

Taped Interview

Dallas Reunion 2006

Tom Morick, Co. C 410th

My name is Tom Morick from Pennsylvania. I was in Co. C 410th Infantry Regiment, a Rifle Company, Weapons Platoon. I had an instance that might be interesting to you--How I had my tonsils taken out in the service. It was in winter of '44/'45, either Jan or Feb. My throat was so sore I could barely eat my K-ration crackers. I think we were hunkered down in some foxholes but things were a little quiet and I went to the medic. And he says, "I can't help you. Why don't you go back to the Aid Station that is about a half a mile back?" At which time I notified everybody in the platoon. I walked back there. I found the aid station and I went into there. The doctor looked at my throat and said you got a problem with your tonsils. He sat me down in a hardback chair and opened up my mouth. He put a clamp inside my mouth where I could not close my mouth. He gave me a shot in each tonsil and the inside of my mouth with a hypodermic syringe. He gave me a little white tray and said, "Hold this under your jaw." I proceeded to do that and he started to snip my tonsils. I reacted by groaning. He said, "Oh, it hurts? Do you need another shot?" I nodded "yeah." So, he gave me another shot

in each tonsil. He proceeded to snip my tonsils out. He painted the area with some stuff. I think he called it argyrols. Which might be silver nitrate. He said, "You could go back to your unit." That's how I had my tonsils taken out. I ate snow for two or three days. So help me God that's how I had my tonsils taken out in the service. It was probably procaine that they used for that. I don't think people would be aware of instances like that.

There is another thing that I have never seen in the movies or anywhere. Another time we were at Rothbach and dug into foxholes we had taken over from some other unit. I guess we were on the side of a hill. We were about seventy-five yards from town. The Germans were in town and we were in these foxholes. And I have a question to ask you. When we have two or three guys in a foxhole with a machine gun right on us, what do we do when you have to go to the bathroom in a dangerous time? You could not get of your foxhole and yell "time" to the Germans. You had to do your business. The only place you could do your business was in a K ration box. Which was like a Cracker Jack box. After that, you pushed it into the snow. Each guy could not complain because he was going to be next. During the day, you did not dare get out of the foxhole because a sniper would get you. At nighttime, it was a little bit different because you could get out of the hole and walk fifteen feet. People are not aware of that. What about today

when they have women in the service? It would be interesting. People never talk about what we had to suffer through.

I went into the service in '43. After awhile I was in the ASTP Program. I went to the University of Oklahoma for two terms. Then they broke up the program and put me and others like me in the Company C Infantry. Were you in the same program? *I was in Oklahoma A&M.* Did you know Tony Hillerman? *No.* They looked at the first two or three guys that came into the platoon in the dark and one of the Sergeants said, "Anyone know anything about machine guns and mortars?" I was stupid enough to put my hand up. But it was better than being a rifleman. I did not know much about machine guns. Just the basics. We had good training but I was a 60 mm mortar gunner on the offense. But on the defense lots of times, I would help out on the machine guns. Because we would never have enough men to cover because we would have three or four machine guns when we were dug in; at least three or four. We never had enough mortarmen to cover three mortars. We only had two mortars on the offense. Our Captain kept us up real close with the rifleman. In village fighting, we didn't even use the mortars. We would help clear houses. But I am going to tell you what I consider a funny incident. One of the guys ended up as an ammo bearer in my squad. He was first in the Selective Service. He had his

examination and he had one foot shorter than the other. He told the doctor that he had polio when he was twelve. The Doc said, “Do you have any proof of that?” Well, you could see that one foot was shorter than the other! So, they classified him “limited service” and put him in anti-aircraft. But the infantry guys, they just grabbed these guys up and a lot of guys from the Air Force and shoved them into infantry replacements. He ended up as a replacement in my company and he was an ammo bearer. He had been originally classified as ‘limited service’. He should not have even been in the service. You would hear of guys having busted eardrums from driving trucks and being exposed to bombs. That’s a bunch of baloney, flat feet, etc.

Another incident I considered funny. I guess our company had just pulled back a little bit. I guess there were tanks and artillery there. We thought we were in heaven compared to where we were--anybody back 100 yards of the rear echelon when you were in a Rifle Company. We had a hot breakfast of some powdered eggs and spam. We started looking around to see what we could grab. We saw a jeep there with a package in the back. In the back was someone’s Christmas present. We both looked at each other. We said, “Baloney”, they were rear echelon and we got nothing. We never carried anything. So, we reopened the package and there was a bottle of wine in it. So we both walked about fifteen to twenty feet away and started

drinking it. I said, "Boy, is this sweet wine." We looked at the label and it was made in California. "Who in the heck is stupid enough to send wine from California over here to France?" After we had drank about half of the bottle, we looked again at the jeep and the label on the bumper said "Chaplain". So, we said, "One Protestant and one Catholic so it is OK."

Then a little while later Tony Hillerman came by. He is a well-known author by the way. I was in the same squad as Tony Hillerman. Tony Hillerman said I'd like to have a Tommy gun. "You must be nuts," I said. What do you want a Tommy gun for when you are carrying a 42-pound weapon already? "Well, we are doing a lot of village fighting." Tankers carried a lot of them too. So, he hops up on top of a Sherman that was parked outside a house there. He looked down inside and pulled up a Tommy gun. Then, he hopped down off the tank. I said, "What good is it to you? It only has one magazine in it." At that time, the Sergeant of the tank walked out from the house. We asked the Sgt. if he had any extra magazines. He said he would check the tank. He came back with a canvas scabbard, that had maybe three in it. The Sergeant said you might as well have these. Some S.O.B. stole my Tommy gun. Tony has the Tommy gun strapped over his shoulders. We walked a little more to where there were some Half Tracks. Up in front of the Half Tracks they would have these

power wenchers with heavy wire where you could pull out vehicles. They had a box of 10 in 1 rations strapped to the front of the Half Track. We started to cut them. There were grenades also. The Tankers were looking out the window where they saw a “couple of grunts”. I guess they said, “Why bother?” They must have taken pity on us. We went back to the platoon and we started eating 10 in 1 rations, which were great. We had never had bacon and eggs. They cooked the bacon inside the house. *We would cut the top off and use a blowtorch up and down and around the can to cook the bacon. We only had 10 and 1 rations once.* We were in a town that just had that. That was just some of the funny incidents. Another funny thing... one of the guys was discussing a fellow who had a real bad case of dysentery. He could not control himself. About every ten minutes, he would pull his pants down. They finally said you got to go back; we can't help you up front. So he goes back and goes into the hospital. So, he was going into see this Major, the doctor who was looking at him. The soldier had his glasses on and a raincoat. This Major said that they were going to give him a physical exam with a proctoscope that they put up your rear end. He said, “Sir, I have no control over my bowels movements whatsoever.” The Major said in a rough voice, “I'm the doctor and I'll decide that”. When they bent him over and pulled the tube out, he sprayed

the doctor completely. He said he tried the hardest not to laugh. They finally gave him some new drug, which might have been penicillin. He came back after a while. But to me that was funny. Maybe the scope went into the manure pile. Or, the doctor said to his orderly, "Just wash it off and we'll use it again."

You probably did the same thing. When you took over a house, you looked for the crocks; the stoneware crocks. They kept the eggs in there in a white wash material. We would dig our hands in there and get a half dozen or dozen eggs. We would cook them up the best you can. We did not carry too much rations with us. Maybe if you were lucky you might find some pork or some oil or potatoes. We went all the way into Austria. We landed at that stupid march up that hill in Marseilles. Then all the way into Innsbruck. We mounted on tanks, the last group like that, when we entered right into Innsbruck. There were Germans right on the corners with machine guns. Nobody was shooting each other. I threw my last grenades in the Inn River.

I don't know whether I should mention his name or not but some things got hot and heavy when we were fighting with our machine guns. Our machine gunner, an excellent machine gunner, was Rice. He also got a Silver Star and other decorations like that. I said several times to him,

“What are you taking your glasses off for?” He said, “If a bullet or shrapnel hits me in my glasses it is going to ruin my eyes.” I used to say, “Don’t worry about it. You will never have to worry about that if you get shot in the eyes.” The reason I tell you about that is because later he went on to get a PhD in Psychology. That’s the kind of guy our psychologists are. If he ever hears this, he will kill me.
