

Recorded Interview
103d Infantry Division Reunion
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My name is Louis Lipoglav. I was born in Franklin, Kansas, on September 20, 1922. I was working as a machinist for McNally's in Pittsburg, Kansas, when I heard about Pearl Harbor. I heard Franklin Roosevelt announce on the radio that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. It made me feel pretty bad. I was twenty years old and I went to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to join up. My parents were sad because I was their only child. The people at Fort Leavenworth examined us and if we met the standard requirements we were put on a train, not sure of our destination. We ended up at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana for basic training. Basic training was 13 – 16 weeks at that time. I was already pretty fit, and of course, young. The hikes were good. I had no trouble with them. The company sergeant was 1st Sergeant Hastard. The mess sergeant was Sergeant Milke. I was with the same outfit all the way through the war and back. I took radio training at Camp Claiborne.

From Claiborne we went to Camp Howze, Texas. At Camp Howze we were involved in maneuvers. I got married at Camp Howze. My girlfriend came down and we got married. I had a weekend pass. My bride's name was Luella. She passed three years ago. We had been married for 65 years.

In order to get into town to have a few drinks, we rode the ground street car. I traveled to Europe on the *USS Monticello* and returned to the U.S. on the *Aquitania*. I was seasick for three days and couldn't even eat a cookie. There were quite a few of us who were seasick. Thankfully, I was

not assigned any duties on the transport. I think there were 15,000 of us on board, it was crowded. Our soap would not lather because of the salt water. So, we just showered using salt water.

We sailed to Marseilles and barges took us to shore from the transport. Our feet were wet by the time we were on dry ground. We immediately marched and bivouacked 10 to 15 miles from the landing sight. The march was tough because we had all of our equipment with us. Each of us had a shelter half and we put our two halves together to make our two-man pup tent. I think my buddy was Lawrence McCall. He was from Santa Monica, CA. It rained and we got wet. We moved out soon after that.

We liberated St. Die. That was our first encounter with the Germans. I was a sergeant for a mortar crew and a forward observer for the .81 mm mortar crew. I would guide the gun crew to the target by telephone. We also had to run our own telephone wire. I would tell them which way to turn the gun toward the enemy fire. I would be right up with the rifle company and I was frightened sometimes.

I was directing fire once, going up a hill. I guess the Germans saw me. They were shooting at me throwing dirt into my face. I just kept on going. I finally got to get them out. It was a machine gun nest. I directed the mortar crew to fire on the machine gun next and that got them out. The mortar was a tube that you would drop the shell into and it would fire. Sometimes they would get stuck and you would drop the shell into your hand without hitting the striker. That was the crew's job.

From St. Die we went clear across the Vosges Mountains; sometimes we came under fire. Sometimes, we had to make our own roads. We crossed the Rhine River by several means: rowing across, walking across a bridge our engineers built or driving amphibious jeeps across. The Germans

had boats as well. At Christmas they tried to sneak back and get into our lines. They would lie down in their boats so we would not see them. We were in the mountains three to four weeks.

The only time we had a general talk to us was when we were close to the Battle of the Bulge. General McAuliffe came out and said we couldn't go any further and that we had to stand our ground. We did have air support during this time.

We could shoot their (German) mortar shells but they could not shoot ours. Theirs was an 88mm and ours was an 81mm. We used their shells a lot. We took many prisoners close to the end. We guarded our prisoners closely, especially the SS troopers. They were a bunch of mean "son-of-a-guns." I felt sorry for the other German soldiers who were just kids and didn't know any better.

We went through Schillersdorf, France and stayed there for a few days. Our trip also took us to Augsburg, Germany and Munich, Germany. I was hospitalized with malaria fever in Worms, Germany and had to stay there for a week until they got some Arterburn (medicine). I got malaria from mosquitoes, which was surprising to say the least. Then, I was sent back to my squad. We would go into a town and we would take a house if we were going to stay for a while. The civilians would take their blankets and go to the Town Hall to stay. In Climbach we were surprised by the Germans. We were on the move and we were strafed. I crawled under the fire on my belly to get away. I thought a great deal of my Company Commander, Lt. Emerson. He was killed. He was on a night patrol and got behind enemy lines.

Our own boys killed him. He was behind enemy lines and talking German. We thought he was a German soldier. That's how it happened. We were told right away by our First Sergeant.

We went through Augsburg. We went through the Siegfried Line. I think we were one of the first units to go through following General Patton. After crossing the Siegfried Line, the Germans were pretty much giving up. We ended up in the Brenner Pass in Italy. The German prisoners were taken behind our lines. We saw Dachau. After the war, we went in there and helped clean it up. After we ended up at the Brenner Pass, they took me and quite a few of us to South Hampton, England. We were scheduled to go over to Japan. When we were at South Hampton, Truman dropped the big bomb.

So then we came on home to New Jersey. I came home on the *Aquitania*. My parents knew I was in the States. Six of us bought a car with our "mustered out pay." We said the last one could keep the car and take it home. We dropped two off in Pennsylvania, one in Chicago and one in Detroit. That left me and the fellow named McCall. I lived in Pittsburg, Kansas and he lived in Santa Monica, CA. He took the car and I haven't heard from him since. We had a great trip. We were celebrating all the way home.

I called my parents from Kansas City where I got off. I took the bus home to Pittsburg, which is 120 miles from Kansas City. They had a big celebration when I got home. All my relatives were there.

After the war I went to work for a bread company. At the present time I have two chicken restaurants in Pittsburg, Kansas. I've been in that since 1945. My mother-in-law started one and my mother started another one. They are all called *Chicken Annie's*. They are in Pittsburg, KS.

We adopted two children, one from Italy and one from Germany. They are taking care of my businesses. Our boy is from Germany and our girl is from Italy.

There were two men to a foxhole, which we could camouflage with limbs and brush. There were times we could have a little fire (heat in a can) to keep warm. We could warm our C-Rations on it too. We had both C and K-rations. K-Rations were for the front lines. When we were behind our lines we ate C-Rations.

We did not want to go to Japan; we wanted to go home. We celebrated when we heard about the bomb. I was with the 45th Division at that time. My whole squad, who took basic training together and fought together, came back together. There were no casualties and no one was hurt.

My wife was a country girl raised in a restaurant that her mother started. She was a hard worker. Chicken Annie's was started by her mother in a coal mining camp in 1934. In the mining camp she would serve sandwiches. My father-in-law got hurt in the mine and had his leg amputated. He couldn't work anymore. My mother-in-law started making sandwiches for the miners. She would get chickens, pluck them, and fry them. That's how she started.

My wife and I had sixty-five wonderful years together. Unfortunately, I am the only member of the 411th that came to the reunion this year.