

Taped Interview

Dallas Reunion 2006

David Dell, Co. H 410th

My name is David Dell Jr. of Parkton, Maryland. Originally, when I went into the service, I was from Bentley Springs, MD. But it is only about five miles from where I am presently living. I went into the service in March '43. I went in at Fort Meade, Maryland at an induction center. I was assigned to the Eighth Armored Division. I took my basic in Louisiana at Camp Polk. In December of '43 I transferred to the Air Corp and went into Cadet Training. In the spring of 1944, the early part of '44, the government decided they did not need all the cadets that they had. I was fortunate or unfortunate to be taken from the Air Force and transferred to the Infantry at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. It was a replacement-training center. I was told that there was an outfit being brought up to strength to be shipped overseas. I was given the option of staying at Claiborne for future transfer or to go at that time to the outfit being selected for overseas duty. I said, "Send me to this outfit". And I ended up with the 103rd Infantry Division. I was assigned to the Second Battalion, 410th Infantry, Heavy Weapons Co. H and put into a machine-gun squad. After a short while, when I was in this position I was also an assistant driver for the Company, a jeep driver. It gave me an option at a further date to be transferred to a driving position. When I went overseas, I went with the machine gun squad. Shortly, after arriving overseas, I was assigned to Headquarters' Platoon. First as a messenger and then as a driver of Number 2 jeep which was the Executive officer. That is just about where I stayed most of the time.

I went to Keister Field Mississippi for classification to train as an Air Corps Cadet and to Victoria Field, in Texas to wait assignment. I was assigned to a unit in San Marcos, Texas, a college unit, when I started my cadet training (the college portion of it). From there I was sent back to the ground forces. I was a cadet about 2 or 3 months. They decided they had too many of us so the ones that were just getting started are the ones they sent back to the ground forces. So everyone that was not in pre-flight training was sent back to the ground forces. I was still in college training. We had several of the pre-flight cadets in H Company that were in the same situation. They needed infantrymen. I ended up in heavy weapons and I was an ammunition carrier. I was still in H Company when I went overseas.

Shortly after we got over there we were going up into the Vosges Mountains. I was in that area about a month and then I was transferred over to the Headquarters' Platoon in H Company. I was assigned as a driver. There was an upset in the motor pool. The #2 driver was made a mechanic. The mechanic was made a motor sergeant. I took over being the driver for the #2 jeep for the Executive officer. That is where I stayed for the rest of the campaign. The Executive Officer was a First Lieutenant. The Captain's name was Nathaniel Dodge. He was from California. The number one jeep driver and I got to be very good friends. We kept in contact with each other after the war.

One time we were awakened in the middle of the night. The German's had broken through the lines. I was in the Command Post. We were awakened that night and told that the Germans had broken through the lines. They got to the Battalion Headquarters before they got to where we were. Part of the Battalion Headquarters did not get out. They were either captured or killed. That was in Schillersdorf. The

Battalion Commander's jeep driver was killed in that incident. We jumped in the vehicles, grabbed everything we could get our hands on and took off. I remember going up the street, machine gun tracers going past me. We were going out. We went back the next day. The troops went back in and recaptured it. That is about the most vivid thing I can remember. The Sixth SS Mountain Division did that. The Germans were noted, from what I experienced, for putting up an open awful fight and the next day they were gone. I remember several instances like that, putting up a fight and being gone the next day.

We ended up in Innsbruck. We went into Innsbruck the day the Germans surrendered. That is where we stayed then but not too long. When the outfit left, I was transferred because I had the lowest points. I probably had the lowest points of anyone in the company. Some men were sent to the Fifth Division, but the first ones were sent to the Third Division. I ended up in the Third Division. Back in the states, (I had been sent back and given a thirty-day leave), I was told to report to Camp Campbell in Kentucky to train to go to Japan with the Third Division. When I was home, Japan surrendered. I got home early. I had time with my family and then I went back to Campbell. I, more or less, had a good time during the rest of my career in the service. The Third Division was deactivated and the Fifth Division took over. I still stayed in H Company and was still in the motor pool. Later I was assigned as a mechanic in H Company.

Another interesting thing happened. We had a chance to reenlist either for a full term or for a year and a half and get assigned. I enlisted for a year and one half. I had a friend who was so disgusted with Camp Campbell. He was from Massachusetts and he wanted to get back to Massachusetts. They told us if we would reenlist, they would

assign us where we wanted to go. I enlisted for eighteen months and said, "I was fine where I was." This other fellow reenlisted and wanted to go to Fort Deavers in Massachusetts. They sent him to Fort Devers but it wasn't two weeks later they sent him back to Camp Campbell as a replacement. He got his assignment he asked for but it was a Replacement Training Center so they sent him down there as a replacement to us. He was very unhappy. Shortly after I reenlisted, I met this young girl who later became my wife. We were married and I was transferred in December 1945 to Washington, D.C. to the Military Police Battalion. I served there until April '46 when I was discharged. I was right at home. In fact, while I was stationed in Washington I was commuting from home to camp each day. The Battalion was based at the Army War College. Most of what we did was pull guard duty at railroad stations and special duty around the Pentagon. I remember pulling duty at the Pentagon and railroad stations and Greyhound stations. I think this has been my fourth reunion.