orifices. He would just lie in bed pleading to die. A couple of us tried to talk him into facing his future. I felt we were very

arrogant doing it, the man was really hurting. (This man and a woman back in my hometown impressed me as the two individuals I knew who suffered the most in the war. The woman had a six month old baby when she learned her husband had been run over by a tank.) I think I was in Kilmer a week or less, and then boarded a train for Harmon General Hospital in Longview, Texas. It was on that train ride that I learned how to play Black Jack. I had avoided gambling up until then because I felt I could not afford it, and I didn't believe gambling to be a very wholesome activity. But I won \$6.50 on that train ride. I was at Harmon from early March to October the 8th of 1945. By this time my hip was healing pretty well. At Harmon, the doctors did some more surgery on my right arm and I was there a couple of weeks longer before I received a 30 day furlough. My relatives gathered around to welcome me back. My six year old sister sidled up to me and asked, in an excited way, if I had killed any Germans. I took a couple of moments to decide how I was going to reply to that, but simply told her I wasn't armed. About the time I arrived at Harmon there was a group of cadet nurses that had graduated from nursing school at Baylor University, in Dallas, Texas who came to Harmon, where they were assigned to the various wards. It happened that one of them, named Lillie Pearl Niell, whose hometown was Santa Anna, Texas, was assigned to my ward. There were two other nurses

assigned to the surgical ward, but she seemed to have a little bit of extra interest in me. I remember after my surgery that, when she was supposed to be off duty, she came back to the ward to check on me or to visit me after I had wakened. The Captain who was in charge of the ward instructed her to go back to her barracks. Later we talked a little bit and got acquainted and compromised Army regulations by going into town two or three times to see a movie. She played 3rd base on the nurse's softball team. Patients would go out and watch them play softball two or three evenings a week. I had another surgery on my arm and I was given another thirty day furlough. When I returned, another surgery was done at my request because the tendons in my right forearm had become attached to the scar tissue on my inner arm which limited the flexibility of my fingers. I asked the doctor if he could remove the scare tissue from those tendons. He said I could have a good result only if I worked really hard flexing the fingers after the surgery to keep the tissue from reattaching. I tried the surgery, and worked my fingers really hard but it was not successful. I turned down a third 30 day furlough because people in Blackwell were asking me to explain why their relatives never came home, even though stationed in the States. I never told them it was because they didn't want to.

Except for the fact they did not issue me a decent uniform I felt that the medical service had treated me very well. I found out later that I could have gone to a regular army post and been issued a uniform, probably. While I was at Harmon General I made a trip into Marshall one time to buy some leather to craft a leather purse; a western style purse for my mother. I visited with Lillie when we could maneuver it; we would go down to the PX and have cokes together accidentally. The war in Europe ended in May while I was still at Harmon General. After I left the surgical ward I went to a rehabilitation ward where I was just waiting. Lillie maneuvered to become a nurse at the rehab ward. I was beginning to get the message. The war in the Pacific ended on August 15th 1945, just as Lillie was completing her internship and was to become a Second Lieutenant in September. Instead of the bars they gave her a discharge. She went back to Dallas to work at Baylor Hospital. I received a discharge October the 8th and I went to Dallas to see her on my way home. I went back home to Blackwell intending to enroll at Oklahoma State in January, taking advantage of the GI Bill. I worked at the Hazel-Atlas Glass Plant where I had worked after my senior year in high school. I went down to visit Lillie once from Stillwater. The bus from Stillwater to Dallas left at noon on Saturday; the return trip had to leave Dallas at noon on Sunday. That didn't work very well. With a little

encouragement, I transferred to Southern Methodist University in Dallas to complete my degree. One time when I was in Stillwater I invited Lillie to visit me. She flew to Oklahoma City; I met her when she got off the plane, then we took the bus to Blackwell. That night my parents drove us to Stillwater. We spent a day together there before she went back to Dallas. I asked her to marry me. That was in the spring. We married November 9th, 1946 and have lived happily ever after, having only candy bars for lunch. I transferred to SMU that summer, going to summer school. I nearly starved to death the first summer at SMU, until my GI Bill caught up with me. I majored in chemistry and minored in mathematics, graduating in January 1949. I did four years of college in three calendar years. I then transferred to University of Texas working on a master's degree at least. Lillie became pregnant while we were there that first semester. I stayed in school through the summer, but saw that I was going to be running out of money pretty quick. We moved to Houston where I went to work for Diamond Alkali Chemical Company doing laboratory work. I worked with the most basic chemicals like hydrochloric acid, chlorine, sodium hydroxide, hydrogen, sulfuric acid, potassium hydroxide, and sodium methoxide. My starting salary was about \$312 a month. After two or three months I received a \$60 raise and informed I had a permanent job. We eventually had two processes

for manufacturing chlorine, sodium hydroxide and hydrogen both of which used the electrolysis of sodium chloride brine, making three products from the same process. After two years I was given another \$60 raise and promoted to supervisor of the laboratory, with a staff of four. As supervisor, part of my job was to make calculations for the production report. After a year they hired a clerk and trained him to do those production calculations. Then I went back to full time duty as lab supervisor. I had that job for 9-10 years. At the end of that time I had three other chemists and ten technicians reporting to me.

By the end of thirteen years we had three children in school. I got transferred to Painesville, Ohio, to work in the Research Dept. developing analytical methods for liquefied chlorine. For a number of complicated reasons, that did not work out well. I ran out of time and they transferred me to a manufacturing plant supervising the chemical activities of a plant producing chlorine, caustic soda and hydrogen and carbon tetrachloride which used carbon disulfide raw materials. Everything I worked with was smelly, corrosive, explosive, or nasty stuff. I worked for the company for eighteen years, when Diamond Alkali began merging with several other companies, including Heritage Chemical Company that made horticultural chemicals, Terra Chemical Company that was manufacturing fertilizers

based on nitrogen, i.e. ammonia and ammonium nitrate. They also merged with a specialty chemical company that was manufacturing ion exchange resins in California. They bought another company manufacturing specialty chemicals including some ion exchange material whose name I have forgotten. They also merged with the Shamrock Oil and Gas Company. I felt that the main thing that was going to happen was they were going to consolidate all these companies and they are going to be eliminating some middle management people, and I will be competing into a situation of surplus.

I decided to leave Diamond and went to work for Texas Instruments Company in Dallas as Senior Quality Control Engineer for their plating shop. They reduced their manufacturing programs and I was discharged after two and a half years. My wife had me convinced by this time that she didn't want to move anymore. I had always liked Dallas a lot. So, I went to work for the Dallas Power and Light Company, which was one of three electricity generating companies under the umbrella of the Texas Utilities Company. I joined them as a chemist in the water treating department. I believe I worked there for twelve years as assistant chemist. My immediate supervisor was Bill Lamb. His reputation in the industry was that he was "meaner than a junkyard dog," but he was actually a very good man, who

could criticize very effectively. After twelve years I transferred to the engineering dept doing environment type work. One of my first projects was to develop a site location for a power plant. That got me into geography, geology, hydrology, and all kinds of things that I was a relative rookie at. I spent about a year on that project. I prepared the report and made a map of the state of Texas and located various possible power plant locations. I made many transparent overlays each showing the advantage of the various locations for features such as water, wind and solar, rail, and distribution availability; one of which was train transportation. These plants were to use coal transported from the Green River mines in Wyoming.

I then went to another group, the Solid Waste group, in the Environmental section of the Engineering Department. One of the benefits of that job was that I went to all twenty-three power plants the company had. I had to go to each plant twice a year which was a pretty neat assignment. It got me out of the office and back into the countryside and I was dealing with people who had their boots on the ground. The company reorganized. They offered a second early retirement. Bill Lamb had taken the first one. By this time I was sixty-eight years old and still enjoying work. When I was at Texas Instruments and forty-four years old, I had started a physical fitness

program and was running ten miles in ninety minutes on the weekends by 1982.

I took the early retirement program at the age of sixty-eight and a half on November 1, 1992. In the sixteen years of retirement I have taken it easy. I bought a computer. In 2000 I found out I was eligible to go to the VA Hospital for medical treatment. The VA increased my pension benefit very nicely as a result of having my disability rating increased. Lillie received a retirement benefit from Baylor Hospital. When I left Texas Instruments we had three kids in college at that point. I had to ask Lillie to go back to work because the transition from Texas Instruments to Texas Utilities involved a loss in pay. At this time we had not accumulated much. We were actually taking on debt to graduate our children who were very good students. My oldest daughter, Marilyn, graduated as Salutatorian from high school in Painesville, OH. We had immediately moved to Plano, Texas, in June. That fall she went to Rice University, majoring in Social Work and Art History. When she graduated she went to work for the Foster Grandparents' Program at Ben Taub Hospital. She then decided to go to Public Health School and continued her education at the University of Houston for a year or two taking science courses. At the end of that time she decided to go to medical school at University of Texas at San Antonio. She

got a degree in Pediatrics and did her internship at Shands General Hospital in Florida. She did a Post Doctoral Program at University of Alabama Medical School. She married one of their Biology professors and has two really neat children. The girl is a sixth grade science teacher in Austin and the boy, who is younger, is working on a Physics PhD at the University of Colorado. My second child was a boy and he went to Rice University, also. He took a liberal arts degree and a second bachelor's degree in fine arts. It would have been hard making a living at that, so he went to get a business degree at the University of Texas in San Antonio and became a CPA. He works in San Antonio as a CPA, currently. He and his wife have a son, currently a second year student at University of Texas, S.A., planning to study medicine. Our youngest daughter graduated from high school in Plano, Texas, as did our son. She went to Baylor University in Waco, TX. While there she dated a student who lived in Waco who had already served four years in the Air Force. They got married during the Christmas holidays of her sophomore year, and transferred to the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas. They moved to Junction, then Houston, where Mike worked in Commercial insurance. They live in Kerrville, Texas currently, while Mike commutes to work in San Antonio. My daughter has been teaching school in Kerrville. They had two children; the daughter was born on

Christmas Day. That granddaughter has two wonderful little boys, who are great grandchildren. (My first child and my first grandchild were born on Christmas Day.) I have a great family and they are doing well.