

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS  
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION  
NUMBER

1856

Interview with  
WALLACE "TIM" DUKE  
December 17, 2015

Place of Interview: Denton, TX

Interviewer: Tiffany Smith

Terms of Use: Open

Approved: *Wallace Duke*

Date: December 17, 2015

**Copyright ©2015**

**THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS  
IN THE CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS**

**All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without permission in writing from the Director of the Oral History Program or the University Archivist, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas 76203**

Oral History Collection

Wallace "Tim" Duke

Interviewer: Tiffany Smith

Date: December 17, 2015

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

[Editor's note: Mr. Duke's daughter, Cindy, is present for the interview.]

Ms. Smith: This is Tiffany Smith with the University of North Texas Oral History Program. Today is December 17, 2015, and I am interviewing Wallace "Tim" Duke at his home in Denton, Texas. Thank you for meeting with us today. Now, your name is Wallace Duke?

Mr. Duke: Wallace Duke.

Ms. Smith: But you go by Tim.

Mr. Duke: Yes.

Ms. Smith: Okay, can you tell us why you go by that name?

Mr. Duke: Yes. I have a twin brother, Hollis Duke. When we were young, I was smaller than he was. At that age we had funny papers [comic strips] that had [the character] Tiny Tim. It showed Tiny Tim

flying an airplane and all that. I got the nickname of "Tiny Tim" at that time.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: Nothing unusual. He was Hollis and I was Wallace, actually our given names.

Smith: Okay, just for our records, can you state your full legal name?

Duke: The full legal name? Wallace B. Duke.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: And now, in later parts of life, people have gotten to where they call me Mr. Wallace instead of Duke. I don't know how they got it reversed but now they call me Mr. Wallace a lot of times. My actual name is Wallace B. Duke and his is Hollis D. Duke.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: He is in some of the scripts here. [Referencing the military paperwork and timelines nearby.]

Smith: Okay, and when were you born?

Duke: 1924.

Smith: Okay, and where were you born?

Duke: Fruitvale, Texas. F-R-U-I-T-V-A-L-E, Texas, about sixty miles east of Dallas on Highway 80.

Smith: Okay, and did you have any siblings besides your twin brother?

Duke: Oh, yes. I had three sisters and a younger brother.

Smith: Okay, and what is the order? Were you guys the oldest?

Duke: Faye Marie is the oldest girl. Ruby Lee is next. Anna Mae is the third, and then Hollis and Wallace, which we're twins, and then Billy Dean.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: That's the order they came in.

Smith: All right.

Duke: Billy Dean is now eighty-seven, I think.

Smith: Oh, okay. Wonderful. What were your parents' names?

Duke: Ben Amos Duke--back in those days they had Amos and such. Ben Amos and Norena Duke.

Smith: Okay, and what did your parents do for a living?

Duke: Farmers.

Smith: Both? Did they both work?

Duke: We had a 100-acre farm--

Smith: Oh, wow.

Duke: --at Highway 19 and Highway 80. [Gestures] Canton is here, nine miles where Highway 19 crossed Highway 80. We were the second farm off of Highway 80.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: 100-acre farm.

Smith: Growing up with that many siblings, I assume you all helped on the farm.

Duke: Oh yes.

Smith: Can you just share a little bit of your memory about farming with us?

Duke: In the morning I got up, built a fire in the heater. Daddy and mother--we always had hogs killed and dressed--He would fry the meat from the hogs and my mother would make two big pans of biscuits to feed eight people, every morning, eight people. Just think about that today [laughs softly].

We never went hungry. We always had a garden, but actually we raised cotton, corn, and maize as our staple crops. We had turnips, chickens with eggs, and milk with three cows usually, and they had calves. Do you know anything about milking a cow?

Smith: A little bit.

Duke: Do you know why you let the calves nurse first?

Smith: No.

Duke: So the cow will give her milk down. She will hold her milk back for her calf but you let that calf nurse and she will give her milk down. After about five minutes you take the calf off, tie him to the fence, and then get the milk. That's the reason that a cow is milked in that manner.

We had two horses. We fed the horses corn and got them ready for work. We usually had four or five hogs and then chickens. We had Dominickers and white leghorns, mostly laying hens. Some of the chickens are meat chickens; the Dominicker was one of them. The white leghorns are an egg-laying [breed], so we had plenty of eggs to eat and milk. We never went hungry because we always had a garden and fruit trees, peaches, apples, whatever.

Smith: Were your parents from Texas?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Both of them?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: When did they purchase that farm you lived on?

Duke: The farm was inherited or handed down from his grandfather.

Smith: Oh, okay. So it had been a family farm.

Duke: That's right.

Smith: Okay, great. So you were living on that farm in the Depression years?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: What do you remember about the time period, being a farmer during the Depression?

Duke: As I said, we never went hungry. A lot of people did. A lot of people were not raised where they had hogs and meat and all that. We always had a farm and we always had plenty to eat. We had vegetables but there were a lot of people that went hungry back in those days.

Getting to the military, I used to catch a bus right up here at Gainesville into Dallas, get on a streetcar for seven cents, go to downtown, transfer to another streetcar that went out on Highway 80. So I could go all the way through Dallas for seven cents. That's what money was back in those days. If you had a nickel it'd get you a little something.

Hollis and I never had any experiences going to town or anything like you do today. We got fifteen cents one Saturday and we went to the show [movie]. The shows back then had Buck Rodgers and Flash Gordon as a serial. We got in for fifteen cents and we saw the serial. We thought the show was over so we got up and left, but that's what the show cost, fifteen cents. [Laughs softly]

Smith: All right. So what did you and your siblings do for fun in Fruitvale?



Duke: We didn't have to have anything particularly. I played with snuff bottles, the little square snuff bottles. That's about what we had to play with. Another funny incident: they had the old flying Jenny plane back then that would come fly over. He'd decide, "Hey, this is a pretty good place," so he'd land in a cotton field right out here or a corn field. Here would come all the neighbors to see this airplane. That was a flying Jenny and he would give rides for five dollars.

So when we were working in the cotton field and we'd see a plane coming over, we'd want that plane to crash so that we could get the wheels off of it. We never had any wheels to build anything. So that was our hope, that the plane would--we didn't know about the guy that was in the plane, but we wanted the wheels off of that plane. So that is what we looked forward to, something like that.

As far as buying a car or anything, we had an old 1935 Dodge pickup. It was the only thing we had. Of course, this is before the war. We used it for everything, to haul hay out of the barn. Later we got to hauling tomatoes to the Irving Street Market in Dallas, which is sixty miles. We'd sell a basket of

tomatoes for twenty-five cents. That was the price of things back then.

My wife says I talk too much. Am I talking too much? [Laughing]

Smith: No, you're doing a great job. No, you're good.

Duke: Anyhow, that's the way our life was. We never wanted for anything. We never had anything. We didn't know the difference. That's the way we were raised. Life was good and all our families were healthy. We had relatives, of course, that lived right around us. I think back in those days we had never been out of the county. We never rode a car, bus, or anything. We didn't have anything to ride. We lived a life on the farm. That was it. Our cousins and uncles and so forth would come to visit. Of course we'd have a big chicken fry on Saturday or Sunday, stuff like that.

Christmas: we all got together for Christmas. I remember we had socks. We'd hang our socks on the mantle of the fireplace and they always made sure that we had an orange and an apple and some crinkle candy. What is that? What do they call that candy? I don't know.

C. Duke: Ribbon?

Duke: Yes, [ribbon] candy we'd call it. We always had that in our sock and you'd have your name on your sock. So that was our Christmas.

One Christmas--Daddy and Mother never had much money, but we went to town in a wagon, two horses pulling a wagon. I've got one up there I made. [Referencing a model wagon on a shelf] I'll show you. On the way home we kept getting under the spring seats to see what they had bought us. Well, they bought one little ball, about that big; it had little stars on it. I think it was blue. That's the only thing we got for Christmas but you couldn't have asked for anything to beat that because everybody played with that ball. You'd see how many times you could bounce it without missing a bounce. The whole family played with that ball. That was our Christmas. We didn't know the difference. We thought that was what you were supposed to do.

So that's the way I was raised. Never wanted for anything because we always had plenty to eat. Our relatives were close. In fact, around Fruitvale there is a little community of Lawrence Springs. There was one artesian spring there and they call it Lawrence Springs. That's the way all of our family was raised

around that. Anyhow, if I talk too much stop me.

[Laughs]

Smith: No, you're doing great. So you and your family never went hungry during the Depression, but did the farm stay economically profitable during that time?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Yes. It was good?

Duke: Yes. You'd get \$200 for a bale of cotton. Whenever you picked cotton, the whole family picked cotton. You've seen the cotton sack that you pulled? Okay. Everybody would pick cotton, maybe 100 to 150 pounds each. You'd get 1,500 pounds of cotton, which was a lot of cotton. You'd put that on a wagon and you'd haul it to the gin. When it was ginned you might get a 500-pound bale of cotton. At that time \$200 was a lot for a 500-pound bale of cotton. That was a living.

Smith: So the [price of] cotton stayed good during the Depression?

Duke: Right. Yes. In Fruitvale you had a service station, family-owned service station. Gas was ten cents per gallon. It was one of these pumps, you pump it and you sit there and watch it drain into the car. When it got through you handed him one dollar.

Now if you didn't have a dollar back in those days and he was good enough to take your credit, he'd write down, "\$1: Tim Duke." At the end of this when you got your \$200 bale sold you'd pay him off. It took a family man running a grocery store to have enough money to give you credit for the year to people. He was giving credit to several people but that's the only way he made his living so he went through the depression that way.

Smith: So your family used that credit system?

Duke: Yes, ma'am.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: Yes, we didn't have money. Of course, as I said, we never went hungry. We wasn't rich but all we had to do is go down to the store and get ten cents. We never had candy or anything like that, hardly. We did our own meal. We usually ground our corn and made the meal, but for flour and sugar you'd get it and whatever it was. You'd write it down and he'd sign it and at the end of the cotton season when you'd get your crop then you'd pay him off. He lived from year to year by collecting from other people. That's the only way back in the depression that people lived.

Smith: On credit.

Duke: Yes, on credit.

Smith: Yes. Okay. Were there a lot of other farms in Fruitvale?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Okay, was that the main--

Duke: Yes, that was all. There were just other farms then. You visited your farmer that may be a quarter of a mile distance away. We always visited each other. In fact, we had one black family that lived maybe a quarter of a mile from the house and they would come by and say, "Yes sir, Mr. Duke." They were honorable people and so was Daddy. He always honored them in any way he could and they would bring their own cup if they wanted to drink out of the well. They brought their own cup. Most of the people did back in those days. So, where am I? [Laughing]

Smith: Do you remember race being an issue in Fruitvale for that one black family or was that--

Duke: No. No, never. There never was. Black people were just as welcome then as they are today.

Smith: You said your dad had good relationships with other people and in getting credit and with other farmers. Can you just tell me a little bit about your memory

of your father? What about him stands out in your mind?

Duke: Very honorable man that never had anything hardly except for the farm. He more or less inherited the farm. It was handed down to him. People lived off that, what they made [with it].

Smith: What about your mother?

Duke: Mother, same way. A helper, very much so. They worked together. Everything was done with them and the kids. Everything was done and there was no griping or fussing. It was just everyday work.

My job when I got up in the morning was--my daddy would come in and get me by my nose and I would build a fire in the heater. We always had to have the wood cut. We cut our own wood. I'd get up in the morning and build a fire in the heater. He'd go in the kitchen and build a fire in the range in there, start frying bacon or sausage. My twin brother got ready to go milk the cows. We would always go milk those three or four cows, feed the hogs, and feed the horses. We had corn for the hogs and the horses. We would feed the horses in a wagon bed and prepare them for work in the field. You always shuck your corn and throw it in there and they'd eat it while you were eating your meal.

When you got your meal finished we'd go to the field in the daylight most of the time and the horses would be ready. You'd harness them and go to the field and stay in the field sometimes until dark. It all depended on the weather. You had to plan everything by the weather. That's the way we lived.

Smith: So did you attend school in Fruitvale?

Duke: Yes, not in Fruitvale but in Edgewood. Edgewood was three miles up the way. We graduated from Edgewood High School and here comes the war. All of a sudden Japan decided to bomb Pearl Harbor.

Smith: Were you in high school when Pearl Harbor happened?

Duke: Yes, I was a junior. In fact, I finished in 1942. In 1942 my sister had married and moved to Port Arthur, Texas. The war broke out. They call it "broke out," I don't know why. Anyhow, her and her husband, he went to work in a shipyard at Orange. He told me, "Tim, whenever you graduate you can come down and live with us until you can get on at a shipyard." That's how we got into the war and war effort. At that time I think there were twenty-nine defense plants on the east coast of Texas including the gulf. I don't know how many on the west coast.



I graduated in 1942 and Mother and Dad took me to Canton, Texas, which was nine miles away from where we lived. I'd never hitchhiked. I didn't know where Port Arthur, Texas, was but they put me out on the streets of Canton. I stuck my thumb out. If you were military age they didn't care what you looked like, there was no farmer that was going to pass you up. They would pick you up if they were only going ten miles down the road. [Emotion in voice] Excuse my-- the first one that picked me up. He said, "Where are you going?" I said, "Port Arthur, Texas." "Okay." So we went to Port Arthur, Texas.

My sister says, "When you get there, you get on a bus on the edge of town and you ride to," I don't know what street it was now but anyhow, "You go to the 1000 block of that street, you get off and you walk two blocks and you'll be at our house." So that's the way I got to Port Arthur and got started. I stayed with them a week or two. He got me on at the shipyard in Orange, Texas. I don't know, are we advancing too fast on this?

Smith: No, you're doing great.

Duke: Consolidated Steel Shipyard was at Orange and I got a job on it. I had never worked an hourly job or

anything. I was just a farmer. The first I hired out was July 3, [1942], and I worked the 3rd, 4th, and 5th. I think I got \$75. I'd never had \$75 in my life.

[Chuckles softly]

Smith: And what did you do with \$75?

Duke: I paid my rent, which at that time they had barracks at the shipyard grounds and I think it was \$8 a week for room and board. I paid that and then I turned around and sent some home. I don't remember how much. That's how I progressed in the shipyard.

I worked in the shipyard from midnight until 8:00 a.m. That was the way the shifts were turning. I would go to work at midnight and get off at 8:00 a.m. I'd go to the barracks on the grounds and go to bed. The next night at midnight, I'd go.

Back then they had a lot of music. The old songs like "Don't Sit under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else but Me" and "Give Me One Dozen Roses," and stuff like that. Every night when I went up to work they would be playing that music and that is very much a memory at that time.

I worked there six months. I worked as a [shipfitter's] helper. You'd have the flat keel, would be cut like that [gestures], it would be on a

slab. They called it outside the pre-assembly. It would be on a metal slab. Then they would put the vertical inside the flat keel of the vertical keel. The vertical keel would go on the inside and then they have to weld it. While they were welding, I was setting brackets. I had to set brackets. Now, this is the bottom of the ship and they built destroyer escorts. At that time that's what they were building. It would take three months to build a ship.

I worked as a [shipfitter's] helper those six months I was there. One guy told me, "Now you're due a raise in six months. If you don't get one, go tell that foreman up there that you're going to go to the army." Stupid me, I did. I said, "I'm due a raise in six months." He said, "Yes, I know." I said, "If I don't get one I'm going to the army." He said, "Well, go ahead." [Laughing]

Smith: Called you.

Duke: Yes, he called me.

Smith: Did you like building ships?

Duke: Yes, very much. In fact, I see ships today and I wonder about them. Sometimes while they were welding I would go down in the ship. You could get lost in one of those things pretty easy. Those ships were 300

or 400 feet long and they were destroyer escorts. The destroyer was the fastest. They ran about. This was an escort for destroyers. So that put it in place.

Smith: Orange, Texas, was a pretty big wartime manufacturing town, right? A lot of people moved there for that--

Duke: Orange, Texas, had about 500 people in it when it started. When the war broke out, then it was 5,000 people.

Smith: Yes.

Duke: They didn't have anywhere to stay. They would stay in a chicken coop, a garage, or anywhere to get a place to stay and a place to work.

Smith: Okay, so when you got there it was already pretty big?

Duke: Yes, the shipyard had already built barracks on the grounds. That was where I stayed. Anyhow, I worked there for six months. That was 1942. I'll get it right after a while. In 1943 I went into the service.

Smith: Let me back up for just one second. I want to ask you, you would have still been in school when Franklin Roosevelt was running for president.

Duke: Right.

Smith: Do you remember Roosevelt running for president?

Duke: Yes, I do.

Smith: How did your town feel about that? Did they support him?

Duke: He ran against Wendell L. Willkie. Wendell L. Willkie wanted to go ahead and declare war on Germany, and that's the reason he didn't get to be president. Nobody wanted to declare war on Germany. Wendell L. Willkie, that was his platform. That's how Roosevelt got back in. I guess this was his first term? He stayed in for eight [sic].

Smith: A long time. Do you remember your family being political at all? Did they support the Democratic Party or were they--

Duke: It was never mentioned.

Smith: Oh, okay. When you were in high school the war in Europe was already breaking out. Did you follow that at all? Were you interested in the war in Europe?

Duke: All I knew is that I was going to go sooner or later because I was eighteen years old. Before I went in I quit the shipyard about a week or two ahead of time. I knew I was going to be drafted. By the way, they drafted me at Beaumont. I was raised in Van Zandt County in East Texas, Canton, but they drafted me in Beaumont. Yes, I was drafted there.

About a week or two before I was drafted curiosity got the best of me. My cousin, I called him Dick Duke at that time, had already been to Africa, Italy, and Germany, and he was home on furlough. I said, "Dick, what do you do when you get in the army?" He said, "Whatever you do, don't volunteer to be a truck driver. They'll put you to pushing a wheelbarrow." That stuck in here [points to head]. So I was drafted.

Did you know they had a camp up here in Gainesville? That's where I wound up. I went in the service at Fort Sam [Houston, in San Antonio].

Smith: Okay, I'm going to back up one more time.

Duke: Sure.

Smith: Then we'll go forward again. Do you remember Pearl Harbor? What was happening for you when Pearl Harbor happened?

Duke: Yes, I was in high school and we went home and somebody said, "Pearl Harbor!" I said, "Where's that?" Nobody knew where Pearl Harbor was. They had never heard of it. That's how it was introduced to us because it was a place that we never seen or heard of. Of course, it became known pretty well from then on.

Smith: You said that you knew that you were going to end up fighting in the war.

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Did you want to volunteer to fight?

Duke: I thought about it and at that time I had too much to do at the farm but I never missed the farm. I went to Canton and hitchhiked to Orange and to work at Port Arthur. I came home on leave. I had quit my job there.

Smith: You quit at the shipyard?

Duke: Yes. I knew. Uncle Sam had already sent me a letter.

Smith: So when you get your draft summons, what do you think?

Duke: Everybody was anxious to get it over with. We thought we were going to go over there and clean this thing up. I was very eager just like everybody else. In fact, my cousin Dick had joined the next day after the war broke out. All of us at eighteen knew we were going. We were anxious to get there and get it over with.

Smith: Did you know any of your friends in your hometown who tried to go into the service and was rejected?

Duke: No.

Smith: No, all of you got to go?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Okay, so you get your draft letter. You quit the shipyard because you have been drafted and you go home.

Duke: Yes. Then Dick came home on furlough and I asked him this question. To continue with that, I got in at Fort Sam Houston [and spent] about two or three days down there. Then they shipped me.

Smith: Did they do any sort of physical exam on you or anything, or did you just go straight in?

Duke: Yes, you went through military questions.

Smith: What was that like?

Duke: I didn't make much on it. [Laughs] I wasn't very good at it.

Smith: What sort of stuff did they ask you? Do you remember?

Duke: Yes, if this cog is going this way which way is that cog down there going? Then they'd give you a picture of a bunch a people and a picture of names and you had to put the name with the picture. I didn't do very well.

Smith: But you got in.

Duke: I got in. They weren't going to refuse you. If you were physically able they would take you. I guess I was physically able.



Anyhow, from Fort Sam Houston, they put us on a train. Then nobody knew where they were going or how long it was going to take to get there. I wound up at Gainesville, [Texas]. I didn't know where Gainesville was. I didn't know anything but there was a camp being built at Gainesville, Camp Howze. They had the barracks and all that. We did a lot of work on the streets. We finished it up, really.

The first night, here was this big barracks. That guy got close to the fire, this one over here didn't. They had a fire at each end. If you got too close to the fire it was always too hot. If you're out here you're cold.

The next morning we got up and the old captain,  
[Captain Zack]--

Smith: You joined the army.

Duke: No, they drafted me.

Smith: But you ended up in the army.

Duke: Yes, at Beaumont they asked you a question. "Do you want to go to the navy or the army?" I said, "Navy!" So they sent me to the army. [Laughter]

Smith: It was a trick question.

Duke: Not necessarily. They were filling different areas at that time and they needed more in the army than they

did the navy. So that's the way I wound up in the army. It was in the infantry.

The next morning I got up at Camp Howze, lined up against the building. The captain says, "How many of you can drive a truck?" Everyone is waving their hand except Tim Duke. I did not wave my hand. He said, "You, come here." I stepped out. I drove a jeep for three years. That's how I got to drive a jeep. People would probably say that that's a lie. It's not. That's the way I got to drive a jeep. Really and truly, back then we had an old 1935 Dodge. We used it to haul hay out at the barn, but that's all the driving that I've ever done. I got a brand-new jeep out at Camp Howze, Texas.

Smith: Was it different to drive?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Yes, in what way?

Duke: It was like this one right here. [Referring to a model jeep] That's the [86<sup>th</sup>] Infantry, K Company; here on the bumper too. That was the jeep I drove for three years. They were similar. It was just like that.

Smith: So you were in [Camp Howze]; you did your basic training in [Camp Howze]?

Duke: Basic training and advanced training. I didn't know it at the time but our division was used mostly as a trainer. We'd get a bunch of people in and train them, basic training and advanced training. Then they'd ship them out.

The 84<sup>th</sup> Division was also at Gainesville, the 84<sup>th</sup> and the 86<sup>th</sup>. During the Bulge in Germany the 84<sup>th</sup> Division was shipped. They went right in the middle of it.

Smith: And you were [86<sup>th</sup>]?

Duke: We were 86<sup>th</sup>.

Smith: You were 86<sup>th</sup>, okay. So your division stayed in Gainesville.

Duke: Right.

Smith: For how long?

Duke: We stayed there eight months.

Smith: Training and helping training.

Duke: Training, yes. We'd get some in and we'd train them and they'd ship out right straight to Germany. Then we'd get some more in. Each time we had to take basic training and advanced training over and over--

Smith: With them. How did you feel about it?

Duke: I didn't want it. [Laughing] In fact, about halfway through they decided to get some more people in their Air Force--it was the Air Corps then. You knew that?

Smith: The Army Air Corps?

Duke: Yes. Some paratroopers. So I thought, "Hey, I'll go to paratroopers. I'll get out of this thing." I was too dumb to pass the test so I did not get in.

Smith: So you stayed at Gainesville.

Duke: I stayed in at Gainesville.

Smith: Where was your twin brother at this time?

Duke: My twin brother married when he graduated and he went in four months behind me. He went to Camp Wolters. He was at Camp Wolters [outside of Mineral Wells, Texas]. They made him a corporal.

Even though I didn't pass the test to get in, within three months I made technician, fifth-grade, which was a corporal. That what I went all the way through my service, T-5. [When I got my discharge, I made sergeant.]

Hollis was at Weatherford. Our mother, bless her heart, she wanted us put together. She said, "He ought to be with him." She wrote a letter to a congressman and asked him if we could be put together and he did. My captain and his captain liked to kill us both. They

didn't want us together and they let us know they didn't want us together. Old Captain Jones said, "A man from Texas is not running my business here." We left Gainesville in September or October and went to the maneuvers in Louisiana, which was close to Alexandria.

Smith: So at this time you and your brother were in the same [unit]?

Duke: No.

Smith: Not yet.

Duke: Not yet. We had two months in the woods in Louisiana and then they shipped us to Camp Livingston, which was at Alexandria.

Smith: What did you do in the woods for two months?

Duke: They'd take you out in the woods and the woods was woods back then. They'd drop you off out there with a compass and they'd say, "Now find your way back." It was a pretty good job to find your way back. Some of them didn't do it. They had to go get them. That was the training we had.

Actually I thought they were training us for the Pacific. We trained there two months; went to Camp Livingston for four months. Hollis showed up there,

my twin brother. At the end of four months we shipped to California.

Smith: What did you guys do at Camp Livingston?

Duke: Camp Livingston, in the woods we trained. Of course, everywhere you went you had to learn to march and you had to break your weapons down, overhaul them and all that. I had a .30 caliber machine gun, a .45 caliber pistol, an M-1, which was at that time a new weapon. [I] had to learn how to break them down at night and put them back together blindfolded.

Smith: Oh.

Duke: You were going to be confronted with that out on the battlefield so you had to learn to do it here. In my jeep I had a scabbard with the M-1, I had a .45 strapped to my hip, and a .50 caliber overhead, and that's the way I drove the jeep. There the tanks and everything--I found out later that maneuvers in Louisiana had been visited by every official in the United States Army and had gone through maneuvers in Louisiana, it included all of them. They had their training and we had ours.

All the tanks and everything had been through the mud and everything. Try driving a jeep between ruts of a tank. You had to stay out of the ruts,

otherwise you're stuck. So I drove a jeep all but two months that I was down there. Everywhere I went I was issued a jeep, two jeeps actually. I've got some pictures of them somewhere.

We went to San Diego. Started out and we did close order drills on the concrete there and then we went up the coast, 101 Highway all the way up. We maneuvered and did amphibious training.

Smith: So you're thinking at this point that you're going to the Pacific?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: How did you feel about that? Did you have a preference on the front?

Duke: You don't have a preference. Wherever they say, you're going.

Smith: You were happy just to be moving?

Duke: It was training. I knew I had to go through it.

We went all the way from San Diego to San Francisco. We took in one little island, San Clemente Island, on the way up. There wasn't anything but goats on the island. We took a ship out there. Actually, Hollis went. I didn't go on that one.

Back then the war had just broken out; there was a lot of things we didn't know. We took my jeep and

we put stuff around the spark plugs and around everything and ran the tailpipe up where it would get air and we tried to drive it in the ocean. It didn't work. They tried everything. Even when I was at Camp Howze we tried the weasel, and you'll never see--I think I have one book on the weasel. They had the old duck. The weasel was a little vehicle that had an amphibious bed on it, on the chassis of a jeep. We sunk one at Lake Murray up here in [Oklahoma].

Wherever we were needed is where we went, wherever we were trained to go. We had calisthenics. You had to take exercise every day and you had to learn close order drill and how to give commands, all the way up.

We wound up at San Luis Obispo, which is a camp. We were there about four months. We were issued khakis and we were all rested up. We went to Camp Stoneman, which is the next camp up. We put on these khakis, come back down, fixing to go to the Pacific. We got on the train and [passed through] Farwell, Texas, [where one guy waved at] his mom and dad. [People would come to the station to watch the troops go by.] We wound up going around Lake Erie. Wound up in Boston, Massachusetts, and right here [referencing



his paperwork] I've got the whole thing showing when we went to Boston, when we got on the ship, which was the USS *Lejeune*.

Smith: Once you were at Boston, when you were leaving there you were heading toward Europe.

Duke: We didn't know.

Smith: You didn't know that.

Duke: We were on the ship, yes.

Smith: So you know you're going somewhere.

Duke: Right.

Smith: They tell you to get on the ship. You guys get on the ship and you have no idea where you're going. You had your twin brother with you at the time.

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Did you like having your brother with you?

Duke: Did I like it? No, not necessarily, because I was always worried about him and he was always worried about me, so not necessarily.

That particular trip, we were not allowed on the deck. It was January or February.

Smith: Of what year?

Duke: [1945.]

Smith: Okay.

Duke: February of 1945. We couldn't throw a cigarette butt out. The Germans had submarines chasing us. We went all the way across the Atlantic, ten minutes this way, ten minutes that way with maybe [fifty] ships. We saw all the way across. We landed at Le Havre, France, on March 1, 1945.

Okay. Are you tired of this yet? [Laughing]

Smith: No, it's wonderful.

Duke: Okay, we went to Le Havre, France, which had been taken and retaken by the United States. All we saw was buildings [that had been] obliterated completely. We got on trucks and we went to Camp Old Gold. They had camps Chesterfield, Lucky Strike, Old Gold; and they were eight-men tents. We wound up going to Old Gold. That's in about the middle of France.

While we were there I had no jeep so we had to go to Paris and get vehicles. Then we went to Cherbourg and picked up vehicles. That's me. Hollis was training all that time while we were there in basic training and advanced training. I had to go get vehicles.

The engineers had prepared Cherbourg where ships could come in and bring vegetables and stuff. That's

how the supplies got to us. They came into Cherbourg and Paris and coastal places.

We'd get in the back of a GI truck and go to Cherbourg and each one of us would drive a vehicle back. We supplied the companies with vehicles and I wound up with my vehicle. We were at Camp Old Gold for a month.

Smith: While you were training in that month, did you get to go out into France in any off-time or were you strictly on base?

Duke: No, [no time], except they had their restrooms out on the street.

Smith: That was as far as you went?

Duke: Yes. [Laughing] We left there by truck. Well, guess who was bringing up the rear? Me. Did you ever drive cat's-eye driving [in convoy]?

Smith: No.

Duke: They have a cat's eye on this thing. See that little light right there? [Referencing a model jeep]

Smith: Yes.

Duke: That's all you've got. They call it a cat's eye. Back here you've got a cat's eye. At that time it was March 1945 and Germany was in full bloom. I brought up the rear. One minute you look and you see that little

cat's eye in front on you and the next minute it's gone so you speed up. About that time it just stopped.

Camp Old Gold, I've got it in here, 300 and something miles to Cologne, Germany. On the way I rounded a corner about sixty miles per hour. That guy was gone up there and I flipped my jeep [trailer]. All the ammunition went in the ditch that was like [thirty] feet deep. I was trying to upright my trailer and the company commander had missed me and he came back to get me. We uprighted that thing. The ammunition is still in that ditch, I believe, somewhere.

Smith: Oh really?

Duke: Yes. [Laughing]

Smith: You left it?

Duke: That was our trip to Cologne, Germany. We got to Cologne, the Rhine River: half of it was American and half of it was German. So we're sitting there lobbing shells at each other. That night they set up rowboats. About eight men in a rowboat and they rowed across this river and would try to capture somebody over there to get some information. One or two made it, but one guy got lost. He didn't get back.

Smith: He was a prisoner?

Duke: Yes. Well, we don't know. We left him over there. We don't know what happened to him. In my company, several of them got to row the boat. They had a song about rowing the boats. We had taken that training in San Luis Obispo. We were selected to do boat training. We found out once we got over there that crossing the Rhine River had to be done.

Smith: Did you guys get information? Were you able to find out--

Duke: Yes, they found out. Of course, we didn't know. When we turned whoever they captured over they got the information they wanted from them. At that time half of Cologne was taken.

I think the next morning we relieved the 8<sup>th</sup> Division. They were all shot up. They didn't have many left.

Smith: What had they been doing, the 8<sup>th</sup>?

Duke: The 8<sup>th</sup>? It was an infantry division ahead of us. They had taken Cologne.

Smith: Okay. So you were replacing the 8<sup>th</sup>.

Duke: Yes. They shipped out and we shipped in.

Smith: Did you get to spend any time with the men of the 8<sup>th</sup>?

Duke: No, in fact I just hollered at them and waved at them. That's it.

My wife and everybody says I talk too much: "You just won't shut up, so."

Smith: Well, you're doing perfect for oral history.  
[Laughing]

Duke: Okay. Not a lot of people did what I did. I didn't do anything extra, but this is something I thought should be told because of the way it happened. I've got the whole thing written down right there. Every day I was in this town or that town and so forth.

Smith: So the 86<sup>th</sup> Division replaced the 8<sup>th</sup> in Cologne. What did you guys do in Cologne?

Duke: In Cologne we tried to run the Germans out! [Laughing] I think they finally pulled back and we took the whole thing. It went on and the next town is in here [referencing paperwork]. We went into it.

In the United States or anywhere you train with a jeep or a truck, don't bunch up. That is the main [lesson]. Don't bunch up. That included people hiking. You kept fifty feet apart. On the German [landscape], you're supposed to keep twice your speedometer reading as you're moving down the road.

Smith: Why is that?

Duke: To keep one bomb from hitting ten people. In other words, if they could get you bunched up--first day up

that's what happened. We had jeeps, trucks, tanks, and everything else on a country road and we go down into this town. All of a sudden the lead man down there stops. Guess what happens to the rest of us? We all bumpered up. They had a 20-mm machine gun sitting on a hill up there and they opened up on us. There was bullets about as far as that right there [about ten feet away] above my head coming up and down that brick building. I looked and my machine gun was pointing straight up.

I went under the draw bar of the jeep. What happened to me, I was chicken. I was getting out of there and so was my gunner. We got pinned in and that's the one thing we had been taught all of our career, don't ever bunch up and here we were all bumper-to-bumper in that town and they opened up on us.

Smith: So what happened? How long did that last?

Duke: Okay, here comes a two-and-a-half-ton traverse mount on his tank so he gets up there and [makes machine gun noises]--they're gone. In about five minutes they were gone. That's the way it happened. Anytime you'd bunch up they'd get you. Even hiking that was one thing you weren't supposed to do.

So we went--it's all here [referencing paperwork]. We went to the next town and the next town and the next town.

It got to where--I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, which was the mortars and the machine guns. The mortars were 60-mm mortars. You'd set it up out here and you'd lob your shell over there if you're going to get that jeep, you'd lob a shell over there. You had three shells to get your place. You can get zeroed in on him in three shells. That was part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon to chase them out.

When we got pinned down those mortars would open up. The mortar had a baseplate and the gun itself, but it was just a barrel. You had a bullet-shaped ammunition and you'd drop it down in there. It'd hit the bottom and--[sound effect of takeoff]--that sounds about like it. You could zero in on that little man out there that was doing the shooting out there. That was your 60-mm mortar. Then we had the 30-mm machine gun. We had air-cooled and water-cooled. Ours was air-cooled.

So I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon. I had two jeeps, two trailers, and I had to furnish everything for that company. I was K Company's driver. Anything they



needed that I could get I would haul it to them.  
That's what my job was.

Smith: So your group was pursuing the Germans as they were pulling back, firing on them as they're moving into Germany. How far did you guys go?

Duke: With the 60-mm mortar? Maybe into the forest. We'd just lob a shell down there. By the third one you were usually on the target.

Smith: So how far into Germany did you guys end up?

Duke: We wound up from Cologne going all the way up to Aachen and Altena. We went to the Ruhr Pocket. There was a pocket in there they wanted to get rid of. Okay, there was about fifteen divisions and a division had about 15,000 men in it. They had about fifteen divisions to go into Germany. The Ruhr Pocket, they called it, and they were chasing Germans out.

Well, that was Hitler's last stand.

[End of Track 1. Begin Track 2]

Duke: They were inventing the jet planes and everything and lobbing England, when they fired the V-2 rockets at England. This was an area where they were developing

all of that and we got the privilege of taking our part of that Ruhr Pocket.

We wound up at Altena, Germany; another incident. Things happen and sometimes you don't plan them. My jeep had not been serviced, greased, or mechanically checked. When we got to Altena we got a break. The Germans came over the hill with their hands on their head. They were giving up to us instead of Berlin. The Russians were coming in from Berlin so they gave up to us. The hills were black with people coming over the hills: men, women, Germans, the whole outfit. They had their hands on their head.

They came by me and I had just crawled out from under that jeep. I had greased the ten fittings on the front of that jeep. I had just crawled out from under there and I had the old grease gun. It actually had grease in it. I was standing there and I looked --these people were kind of like a horse shying away from and they were shying away from me. They thought I had a strange weapon, I guess. That's what I call "scaring them with a grease gun." [Laughter]

Smith: Do you remember what time period that was when they were surrendering? Do you remember the month of that?

Duke: There is a *Life* magazine that shows all of that. There is the Ruhr Pocket right there [referencing a picture].

Smith: Okay, so it was around April 8, [1945]?

Duke: Yes. April was a busy month because they were giving up. The Germans were tired of fighting and they were giving up. April 12, I think, is when Roosevelt died.

Smith: What did you think when you heard that news?

Duke: Two or three days later somebody said, "Oh, Roosevelt died." That's all there was to it.

Actually, communication, we didn't have it. You had two wires that ran from this phone to this phone and you had a lineman that would run those two wires. Each company that came in, he had to connect them with I Company and I Company had to be hooked up with somebody else. That was the way our communication was.

Smith: Were you able to get letters from home? You guys were moving so quickly.

Duke: Not while I was in Germany. While I was in the service, yes.

Smith: But not while you were in Germany.

Duke: No.

Smith: So you're pursuing the Germans; they're surrendering and then what?

Duke: Do what?

Smith: In April the Germans were starting to surrender, running away from the Soviet troops.

Duke: Yes. They were surrendering to us instead of Russia. They were tired of fighting. The SS troops, which were Hitler's special troops, were pushing and if they wouldn't fight, they would kill them. They would hang them. We went through several towns where people had been hanged.

Smith: You saw the bodies?

Duke: Yes. The SS troops had done that. They finally just gave up to us. The Germans--when we finally got on down in the--when we pulled back out of Altena, we went back to the Rhine River and crossed. I got a pontoon bridge that I drove across. The last bridge at Remagen had been destroyed. We had a pontoon. The engineers had put in a pontoon bridge. I drove across the pontoon bridge in my jeep. From there on we had a spearhead, from there all the way down to Austria.

These people had given up up here, but all the way down to Austria we had contact with Germans all the way. The mayors, *burgermeisters*, got to where they would come out and meet our troops and beg us not to bomb their [steeple] because that is where the German

[snipers hid]. They would wind up in the [steeple] and they would be sitting there picking us off. We got to where with a 60 mm mortar, when we got close to that town, we'd just start bombing the [steeple]. The *bürgermeister* would assure us that there was nobody in that [steeple].

Smith: Did you fire on the [steeples] when that happened?

Duke: After that my twin brother was standing next to a guy that got it. It was from a [steeple]. It was two or three days before May 8. Hollis never got over that. Everywhere he went he gave donations for this boy. He was standing next to him when he died.

That's the way we were. We were on the tail end of it. We only fought about forty days and then we pulled back and came back to the States.

Smith: Did you come into contact with a lot of German civilians? They were surrendering around you, but did you get to--

Duke: Yes, but they were keeping their distance. They were afraid of us. They were still afraid of us. We still had stupid idiots that would line them up and shoot them.

Smith: In your group?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Okay. How often did that happen?

Duke: Not very often. I don't know. One guy lined up about ten of them one day across the road and just mowed them down.

Smith: German civilians?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Yes.

Duke: Yes. I guess they thought we had to get even somehow or another, and they did it.

Smith: How did the rest of your company respond to things like that?

Duke: Most of them didn't know it or they would ship them out. If one guy got out of route about something or other, they'd ship him out somewhere else.

Smith: Did you ever come into contact with any of the Soviet soldiers?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: What was that like?

Duke: It was great. When we got to Altena--or Aachen, at the Elbe, we met the Russians there. In fact, on your K-rations and C-rations you had a little pack of cigarettes with four cigarettes in it. I gave one [Russian soldier] my pack of cigarettes and he was puffing cigarettes when I left [chuckles].

When we got to the 84<sup>th</sup> Division we took the Germans there. The [Russians] had been prisoners. Anything that would cook, could be edible, they cooked. I left that town driving with a drumstick in my hand. They would not eat until some of us would eat.

Smith: The Russians wouldn't eat?

Duke: Right.

Smith: Yes.

Duke: They had been prisoners but they made sure that we ate before they did.

Smith: I'm sorry, the prisoners were Russian prisoners?

Duke: We had relieved them. They were Russians.

Smith: That you had liberated?

Duke: That we had liberated, yes.

Smith: I just wanted to clarify.

Duke: Yes. We were liberating 84<sup>th</sup> Division guys that had come from right here. 84<sup>th</sup> Division, the Russians, British, the Scotch, anything.

Smith: What was that like?

Duke: Oh, man.

Smith: Coming into these prisoner of war camps and liberating them? What was that experience like?

Duke: [Pause] [Emotional] You ain't never been hugged until you're hugged by that. Very, very--they were appreciative because they had been held.

My buddy over here at church--I don't want to mention his name--he and I were close. He was captured in 1944. He was a belly gunner on a B-17. He said they almost took his gun turret off. I don't know if he'd want me to tell this or not. When he bailed out he was upside down. He said, "When I hit the ground it knocked me out." He said, "When I came to there was a lot of women standing around, all the way around me." He said, "I couldn't speak their language and I didn't know what they wanted." They were after his parachute, his silk parachute. He's gone now, my buddy.

We liberated--we started in Cologne. We'd take a little village down yonder. First thing you know, you'd look and there would be a bunch of people running toward you. You don't know whether to shoot them or run! We were liberating. We liberated every town we went into even down to Dachau.

Smith: You got down to Dachau?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: What as that like?



Duke: We didn't get into the relieving of the Dachau [concentration camp]. I don't know what division did but it was awful. We went back later and visited Dachau.

Smith: During that time period?

Duke: No, this was after the war.

Smith: Okay, so you didn't actually go into any of the concentration camps?

Duke: Not into, but I do remember a brick building that had a bunch of naked people. I guess they were Russian [prisoners of war]. I don't know, but they were starved to death. We opened the door and let them out on the side of a hill. We had K-rations and C-rations. We shouldn't had fed them but we did. They were so hungry they couldn't even eat. I think half of them died the next night.

Smith: Where was that? Do you remember what city or town that was?

Duke: That was down in the Bavarian Forest.

Smith: You don't know if they were Russian prisoners?

Duke: They didn't speak our language and we didn't speak theirs, but they were naked and they were just starved to death. We just let them out on the side of the

hill. It's all we could do. Lots of places that we went into, they'd pretty well starved them.

My friend that used to be at church over here, he's dead now, but he said he was in a B-17 as a belly gunner. He hit the ground. They plowed their land deep, and he said, "That's all that saved me. I hit and if it had been hard dirt it would have killed me." He was all the way through Germany in Dachau and from this one to that one and the other. He said he went all the way down into Bavaria. The end of the war was coming and we were liberating. He said, "There was ten of us and this German sergeant had ten prisoners." He said he looked up and the German sergeant was gone. He said, "Here came a vehicle in the yard." One guy was a sergeant, one guy asked him, "What do we do now, Sergeant?" He said, "Just keep walking." The old boys opened the door and said, "Hi, yanks! How y'all?" [Emotionally] So they knew they were liberated.

The funny story--they were liberated so they said, "Well, we'll send you back. It'll be about a mile back there. Do you think you can walk that far?" They said, "I guess so. We walked all the way across Germany." This is all true. It sounds like--I asked him if he walked back. "Yeah! Yeah!" So they started

back. Here comes a vehicle from a side road and it was a bunch of Germans trying to give up to them. This actually happened. They gave up to the guys that had been liberated. They get a little further on. Here they go into camp with a bunch of Germans that had given up to us and we were liberated. That's the situation at the end of the war.

If we captured 100 Germans by the time we got to the rear echelon where prisoners were taken there would be 2000. They were giving up any way they could. Some of those *Life* magazines that I've got shows the Germans giving up. They were sitting beside the road. I went through all that. I drove down through it.

We pulled back and then went back down into Austria. We had liberated all that country from Remagen all the way down to Austria. We had to fight. The Germans would give up if they could, but the SS troops wouldn't let them so we had to slaughter our way down after these people up here had surrendered.

We got to Erding. There was a river and they had built a [tunnel] under the [canal]. One of our guys captured the Germans that were setting charges on the [tunnel] fixing to blow that. Our whole division went under that tunnel.

We wound up at Pischeldorf, Austria. I tried to get her [my daughter] when she went to Germany--[but] there was no such [place in Germany]. Pischeldorf, Austria, was about forty miles from Salzburg. We had made it that far. Someone hollered and said, "The war is over." That was the end of it.

Smith: What did you think when they tell you the war is over?

Duke: We weren't sure, but there hadn't been any fighting. That was kind of an assurance that it was over.

Smith: Did you guys celebrate?

Duke: Oh, yes.

Smith: What did you do?

Duke: Somebody got a bottle of wine or schnapps. There was something else. We kind of passed the bottle around. Some of us got a little tippy, I think. Yes. A fellow by the name of Blacky Blanchard, I didn't know it at the time, but he was an artist. He was sitting on the steps when we pulled back into Mannheim, Germany. He was sitting on the steps one day. I walked out and I had a German flag I had captured in my canteen cup. I pulled it out and said, "Can you draw a picture on that?" "Yes." So he drew a picture of a tank with a wadded-up barrel on it, a German tank with a wadded-up barrel on it. Two or three guys up here. It had my

insignia from my 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He drew that on that flag. He was in our outfit. Blacky Blanchard, he lived in Canada.

Smith: So what happens? The war is over and what do they do with you guys?

Duke: Okay, they wanted us other places. We were important people then. We pulled from Mannheim, Germany, to Heidelberg. It was a big college town. Right back to Camp Old Gold where we came in. From Camp Old Gold we were put back on this ship and sent home. I've got a picture of that ship somewhere here. I think I've got it in here. [Digging through box] I can get into this later. There is a picture of my company. I've got a bunch of stuff you can go through if you want to.

Smith: Sure. So they put you guys on a boat.

Duke: Yes. We were due to be the first complete division back. We were due to go to Japan. That's what happened. We headed back on a ship coming back from Germany. I've got it there somewhere.

Smith: Did they tell you guys that you were going to come back and then go to Japan?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Okay. What did you think about that?

Duke: We were anxious to get home. We had thirty days delay-in-route. We came into--I've got it written down, up north. We came in and went to this camp. They sent us, each one, back to his home base where you shipped out from. Mine was San Antonio, Texas. I went back to San Antonio, got thirty days at home.

Smith: A furlough.

Duke: Yes. We reassembled at Camp Gruber.

Smith: How was your thirty days at home? What was that like?

Duke: Mama and Daddy didn't know what to do with us and I didn't know what to do with them. You still had people that you knew all your life and you'd walk down the street and they'd look at you odd. You could just see [them thinking], "I wonder who he is." They didn't know you. You'd been gone one year but yet they didn't know you. It was kind of strange.

Particularly, me, and my cousin, and one or two more got in somebody's vehicle and we went to Canton. We went to Edgewood. We went to Willis Point. We went to Terrell, all in one night looking for somebody we knew or something to do. That's kind of what it was. You had thirty days' delay.

[Recording interruption]

Smith: Okay, you have your thirty day furlough and then what?

Duke: I came home and--I don't remember. Let's see. I've got it written down when we came home. I just enjoyed visiting with my family and everybody. I don't really think I dreaded going back. I knew we were coming to Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, which is right up here and train in amphibious training again. We did in July and August. I think it was July. In August we shipped out again and went back to the West Coast and shipped out.

In the meantime, while we were gone the bombs were dropped. We were at sea. Evidently they didn't know where they wanted us. I remember somebody saying, "There is Hawaii over there." That's about all. We crossed the international dateline somewhere. I think I have the time written down.

We went down to Enewetak in the Marshall Islands. They don't want us there. We sat outside Enewetak for forty-eight hours in an atoll. It's just a sand dune out there with trees on it. Of course, they've used it for the atomic bombs since then, I think.

I shipped back to Leyte [in the Philippines] and then on from Leyte to Batangas, Luzon. They didn't have a port so we had to go take a life raft to land at Batangas, Luzon. The division went aboard there in

Manilla then right on up to San Jose and then on up to--I forgot what it was. I've got it all written, I think.

We didn't have ammunition. We didn't have water and all that. I had a water truck. I would go up in the hills to the spring and get water and come back. I was up there one day and the muffler had gone off the thing and it sounded awfully loud. I come rolling down through there and there are guys standing out there waving at me. I saw them waving and just went on. I got back to camp and the captain like to have shot me. I had been running through a communist defense. They were taking over some of the little towns in Manilla. I had been running through their guards and I didn't know it. They didn't fire on me so I made it through, but I was hauling wash water-- or water to take showers and whatever. We stayed there four months, I believe it was. I got enough points to get out.

Smith: What did you think about the news when you heard about the atomic bombs?

Duke: We actually didn't hear about it until we got back to the States.

Smith: Okay, you didn't know at that point in time.



Duke: No. We didn't know why we were out around in there.

Smith: So you have enough points and you're discharged.

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Then what?

Duke: I'm discharged [after] three years and so many months I had been in. I went in in February and got out in February.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: February 1943 to February 1946. Of course, Hollis was behind me. He had gone in four months behind me and he didn't have enough points to get out so he had to wait for the next ship.

I had it all mapped out here [referencing his paperwork]. I lose track of things. Oh well. This mostly is telling the dates and the times. We left Camp Old Gold on March 25 coming home. No, that's when we were going over. I kept a record so I would have the dates. For example, I didn't remember when I left San Francisco after we got back from Germany. We went back to San Luis Obispo, loaded on the ship, and when we left there was before they dropped the bomb. We were out there somewhere when they dropped the bomb on August 6 and August 9, [1945].

Smith: Okay, you're discharged and then you go where?

Duke: They discharged me, I came home for a while. We were raising truck patches of tomatoes, turnips, and hogs for the Pearl Street Market in Dallas. My cousin, Claude Duke, lived at Grand Saline, which was eight miles down the road. He came by one day and he said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Oh, trying to raise tomatoes, I guess." "Let's get you out! Let's go to Dallas and get a job." That's all it took. We left.

He had a little Ford coupe he had bought. I had \$925 mustering out pay. We got to Willis Point, and at the service station there was a 1939 Ford sitting there. We stopped and went in there and talked to him. We said, "Would you sell that Ford?" "Yes." "What do you want for it?" He knew that everybody had gotten mustered out with \$925. He said, "\$925." I said, "There it is." I bought a 1939 Ford just like that.

We went to Dallas and didn't know anybody, didn't know anything. We went to Young Street, which was just an industrial street. Asked if we wanted to drive a cab. We said, "Oh yes, we know all about it!" He said, "Where is Main Street?" Some permanent street. Claude said, "Oh, we don't know." He said, "Get out of here. Y'all don't know anything about Dallas."

We went to another place and they were a furniture company. There was a truck pulling out. We said, "We're looking for a job." He said, "You want a job? Hit it! Hang on to that truck right there. He's delivering that furniture." We hung on to the tailgate. We drove about ten blocks down there. We didn't know what we were going to draw or anything. We decided we didn't want the job. We got off ten or fifteen blocks away from my automobile. We didn't know where my automobile was. [Laughing] We spent a half an evening hunting my automobile but we finally found it.

We got a job for Southern Supply Company. I remember it because it was putting up old plow tools like busters and side plows for forty-eight cents an hour. We worked there for a while. We got a carload of flat steel about that wide, forty feet long, and a half inch thick. He'd get one on one end and I'd get another and we'd swing it off the car. We did that all day. When you handle steel you get that old black stuff all over you. We quit about five minutes early and went in to wash up. That guy stuck his head in there and said, "You boys are not through yet. Get back out there and go to work." Claude looked at him

and said, "Yes we are. Get our checks ready." We got paid and left.

I went to work for a butane company at that time. They made the dome for butane tanks. He went to work for something else. We knew somebody that had Earl Hayes Chevrolet so we went to work for Earl Hayes Chevrolet for a while. Then he decided that he would go to the fire department. He took a test and went to the fire department. I took a test and went to the railroad.

I worked for the Santa Fe Railroad from then on for thirty-seven and one half years. He retired as a captain from the fire department in Dallas a year or two before I did.

Smith: Did you live in Dallas for thirty-seven years while you were working on the railroad?

Duke: [No. My job was relief agent until I had enough seniority for permanent agent.]

Smith: When did you meet your wife?

Duke: [Dallas].

Smith: At the rail station?

Duke: No, I had a cousin who was a beautician. She worked as a beauty operator. My wife decided she wanted to be a beauty operator. She went to some beautician

school and that's how we met. My cousin introduced us. I picked her and [Claude] picked another. Two months later we were married.

Smith: What year was that that you got married?

Duke: 1946. You're trying to trick me now. 1946. We've been married sixty-seven or sixty-eight years, something like that.

Smith: So you and your wife lived in Dallas.

Duke: We lived on Beaumont Street. No, I had it a while ago. When we married, we were married about a year and I went to telegraph school because I wanted to do a telegraph. I still do that. I still have my old telegraph key out there.

We decided that the Union Pacific had a job in Omaha, Nebraska and so we gave it a try. We took the 1939 Ford with a jeep trailer on it. I'd given her a cedar chest for Christmas that year. We put it on that trailer and we took off to Omaha, Nebraska, sight unseen. Back then they didn't have hotels and roadside parks and all that stuff. We got to Omaha, Nebraska, at 7:00 p.m. with no place to stay. Finally they told us, "There is a place across the river where you can go." We stayed all night that night, and the next day we were hunting a place to stay.

I went to work for the railroad. I was only up there during the winter. We decided it was too cold so we came home.

Smith: So less than a year--

Duke: Yes.

Smith: --in Omaha? What is your wife's name?

Duke: Martha Anne Curry.

Smith: Okay, so you guys were in Omaha less than one year. Did your wife work?

Duke: She'd bounce from this job to maybe the church needed a secretary and she'd work that. Most of the time she would help me. We'd go to some little place outside for a depot agent and they didn't have any schooling. So you go in and the guy that was the agent would walk out and you'd just take over whatever you thought was best. Me and her would go through his files and see where we could ship a cream can from this place to Omaha, \$1.18. That's what we'd charge. We'd make a bill up. I'd get a week here and a week there. We got tired of that so we just came home. I went to work for the Santa Fe Railroad in [February] 1948.

Smith: And then you stayed there?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: How many children did you wife and you have?

Duke: Three.

Smith: Can you tell me their names?

Duke: Two boys, Kenneth Lee Duke--

Smith: Is the oldest?

Duke: Yes, and then Dennis Dean Duke. [My daughter's] name is Cynthia Joyce Duke. She is named after [Martha's] cousin Joyce.

Smith: What year was that that you had your first child?

Duke: 1950.

Smith: 1950? Okay.

Duke: We were married in 1946 and had the first one in 1950. Baby boomer, yes, baby boomer. We've been booming ever since!

Smith: So what did you do for the railroad for thirty-seven years in Dallas?

Duke: I was a telegraph operator to start with--a clerk, actually. I was a clerk. When I first hired out I did the telegraph. I still have my keys as I said.

You worked extra. You were relieving this guys for a week or two weeks. Back when I first started there was only a week vacation. You'd relieve him for a week and then a day or two over here and a week there. Later they got two weeks' vacation and then later on they got a little more. I worked in 1948 and

1949. I've got an old Tower Nineteen on the railroad. It was on a river. I've got a picture of it. It's in the new museum out at Frisco now. That tower is the one I worked.

I worked that for a while. My seniority built up and as it did I could get a better job. I worked at Dallas Yard close to Fair Park from 1950 to 1967. In 1967 I went to Paris, Texas. I was the official Santa Fe agent there.

Then this job came open. It had been built in 1955, this railroad had. It was a new depot. I walked in and a woman had a white rag, cleaning the window sills. I thought, "Man, I'm in the wrong place." Everything I had been in was 90 to 100 years old. There were cobwebs, rats, and everything else. This was the most modern building on the railroad.

Smith: So you lived in Dallas in the 1960s?

Duke: 1960 to 1967, we left there in 1967.

Smith: So you lived in Dallas when John. F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Do you remember that?

Duke: Yes, in 1963. Yes.

Smith: Can you tell me a little bit about it?

Duke: I had built a house out on Bridal Wreath [Lane] in Oak Cliff, which is--I can't think of the name of it,



but anyhow. That particular day I had taken the window out and was building a bookcase in the window. [I thought] somebody fired a firecracker. A firecracker went boom, boom, boom, three times.

Smith: You heard it.

Duke: Yes, ma'am. There's been all kinds of verdicts here and there, but there were three shots because I heard every one of them. The radio was sitting right there and somebody said, "Kennedy has been shot!" It wasn't firecrackers. Of course, by night they knew Kennedy had been shot. In fact, we were in Oak Cliff. That was in Dallas by I-35, you know, where you cross the old bookstore outfit.

Smith: Had you considered going to the motorcade?

Duke: No. We didn't have time. War was declared December 7, 1941 and I graduated in 1942. All I had to do was just finish school and I was in there.

Smith: Oh, no. I mean when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Had you considered going down to where his--

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Yes, you thought about going.

Duke: I had bought a 1963 Chevrolet pickup and the brakes squeaked on it. Right down on Industrial, by that time, it wasn't [Roy Hill. It was] Earl Hayes. It was

an [Earl Hayes] Chevrolet. I was going to take it down there and have it worked on. I was going to walk under the bridge, under the triple underpass, and stand right there where he was shot, is what I had in mind. I got busy [building bookshelves] and didn't do it.

Smith: Okay.

Duke: That's the only reason I didn't make it up to the firing line.

Smith: Yes, that's interesting that you heard it.

Duke: Yes.

Smith: So you would also have lived in Dallas during the period of the civil rights movement. Did you see anything? Did you experience anything in Dallas as that was happening?

Duke: No, I was too busy trying to make a living [chuckles]. Not really.

Smith: You just didn't notice it much in Dallas?

Duke: No.

Smith: Okay. So you worked for the railroad for thirty-seven years in Dallas.

Duke: No--

Smith: Oh, I'm sorry you moved.

Duke: Yes, with the railroad you follow wherever you get a job, wherever your seniority allows. My seniority was

at East Dallas Yard. It's right there by Fair Park. In fact, you can go to the park, go under the overpass and go to Fair Park, and go to the fair. I was there from 1950 to 1967. My seniority allowed me to go to Paris in 1967. I was the Frisco Santa Fe agent. This job came open, which was better, and I took it.

Smith: What year was that?

Duke: I came over here in 1969.

Smith: All right. Wonderful. How long did you stay there until you decided to retire?

Duke: In 1969, the railroad, like everything else, had begun to reduce. They were pulling off a bunch of agents in small towns and they decided to pull me off. That was in 1982. They closed my job down. I worked right out there by Ben E. Keith. That's where the depot was. They pulled me off. I had a chance to go to Dallas, Gainesville, or Fort Worth. I went to Saginaw, which was at that time I-35W. It was not busy at all. Man, this was a straight shot so I took Saginaw in 1982.

Smith: This was in 1982.

Duke: Yes.

Smith: How long were you at Saginaw?

Duke: 1985. I retired in 1985.

Smith: And then what did you do?

Duke: I twiddled my thumbs. [Laughing] I do a lot of gardening and yard work, and I enjoyed that. I did some carpentry work. I built this house.

Smith: Oh, did you?

Duke: Yes.

Smith: Wonderful. Have you been involved in any veteran's organizations?

Duke: Any what?

Smith: Any veteran's organizations?

Duke: Actually, we in the 86<sup>th</sup> Division stayed together all the way through the whole thing, and we had our reunions every year. We started in 1985 right up here at Gainesville. I think about twenty or thirty met. From then on our division, the 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, would have every year a reunion. One year the most we had was 900, half the division. Where was it?

C. Duke: San Diego.

Duke: What?

C. Duke: San Diego.

Duke: Yes. I've gone to every one of them, and all the old boys that I was in the army with we met and enjoyed talking about the army, what we did. Hollis, my twin brother, passed on in 2010. Our wives got to be bigger cronies than we were. They were together all the time.

They went shopping. They had a ball. Every year we'd go to the 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division reunion. In 1989 our president of that union decided to take two busloads to Germany and go back.

Smith: Okay, this is when you went back.

Duke: We went back in 1989. [Gestures] We used this right here for the bus ride. It went through the whole thing.

Smith: What was that like?

Duke: Great. Great. The people, you couldn't be treated any better. They were beautiful people. I said then that the Germans were a lot better than what we were fighting. It's been great. In 2009 we had our last one at San Luis Obispo. We've got what I call a dummy. We've got a soldier out there. See that up there? Well, I whittled that one to look like his. We've got one of those at San Luis Obispo. There is also one at Gainesville. Have you ever seen it?

Smith: No, I haven't.

Duke: There's one just like that up there in life size. The 103<sup>rd</sup> moved in after we did and they had their reunion at Gainesville. They put up a replica of the infantry soldier. That's what I put up there.

Smith: Your unit was nicknamed--its other name was the Blackhawks.

Duke: The Blackhawks was the name of the division after the old--it was named after the Blackhawk Indian. It was named after a Blackhawk Indian. We were called lots of other things. [Laughter]

We were known as the scarf division at one time. In the wintertime you couldn't take a bath so we tied scarves around [our necks]. We called ourselves the scarf division. Then the kid division. Nearly everyone in the 86<sup>th</sup> Division was born in 1922, 1923, 1924, or 1925. We were all that age. The officers were not much older. Maybe they were thirty years old. All the fighting soldiers were eighteen to twenty-one [years old]. I was twenty-one when I got out. We had a beautiful outfit. We still do. My wife still calls her [friend, the wife of a fellow soldier] at Lake Michigan. She thinks she is just great. She calls her all the time. There was a few of them that passed on. Hollis is gone. Nearly all of my buddies are gone. When you get ninety-one a lot will leave you, but it's been great. I wouldn't trade it.

Every year we've had the pleasure of going and meeting all these people that we were in the service

with. They were some great people. We had one old boy we called "Chief" from Louisiana. Everybody called him "Chief." We've had a beautiful life, really.

I've got five great-grandchildren and they don't come see me as often as they should. I think we've been here in this place since 1970. I built this house in 1970.

Smith: For people listening to your oral history, using it for research or people who are just interested in what you went through, what do you hope they most take away from your story?

Duke: The brotherly love. [Emotionally] I don't meet another soldier that ain't my brother. I can see one in the grocery store who will tell me what outfit he was in and who he was with. They meet you today and shake hands with you and it's great. There will never be any more closeness than there is with one soldier to another. Whether other people like it or not, you're cemented. I think that would probably be my best description of my buddies. They're all my buddies.

Back in the days when we were in the service there was no worry. I could stick my thumb up [as a hitchhiker] and anybody would pick me up. The guys up

here at Gainesville would go to Canada and every state in the union. All they had to do was stick their thumb up. [Emotionally] Nobody would pass them up. In fact, on a weekend pass we had guys go to Michigan, Utah, California, right here from Camp Howze. They'd be back Monday morning. You wouldn't think it but very few people would pick you up and just ditch you.

[When we were stationed] in Alexandria, Louisiana, me and Hollis decided to go to Orange. My parents had moved to Orange by that time. We decided to go to Orange on a weekend. I don't know what it was. It was an off-week or something. We hitchhiked and we caught a ride with an old farmer. He went down to the deepest woods that you could find. He said, "Boys, this is as far as I go." He let us out. The trees were so thick and heavy that people couldn't see us. About 8:00 or 9:00. I got on that side, he got on this side. We got back to camp about 4:00. [Laughing] The only time we ever got stranded other than that you went anywhere you wanted to. You weren't afraid of anybody. It was great.

Smith: Did you ever have any benefit or use of the GI Bill?

Duke: No, but I go to the VA [Veterans Affairs]. I'm welcome to it anywhere.



Smith: Yes.

Duke: Yes. I go to this VA out here every year for a check-up; other than that, no. I've been treated awfully nice by the VA. They at one time got to the point that people talked about them. "I went out there and I had to wait all day." I've never had that problem. I think a lot of it is them. They go out there with an attitude and I think that's a lot of it. The VA has always treated me and anybody I know has been treated nice. That's all I have of contact. I don't have anything from them. I think they're fair, myself.

Have I talked you out?

Smith: You've done great. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you wish I had asked you? Is there anything that we haven't talked about that you would like to talk about?

Duke: No, I don't guess so.

Smith: No.

Duke: No.

Smith: Thank you for meeting with me. It's been wonderful talking to you about all this.

Duke: I didn't know if you wanted to see any of this stuff [gesturing to documents] or not.

Smith: Sure.

[End of interview]

A P P E N D I X



Wallace Duke with his twin brother, Hollis, in 1944 when he came from Mineral Wells, Texas, to Camp Livingston, Louisiana.



Hollis Duke, 1944.



Wallace Duke (right) loading his .50-cal machine gun in Germany, 1945.

[Wallace: Below the headlight is a small light called a Cat's Eye (marked with an arrow). It was used for blackout driving. Note "86-343" on the bumper for 86 Division, 343 Regiment.]



Hollis (back row, right) with his squad in Camp San Luis Obispo, California, 1944.



*Troop Ship. yes we were There Somewhere 'HA' About 2000 men*

[Wallace: There were four ships: USS *Lejune*-to LeHavre, France (Atlantic); USS *Howze*-back to the States; USS *Brewster*-from Luzon and the Philippines--I came home ahead of Hollis; and SS *Marine Fox*-to Eniwetok, Marshall Islands (Pacific).]

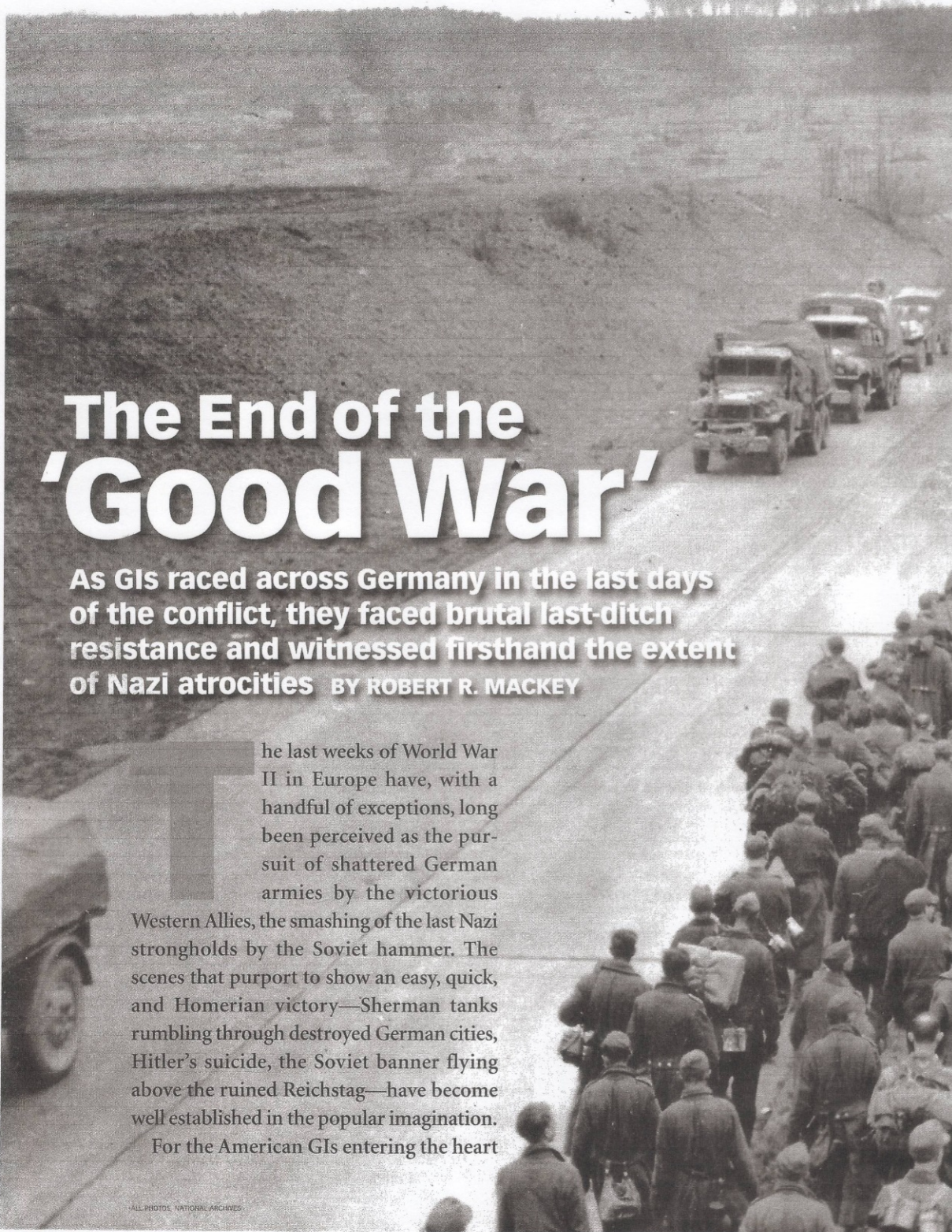


German Surrendering APRIL 1945



For Americans at home, this image of mass German surrender in 1945 was an oft-repeated and deceptively positive scene.

[Wallace: Me and Hollis are somewhere in the middle of this. I drove my Jeep through this, and Hollis walked through it. This was a few days before Hitler died.]



# The End of the 'Good War'

As GIs raced across Germany in the last days of the conflict, they faced brutal last-ditch resistance and witnessed firsthand the extent of Nazi atrocities **BY ROBERT R. MACKEY**

**T**he last weeks of World War II in Europe have, with a handful of exceptions, long been perceived as the pursuit of shattered German armies by the victorious Western Allies, the smashing of the last Nazi strongholds by the Soviet hammer. The scenes that purport to show an easy, quick, and Homeric victory—Sherman tanks rumbling through destroyed German cities, Hitler's suicide, the Soviet banner flying above the ruined Reichstag—have become well established in the popular imagination. For the American GIs entering the heart

ALL PHOTOS: NATIONAL ARCHIVES



# COMING HOME

The Jerries were shelling us again, fumbling for our positions . . . We watched the shells landing in the field around us . . . and in feeble bravado making small bets on the next hit.

I spent most of the long hours making plans for my homecoming. Each small detail was carefully polished to the last shining perfection. I debated seriously on small things. Which would be the perfect hour to come home? Early morning, late night, during a meal? Would I like the kids up and awake when I came in the door, or would the final drop of sweetness lie in arriving after dark, going up the stairs to the nursery, and opening the door softly . . . to see them warm in sleep, tousled and sweet-smelling?

It was an endless and intoxicating game.

—Raymond Guerin, *Blackhawk*

Wildly cheering GIs in New York Harbor are members of the first combat division, the Blackhawks (86th Division of the U.S. Army), to return as a complete unit.



# Fact Sheet World War II

## Profile of U.S. Servicemen (1941-1945)

- 38.8 percent (6,332,000) of U.S. servicemen and women were volunteers.
- 61.2 percent (11,535,000) were draftees. Of the 17,955,000 men examined for induction. 35.8 percent (6,420,000) were rejected as physically or mentally unfit.
- Average duration of service 33 months.
- Overseas service: 73 percent served overseas, with an average of 16.2 months abroad.
- Combat survivability (out of 1,000): 8.6 were killed in action, three died from other causes, and 17.7 received nonmortal combat wounds.
- Noncombat jobs: 38.8 percent of the enlisted personnel had rear echelon assignments--administrative, technical, support or manual labor.
- Average base pay: Enlisted: \$71.33 per month; Officer: \$203.50 per month.

## U.S. Active Military Personnel (1939-1945) (enlisted and officer)

	ARMY	NAVY	MARINES	TOTAL
1939	189,839	125,202	19,432	334,473
1940	269,023	160,997	28,345	458,365
1941	1,462,315	284,427	54,359	1,801,101
1942	3,075,608	640,570	142,613	3,858,791
1943	6,994,472	1,741,750	308,523	9,044,745
1944	7,994,750	2,981,365	475,604	11,451,719
1945	8,267,958	3,380,817	474,680	12,123,455

## Peak Strength of Armed Forces During World War II

U.S.	12,364,000	Switzerland	650,000
U.S.S.R.	12,500,000	Rumania	600,000
Germany	10,000,000	Philippines	500,000
(including Austria)		Yugoslavia	500,000
Japan	6,095,000	Netherlands	500,000
France	5,000,000	Sweden	500,000
China		Bulgaria	450,000
Nationalist	3,800,000	Hungary	350,000
Communist	1,200,000	Finland	250,000
Britain	4,683,000	Brazil	200,000
Italy	4,500,000	Czechoslovakia	180,000
India	2,150,000	New Zealand	157,000
Poland	1,000,000	Greece	150,000
Spain	850,000	South Africa	140,000
Turkey	850,000	Thailand	126,500
Belgium	800,000	Iran	120,000
Canada	780,000	Portugal	110,000
Australia	680,000	Argentina	100,000

## U.S. Armed Forces Toll of War (1939-1945)

Killed		Wounded	
Army and Air Force	234,874	Army and Air Force	565,861
Navy	36,950	Navy	37,778
Marines	19,733	Marines	67,207
Coast Guard	574	Coast Guard	432
<b>Total:</b>	<b>292,131</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>671,278</b>

## Merchant Mariners

Died as POWs	62	Killed in action	6,833
--------------	----	------------------	-------

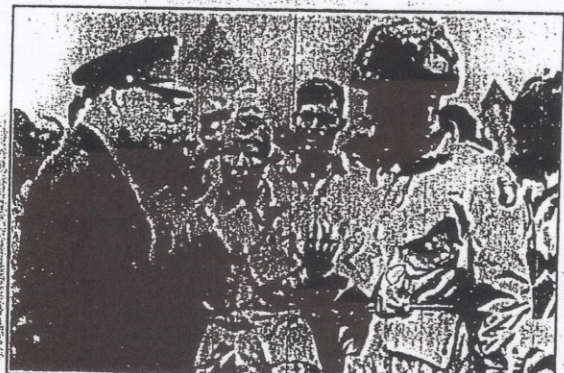
## Estimated International Costs of World War II

Battle deaths	28,504,000*
Battle wounded	30,218,000*
Civilian deaths	46,403,000*
Direct economic costs	\$1,600,000,000,000

\*These numbers are approximate and include Soviet numbers.

## Costs by Individual Nations Directly Related to the War (in U.S. Dollars)

U.S.	288,000,000,000	Netherlands	9,624,000,000
Germany	212,336,000,000	Belgium	6,324,000,000
France	111,272,000,000	India	4,804,000,000
U.S.S.R.	93,012,000,000	New Zealand	2,560,000,000
Britain	57,254,226,000	Sweden	2,344,000,000
China	49,072,000,000	South Africa	2,152,000,000
Japan	41,272,000,000	Turkey	1,924,000,000
Italy	21,072,000,000	Switzerland	1,752,000,000
Canada	20,104,000,000	Norway	992,000,000
Australia	10,036,000,000	Portugal	320,000,000

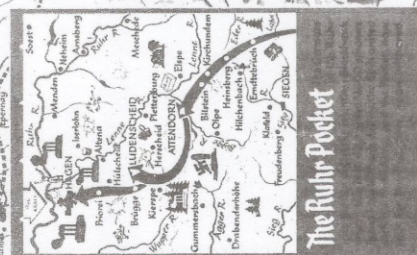


The Supreme Commander talks with men of Company E, 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment, at the 101st Airborne Division's camp at Greenham Common, England, June 5, 1944.

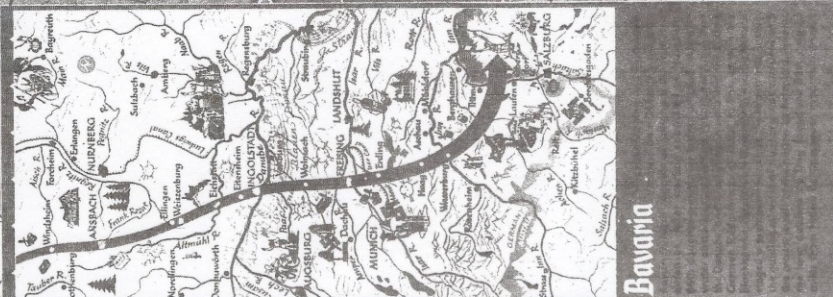
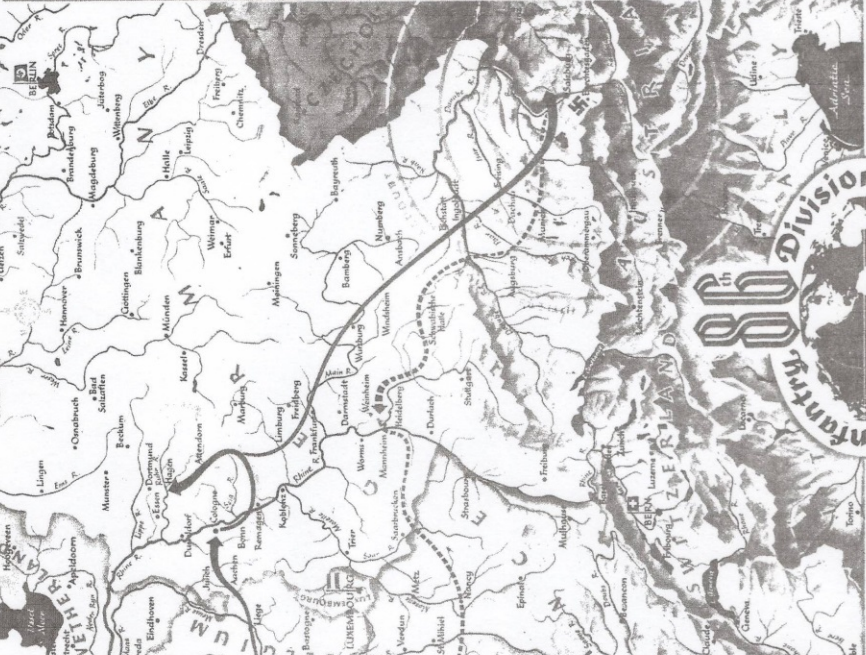
# The Fighting Record of the 88th Blackhawk in World War II



**The Watch on the Rhine**



**The Ruhr Pocket**



**Bavaria**

## The Prologue:

DEPARTED BOSTON PORT, FEBRUARY 18, 1945  
ARRIVED LE HAVERE, FRANCE, MARCH 1, 1945  
DEPARTED LE HAVERE AREA, MARCH 14, 1945

## The Battle:

THE RHINE... MARCH 6 TO APRIL 4, 1945  
THE RUHR... APRIL 7 TO APRIL 16, 1945  
BAVARIA... APRIL 21 TO MAY 8, 1945

## The Victory:

GERMAN PRISONERS CAPTURED... 53,154  
GERMAN TROOPS CONQUERED... 120 MILES  
IN THE WEST... DANUBE, MUELSHAU, INN, SALZACH

## The Epilogue:

DEPARTED GERMANY... MAY 10, 1945  
DEPARTED THE SAAR... JUNE 1, 1945  
ARRIVED NEW YORK... JUNE 17, 1945



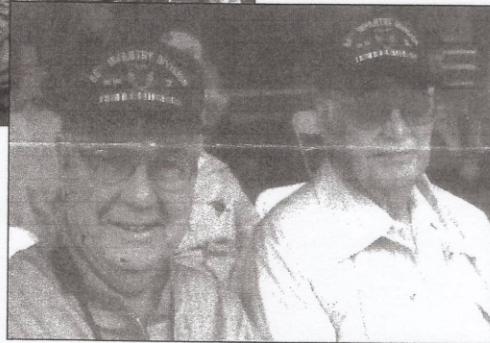
*A grand job—good luck—Harris McNeelock, Maj Gen, U.S.A.*

*W. W. W. W.*

## Blackhawk Twins I

by Hollis D. Duke 343rd-D

I grew up with my twin brother, Wallace Duke, in northeast Texas. We joined different units of the Army at different times, but that changed when Congress passed a law that permitted brothers to serve in the same unit: K Co. of the 343<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Regt.. The assignment may have been influenced by a letter our mother wrote to our Congressman, which was frowned on by our company commander. Soon after my arrival, I was summoned to appear before my new boss, who asked to give up my corporal stripes and start over as a buck private. "I'll watch you and if you so much as stub your toe you will become a private anyway," he said. And watch me he did.



Hollis and Wallace Duke

Serving together in the same unit had both good and bad points. It was good to be able to discuss home town gossip together, but I didn't enjoy it when Wallace would drive by in his Jeep during a march and toot his

little horn. "Hello George," he would say with a smile. (For no particular reason, we got in the habit of calling each other "George.")

In combat we had our separate missions, but I was always worried about that jeep-driving brother of mine. One morning I saw this jeep that was blown to bits. There was no body to be seen, but there was blood everywhere. Was it George or some other poor soul?

Then there was the time when

I went into a seaside village with friends on R and R and word went out that a GI had drowned in the surf. "George" never learned who it was, but he sure got upset with me because I

had gone into the village to soak up some local culture. I guess he was watching out for me, too.

### NATIONAL PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR

The New Windsor, NY, Cantonment State Historic Site is now the setting for the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, a 7,500 square foot facility that will share the stories of America's combat wounded veterans and those who never came back, all recipients of the Purple Heart. Since 1932, 800,000 military personnel earned the medal in service to the nation. Their stories will be preserved through exhibits, live and videotaped interviews. A video recording studio will allow veterans or family to add their stories to the historic record. Telephone: (845)561-6577.

### HIGHWAY HONORS BLACKHAWK INFANTRY DIVISION

Our highway is a reality! New York Governor George Pataki has signed into law the designation of a major New York highway (Route 9W) as the "86th Blackhawk Infantry Division Memorial Highway." Association Secretary Larry Bennett spearheaded the effort to get our name on the highway during and after his years as a New York Assemblyman. Well done, Larry!