

Interviewer:

Good afternoon. Today is August 29, 2015, and we're in the Center for Oral History with Retired Colonel Milton Norman. How are you, sir?

Milton Norman:

I'm fine, thank you.

Interviewer:

Will you please spell your name for us for our transcriber?

Milton Norman:

Surely. M-I-L-T-O-N, no middle initial, and my last name is N-O-R-M-A-N.

Interviewer:

Wonderful. When were you born, sir?

Milton Norman:

I was born June 17, 1925.

Interviewer:

Okay, and where did you grow up?

Milton Norman:

I was born in the Bronx. At two, we moved to Brooklyn, and I lived in Brooklyn until I got married at age 26.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what did your folks do?

Milton Norman:

My parents were immigrants from Russia. They fled the pogroms in Russia, and I might say that during my entire lifetime, there was never any discussion about why they left, what happened there, what their life was like; we never talked about it. We never talked about it. And I never asked questions, because I guess I was too busy doing other things to worry about my parents' background.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

You know?

Interviewer:

Now was -

Milton Norman:

And of course I grew up during the Depression, and my recollection of the Depression is that we always had enough to eat, and my father struggled to make a living. In fact, the one thing that he did while I was growing up that has always stayed with me is that we lived on Ocean Avenue in South Brooklyn, which is now called South Brooklyn, about a mile to two miles from the water, which was Sheepshead Bay. And he used to walk there on Sunday mornings and come back, because the ships, the fishing boats, used to sell their catch right off the dock at Sheepshead Bay. Presumably, you know, at a cheap price. And my father always came back with a fish called smelts, S-M-E-L-T-S.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Very small fish. And my mother used to fry them up, and we thought for many years that we were eating a delicacy. I awoke later on, probably in my early manhood, that number one, the reason my father walked there and back was not because he was an exercise fanatic. It was probably to save the carfare, the ten cents, five cents each way. And he probably bought smelts because it was the cheapest fish, probably ten cents a pound. But it didn't matter at that time, because I was well-fed, and I was more interested in playing ball, you know, depending on the season, than anything else. So I had a very happy childhood, even though we grew up in the Depression, and for many years, we lived in a walk-up. I think I was about 17 before we moved into an elevated apartment. But I was a

happy kid. But my childhood ended when I finished high school.

Well, not quite. When I finished high school, I decided I wanted to work, and I took a job, probably as a shipping clerk in some kind of a jewelry place, and I went to a college at night. And then I switched to the day session subsequently, and we had a draft, as you know, and I turned 18 in June of 1943.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

At which point I enlisted. And the purpose for enlisting was it enabled me to stay out of the Army for a few months, so I completed another semester of college.

Interviewer:

Okay. So what were you taking in college?

Milton Norman:

Well, I enrolled at night at the Baruch School, now called the Baruch School -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Which is part of City University, and it's a business college, basically; it was at that time. The liberal arts branch was uptown. And I thought maybe I'd be an accountant, and the two courses I took at night when I finished high school convinced me that I didn't want to be an accountant. So at the time I went into the Army, I had probably a year and a half of college, not knowing what I wanted to do. And I went into the Army in October of 1943.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And my recollection of Fort Dix, where they issued us clothing and other equipment, was that on my third day there, they found out that I had had ROTC at City College, and we were given wooden rifles, and we marched from 23rd Street to the Armory at 28th Street. And so I knew how to count cadence, and suddenly, three days into the military, I was marching the recruits who came in a few hours after I did to their various areas to get their clothing and other equipment.

Interviewer:

Very good. Could I cut in here for a second?

Milton Norman:

Surely.

Interviewer:

What did your dad do when you were growing up?

Milton Norman:

He had a variety of things.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

His last job was as a designer of women's handbags in a leather goods factory.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

And then he had a stroke before I went into service, and he didn't work after that.

Interviewer:

Okay. And so did -

Milton Norman:

And he died later on, while I was in service.

Interviewer:

Did your mom have to work?

Milton Norman:

Yes, my mom worked.

Interviewer:

What did she do?

Milton Norman:

She worked in a factory.

Interviewer:

Okay. Now, was Norman their name when they came over from -

Milton Norman:

Now, thatâ€™s a good question. Iâ€™ve been asked that.

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Milton Norman:

And nobody believes me that that was the name he came over with, because I ran into other relatives who came over different times, and their name is Norman.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

The conventional wisdom was the guy in front of him at Ellis Island said, â€œNorman,â€ and he adopted that name as he went through the line, but itâ€™s Norman. As a matter of fact, interestingly, I thought I had three uncles, three of his brothers. I have since learned that there were other siblings that never made it to America; made it to South America, and some of them are in Israel. So weâ€™re still exploring the family.

Interviewer:

Okay. And did you have brothers and sisters?

Milton Norman:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

I had a sister; theyâ€™re both gone. My sister was somewhat older than I was, and it never occurred to me, but she was born of a different mother who died in childbirth in Russia, so when my father came here, he came with my sister.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

I never realized until after I returned from the war that she was my half-sister. It didnâ€™t make any difference; she was considerably older than I was. And my brother, who became a dentist, I think he really wanted to go to medical school, but he wound up being a dentist, and heâ€™s gone. He was five years older than me, so he would be about 95 at this time.

Interviewer:

Okay. But the war started in 1941, right, and -

Milton Norman:

December of â€™41, yeah.

Interviewer:

But you didnâ€™t turn 18 and enlist until â€™43.

Milton Norman:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

What was it like in your family as you were hearing news of the war? So from perhaps about 1939 to 1941 to 1943?

Milton Norman:

Well, to be frank, it never really occurred to me that I would wind up being in uniform,

because Pearl Harbor was in December, and I was just six months past my 16th birthday.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

So we followed the war, and I listened to all the broadcasts. I remember listening to Edward Murrow from London. And it wasn't until maybe a year later, when I passed my 17th birthday, that I said, "You know, it looks like I'm going to go." And you know, it didn't cause me any grief or any concern, because everybody was going, and I think we had 14 million men in uniform.

Interviewer:

Right. Do you remember the day that you came home and told your parents that you were enlisting?

Milton Norman:

No, I don't really remember that.

Interviewer:

Okay, all right. So now we're back to '43, and you're marching soldiers from Fort Dix to get uniforms, right?

Milton Norman:

Get uniforms, right, and yeah, and other equipment - mess gear, and

Interviewer:

And Fort Dix was where you did your Basic Training?

Milton Norman:

No. We got the uniforms at Fort Dix, that's correct, you're right. And we then went to Fort Benning -

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

To Infantry Basic Training. And we were all enrolled in a program called ASTP, which we've discussed earlier, Army Specialized Training Program. And it was General Marshall's idea to take college students and send them on, after Infantry Basic Training, to send them to colleges all over the country to learn how to become Specialists in language, code enforcement, engineering, even doctors.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And that program, I never got the benefit of that program because we finished Basic Training probably at the end of '43, at which time because of - this is what I determined having read about it after the war - was that we suffered severe losses in Africa. And General Marshall and his people decided that they needed more Infantry soldiers and less Specialists.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And so I wound up instead of going to Bowdoin College in Maine, I wound up in Mississippi, in the 94th Infantry Division, to fill a lot of vacancies that had occurred, because a lot of their people had been sent out to fill vacancies in Africa as replacements. So a lot of ASTP people wound up in the 94th Division, and I wound up in Company L, Company L, which would be the 3rd Battalion of the 301st Infantry Regiment.

Interviewer:

What was it like getting to Mississippi? I mean because you said you grew up in New York your whole life.

Milton Norman:

Well, it was culture shock, to tell you the truth.

Interviewer:

Why?

Milton Norman:

Well, most of the people that I met when I joined the 94th were from Middle America, and I didn't know anything about Middle America. Their interests, their language, their culture was so different than mine, and I was probably the only Jewish member of my Company during that period of time. I met people who said to me, "You're the first Jew I ever met." And somebody once said, "I was told that all Jews had horns." Things like that.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

And so that there was anti-Semitism, but it wasn't overt, and as a matter of fact, I bonded with a fellow in my Platoon who was from Pennsylvania, of Italian heritage. I think Italian was probably his first language; at least he could write or read English hardly at all. And he had a girlfriend, and I used to help him write letters to his girlfriend. She wrote him in English, and I had to read the letter to him, and we composed an answer, and we became good friends. And he happened to be the Division Lightweight Boxing Champ, which I think was helpful in a sense that here I am, 18 years old, 128 pounds soaking wet, you know, and so we became good friends.

Interviewer:

What was his name?

Milton Norman:

He's got a weakness for names.

Interviewer:

If it comes to you -

Milton Norman:

I think his last name was Demeno.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

D-E-M-E-N-O. And I believe he survived the war.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

You know. The Division, which we'll talk about later, I guess, made it to the Czech border, where they met up with the Russians towards the end of the war, and he was still with them.

Interviewer:

Good.

Milton Norman:

So he made it. But I had no contact with him. So I joined the 94th Division, and we trained. They were activated in Salina, Kansas, I believe, and then went to Mississippi, to Camp Grenada - Camp McCain in Grenada, Mississippi, and then we had maneuvers there. And I also went and we had maneuvers in Louisiana, but I stayed there until we were shipped to New York -

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

To a place - yes, I'm sorry, go ahead.

Interviewer:

So that was probably early '44 - late '43, early '44?

Milton Norman:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

So probably a pretty pleasant time to be down in Mississippi in the winter.

Milton Norman:

Yeah, the weather was fine. The weather was fine.

Interviewer:

Okay. And then so you did all the training, and you went up to New York to ship out, right?

Milton Norman:

Yes, at Camp Shanks, which is in Rockland County, I believe, near Nyack.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And I think I was able to spend an evening with my parents before I shipped out.

Interviewer:

You remember what the evening was like?

Milton Norman:

Yeah, very sad; very sad.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Milton Norman:

My father had suffered a stroke -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And so he really didn't know what was going on. Anyway, I spent one night there, and then we shipped out, and we crossed on the Queen Elizabeth, entire Division, 15,000 strong. And that was pleasant, because the Queen Elizabeth was very fast, and I don't know if the escort ships could even keep up with us, but we crossed the Atlantic in like four or five days.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

And with 15,000, we double-loaded. By that, I mean one night we slept in triple-deckers or quadruple-deckers down where they used to keep the luggage, and the next night we slept on deck, because there weren't enough accommodations below for everybody. And that was fun. And then we landed in England, and this must've been probably - it was after D-Day, I believe. I think it was after D-Day; I'm not sure. And we spent a lot of time, maybe two or three months, in Chippenham in England, or Cheltenham. There were two towns right there, and the only thing I remember about either of them is that they ran out of beer after four days, because these people drank a lot of beer that I was involved with in the Division, and you know.

Interviewer:

What did you do when you were on the ship during the crossing?

Milton Norman:

Well, there were a lot of poker games going on, but I didn't play poker, so I just wandered around.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did you talk with your friends about what was coming?

Milton Norman:

Yeah, we were lighthearted. Nobody seemed to be concerned. We didn't know what was going to happen, but where we were going, other than we were going to war, but we didn't know where. Then we went up north to Cheltenham, and my recollection is that the evenings, it didn't get dark until 10:30, so we played a lot of football at night.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Played a lot of football.

Interviewer:

Did you ever -

Milton Norman:

I made one trip to London.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And I think I made a trip to Bath. In London I had a scare; I was in a double-decker bus that got hit by one of those missiles that they were firing over, and I remember spending some time in a bar. My recollection is I was in London on my own. Somehow or other, I hadn't joined up with anybody, and I remember seeing Glenn Miller, and he subsequently got lost in a plane crash over the Channel, I believe. I saw them play, the band.

Interviewer:

Did you interact with any English citizens while you were there?

Milton Norman:

Well, only once I can recall a conversation I had with a woman, and I think I ordered Guinness stout. You have to understand that in my youth, going to a bar was something I didn't do.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

First of all, I was underage. I was still underage, as a matter of fact, and she - the woman told me that that was a lady's drink, Guinness stout. And I got lost a few times, and I talked. I don't have any vivid recollection of interacting with the British people.

Interviewer:

Yeah. What did she mean by that, that it was a lady's drink?

Milton Norman:

Well, I guess what she meant was that men don't drink Guinness stout.

Interviewer:

Oh, okay. All right. So when did you ship over to Europe, or from England to mainland Europe?

Milton Norman:

Well, I think the Division landed, believe it or not, the 94th Division, we landed at D plus 94.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

So that would be July, August, September - September 10th - right - that's 94 days after June 6th.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And we landed at Utah Beach. I got wet. We landed in the same manner as the men who invaded the coast three months earlier. I got wet up to my waist. The human casualties were cleared up by then, but there was a lot of debris around; a lot of crafts, landing crafts that had been shot up. And we got on trucks, and we went over to the Brittany peninsula. Now, I have to interject this at this point. Being a Private or a Private First Class in the Infantry, you don't really know what's going on.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

You just follow the fellow in front of you. That's what it amounts to. So I knew nothing about why we were going to Brittany, because we had heard the battles were in Normandy. But it seems that the Germans had submarine bases in Brittany, at Lorient and Saint Nazaire. I think they also had a submarine base at Brest, but I think the 28th Division took Brest. All of this I learned subsequently.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Not while I was there, in Brittany. And so they had 30,000 troops in Lorient and Saint Nazaire, and I guess they were entrenched on the coast with enough food and supplies to last them forever. And somebody had to contain them, and so we relieved some Armored Division that went up to where the battles were going on, and we spent about three months, maybe, in Brittany. We were dug in. Everything was underground because they knew where we were, and we knew where they were, and if you hung around outdoors too often, you subjected yourself to artillery barrages.

And I guess the Officers in charge decided that the Germans had too many pillboxes or forward outposts overlooking where we were, and we had to eliminate them. So we did have some skirmishes. In fact, I recall me firing a bazooka. I had been taught how to use a bazooka. I don't know that that weapon really amounted to much in the scheme of things. I don't even know if it's still around. But it took two people, because you put the bazooka on your shoulder, and somebody sticks the missile inside. And I remember firing it and I hit a pillbox. I hit a pillbox, and a few minutes later, a handful of Germans came out with their hands up, so that was fun.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Milton Norman:

But I just wanted to add that in going over the terrain when it ended, we saw dead Germans, and this had a disquieting effect, I think, on all of us. We had never seen dead soldiers before. I guess we were happy they were Germans and not Americans, but. So we didn't talk much when we went back to our dugouts, because we realized that it could've been us. So we were there for a while. Did you want to ask me something?

Interviewer:

Yes. You mentioned that as a Private, you follow the guy in front of you.

Milton Norman:

Yep.

Interviewer:

How about your Officers or N.C.O.s? Do you remember anything about their leadership?

Milton Norman:

Yes.

Interviewer:

What do you remember? Were they good leaders for you?

Milton Norman:

No.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

I had a Sergeant in the States and I went over with him, and later on - I might tell you now because you asked the question. Later on, I made a decision to violate an Army rule - unspoken - that you never volunteer. I don't know if that's still true, but. I had the feeling that he was going to get me killed, because he was stupid. He always made the wrong decision. So I volunteered for patrol work for Regimental Intelligence, but that came later.

Interviewer:



Okay. And your Officers?

Milton Norman:

Well, we had a couple of replacements, and some of them were 90 days, you know, Fort Benning. We used to call them 90-day wonders. And they were young, and not too good. Some of our enlisted people were fellows who had failed at Officers School and become Sergeants, and they were tough, and some of them were pretty good. They were all bitter, too, that they flunked out of O.C.S.

Interviewer:

All right. Did your training prepare you for combat?

Milton Norman:

I would say no.

Interviewer:

Okay; why?

Milton Norman:

Well, for one thing, we had the wrong clothing.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Again, this comes later, but the winter of 1944-45 was one of the coldest winters that Europe ever had. And our soldiers had the wrong footgear, the wrong socks; trench foot was a big casualty, and if trench foot became real bad, you lose a toe or two. And I subsequently learned that amongst the ten - you know, I don't remember how many unit Infantry Squad. I think it's ten, but I'm not sure. But I think six or seven of the members of my Squad had trench foot.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Later on. We had no problem weather-wise. In fact, Brittany was - I would be very happy to be sitting here to tell you that I spent the whole war in Brittany, because it was very nice. The local people brought us fresh eggs, and we were in our dugouts for two weeks or three weeks, and then we were off for a week. And we had the free French attached to us - they called them the FFI, spelled F-F-I, pronounced F-F-E, the Maquis, and these were French soldiers. And again, they were not very good soldiers, but they liked to sing, and when we went off the line back into town, they knew everybody in town, and we had a lot of fun -

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

For a week. That was Brittany.

Interviewer:

It sounds like a decent place.

Milton Norman:

Well, if you're going to be in combat, I would say I would agree with you.

Interviewer:

And so since you said you were ill-prepared for what you were to experience -

Milton Norman:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

How did you learn? How did you survive?

Milton Norman:

Well, in Brittany it was simple, because the dugouts were there when we leave this Armored Division. We improved on them, and we got no training. The training we got in England was perfunctory, really -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

You know? For example, I think one of the things we didn't learn was how to detect artillery and mortar fire just by the sound, so you know what's coming, and that took a while and you learned from experience -

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

You know?

Interviewer:

Could you describe the first German you saw, and what you thought when you saw him?

Milton Norman:

Well, I saw Germans in Brittany, you know, a couple of hundred yards away, and I saw some dead Germans. I didn't really see any Germans until I got captured later on.

Interviewer:

Okay; all right. So after Brittany, what happened to you?

Milton Norman:

Well, there was the Battle of the Bulge, and I think again I can only conjecture, because nobody discussed this with me. There was the Battle of the Bulge, and I think there was a Division - I can't remember the town - that was surrounded. It's famous.

Interviewer:

Bastogne?

Milton Norman:

Bastogne; thank you. And I think they needed some help to, you know, secure the - to save these people who were surrounded. This is when the General there - I think his name was McAuliffe -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Said, "Nuts," when they asked him to surrender, and the General didn't know what he meant, you know? And I think we got sent up there. I don't know exactly where we were when we went there. We were not involved in the Battle of the Bulge. It was over. By the time we got there, it was probably the last week in December. I think the Bulge started maybe ten days before Christmas, and it was over once the clouds lifted and our aircraft was able to function, and they ran out of fuel. It was scary, but I also think - again, this is my opinion from what I've read - that Hitler's gamble shortened the war, and a lot of the writers seem to agree. Anyway, so we went up to I guess it was Luxembourg - again, I don't know what country I was in, because you know, I didn't walk around reading road signs.

But it could've been Luxembourg. It was France and Luxembourg; then we were inside the Siegfried Line into Germany, and we attacked a couple of towns, and most of the time the Artillery did the work. By the time we got into town, the Germans had fled, and so I never did any digging once I left Brittany. Never had to dig.

Interviewer:

~Cause you were on the move so much?

Milton Norman:

Yes. And we would stay at abandoned farmhouses, and we ate a lot of potatoes, ~cause that's what we found there. And we threw a lot of dishes into fireplaces, you know?

And about this time, I decided that - it was not any particular event or incident that impelled me to do this, but I guess maybe an inquiry went out, anybody want to do patrol work? And I volunteered and we did a few patrols without incident. And in January - and you have to understand the ground was all covered with snow - we tried to get into a wooded area that had a name, but I can't remember it.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

We tried to get in and we got close, but we didn't go any further. And then they said, the Intelligence Officer said, "I want you to get into the woods, tell us what the terrain is like." They wanted to know whether they can put tanks through there. So I think we got within about 50 feet of the edge of the woods, and I could see the luminous dial on the wristwatches of the guys there. And before you knew it, a machine gun opened up, and we were a six-man patrol, and three of us had gone forward. The other three remained in the rear with a radio. So the three of us were fired upon, and to this day I am thankful that whoever manned that machine gun didn't see too well, 'cause he missed us and we fell. And a few seconds later - no, maybe 15 minutes later - we were surrounded by maybe 20 or 30 German soldiers.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And the only recollection I have is that they looked very young, and particularly one fellow, he looked to me like he was 15 or 16, took my rifle, offered me a cigarette, and he said - probably with a touch of envy - "For you the war is over." And I would think that he would've gladly changed places with me. Of course, this is January of '45, and I think the Germans knew that it was only a question of time.

Interviewer:

This is about January 22nd, right?

Milton Norman:

Yes, that's when I was captured, yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Before we get into that a little bit more, when you volunteered for the patrol work, what were the patrols -

Milton Norman:

No training. No training at all.

Interviewer:

No training, huh?

Milton Norman:

No training at all.

Interviewer:

But what were the patrols like? What was your job?

Milton Norman:

Well, we were looking to see if there were any Germans assembled in large groups. We were told to try and avoid fire fights, because when you're a three-man patrol, you aren't going to do too well in a firefight. Just report back to the nature of the terrain, you know.

Interviewer:

So you were more or less reconnaissance.

Milton Norman:

Yeah, rather than a active patrol.

Interviewer:

Go out and find what's out there and report back.

Milton Norman:

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Okay. And so what did you think when you were captured? What was the first thing that entered your mind when you were surrounded by those German soldiers?

Milton Norman:

Well, I thought maybe the war was over for me. In retrospect, it's hard to understand why I wasn't scared to death, but I have no recollection of being frightened. It was an

adventure.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

How stupid can you be? And as a matter of fact, being Jewish and being conscious of the fact that my dog tag said H on it -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

I shouldâ€™ve gotten rid of my dog tags, which I didnâ€™t. I still have them.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

I still have them. No one ever searched me.

Interviewer:

So they captured you, they got you up out of the snow -

Milton Norman:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And where did they take you?

Milton Norman:

Well, Iâ€™m vague about this.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

But I believe I was separated from the other two, for reasons that escape me, and I remember being in the back seat of a car with a German Officer on either side of me, who didnâ€™t, they didnâ€™t talk to me. And I arrived at a building in some little town that seemed to house German prisoners; maybe soldiers who had deserted or gone AWOL, you know. And they put me into a room with a heavy door, and oh, they fed me, and I was interrogated there by an Officer.

Interviewer:

Now, were they speaking English to you?

Milton Norman:

Yeah, well, only the German Officer who interrogated me.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And you know, he told me more about my Company than I knew, and he realized that I didnâ€™t know anything, and I said, â€œI canâ€™t answer that,â€ you know. And of course, he knew I was Jewish because he thought my father was obviously an industrialist and owned a clothing factory or something. Well, you know.

Interviewer:

Did you tell him your dad had a stroke?

Milton Norman:

Yeah, I think I did; I donâ€™t remember. Anyway, then they locked me up, and I was only there overnight. And about 4:00 in the morning, the door opened, and I, â€œOh, they come to get me.â€ And three guys was thrown into the room with me, dressed in United States Army uniforms, so I guess I broke the rules. I started talking to them, but not surprisingly, they wouldnâ€™t talk to me, because later on when I thought it through, they thought I was an English-speaking, you know, German, trying to get information from them. They wouldnâ€™t talk to me. Not at all. Not at all. And thereâ€™s an interesting sequel to that, which weâ€™ll get to, I believe. And the next morning they were gone, and then I was

gone.

And I wound up at Stalag I think 12A, which was a receiving point. And I was interrogated there, but you know, again, nothing; nothing came of it. And then I was - and I think I briefly saw the other two fellows that I was captured with, but we were separate. And a day, a couple days later, I was part of a group that we marched, you know. Incidentally, I forgot to tell you that when they took me from the point of where I was captured to that house where I spent that first night, we crossed the Rhine River. And so I used to play, you know, trivia with people and say, "I crossed the Rhine." You know, the American Armies crossed the Rhine, if you know, in March at Remagen. But I said, "I crossed in January," and that's a big riddle - "How did you get across?" you know.

Actually, there were prisoners taken in the Battle of the Bulge who crossed the Rhine where I did. The 106th Infantry Division was decimated, as you may know.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Either captured or killed. Anyway, so we marched through Frankfurt, from one end of Frankfurt to the other. There wasn't a building standing. I never saw a human being there. I guess they all fled to the countryside. And then we wound up about 25 miles north of Frankfurt at a place called Bad Orb, which we located on a map earlier today.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And that's where - and Bad Orb was originally set up as a receiving point for distribution of POWs to POW camps. But because of the large number of Americans who were captured in the Bulge, they couldn't do this, so Bad Orb became a camp. It had other nationalities in separate compounds, and when I got there, there were Americans, mostly from the 28th and 106th. Used to call them the Hungry and Sick. I don't know if you heard this. Anyway, my first day at Bad Orb I ran into a fellow I knew from college - would you believe this? And he said to me, "There are no Jews in this camp." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he told me the following story. I think he was from the 106th.

They had arrived probably the end of December. About two weeks before I got there - oh, and when they arrived, they set up a particular barracks for Jewish prisoners, and they asked all the Jewish prisoners to fall out, and they put them in a separate barracks. He didn't fall out; he was Jewish, and he did not fall out, and I guess there were others who didn't. And so he told me this, and then he said, "About two weeks ago, the Commandant got an order to provide 350 prisoners for, as it developed, for a work camp, underground work camp. So they started with the number that they had in that segregated Jewish barracks, and they were short.

So they convened the group, the troops, the prisoners, and they again asked Jewish prisoners to fall out, under threat of being killed or something. And some fell out, some didn't. And to make up the quota, the 350, they looked at names. They picked people who they thought had Jewish-sounding names, or looked Jewish, or were troublemakers, and then a couple of people volunteered. So they got 350, and they marched them to Berga, Berga an der Elster. Elster is - oh, okay - somebody said good-bye to me. Elster is a river, I guess, and right near Buchenwald.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And Berga was a work camp, specifically set up to have people work underground, because nothing could be done. We had bombed every conceivable above-ground installation the Germans had by that time. And they marched them over there. I thought it was 300, but I read the other day that it was 350, and they went to work. Their living conditions were atrocious, and if you fell down, they just left you there, and I think the

fatality rate was in excess of 20% of the 350.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

And when it became untenable to stay there, some German Sergeant marched them out all over westward to get away from the Russians, and they had sick people with them, and he refused to take them to a hospital. It ended when the war ended, in May. So I finally arrived at Bad Orb with the admonition, "There are no Jews here." And I must say during my two and a half months there, we had no - I was not witnessed any atrocities, I didn't see any. There may have been some, but I don't know of any. I saw very little of the guards, other than the ones in the towers, and I think a good many of the guards might not have even been Germans, you know.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

So we weren't required to work or do anything. Basically, we couldn't work, because we were all pretty weak. Food - want to talk about food. We got a loaf of bread a day, to be divided among six of us. We were separated into squads of six, and the bread was sawdust, basically, and then we had a bowl of soup. And I would say with respect to both of those, in a normal situation you wouldn't touch them, but when you're hungry, anything that you put in your mouth is acceptable, unless somebody says you're going to die if you put it in your mouth. And interestingly, my five cohorts on the bread detail selected me to cut the bread, which I considered an honor, and the trick was to make six equal slices.

And we rotated the order in which you selected your slice, and a little bit this way made a big difference, I guess.

Interviewer:

Oh yes.

Milton Norman:

So that's what we did, and we talked. We talked, and we sat around in a big barracks on a bare floor. I don't know that we ever had blankets or anything, you know; a lot of lice.

Interviewer:

Now, so your fellow prisoner told you there's no Jews in camp.

Milton Norman:

Just one. Just one person. I never had a discussion about this with anybody else.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

I don't know that anyone else there was Jewish, and I wouldn't ask for that reason.

Interviewer:

No one asked and no one told.

Milton Norman:

No one asked. We never talked about religion. We also never talked about sex, interestingly. We talked about food, and they asked me to draw up menus, which I did.

Interviewer:

So you'd think about food all day.

Milton Norman:

Yeah. Yeah. And I tell you another thing that sustained us was that we had some Artillery people there. When we first arrived, we'd hear the artillery in the distance, and day by day, it grew louder and closer. And we had a couple of Artillerymen who were able to tell us how far away they were, and I remember one guy saying, "Any day now. Any day now." Easter Sunday, April 2nd, we woke up 'cause we heard vehicles in the yard, and

I looked out, and they were American vehicles. So I guess all the German guards had fled during the night and we were free. We had a big bonfire. They had big barrels where they made the soup. We had a nice fire burning them, and then weâ€¦what happened? We were there a couple of days, because they had to make arrangements. We were liberated fairly early.

April 2nd was fairly early for liberated POW camps. And they drove us to a airfield, so to an improvised airfield a couple of miles away, and we got showered and deloused, and we were issued uniforms. And then we got on an airplane. My recollection is it was the first time Iâ€™d ever been in an airplane, which sounds kind of crazy, but this is 1945.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And we flew to Le Havre, France. The Army had opened up a place called Camp Lucky Strike. I donâ€™t know if thatâ€™s been mentioned to you in your, any - it would only be mentioned to you if you interviewed a POW.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And Lucky Strike was set up with soup kitchens, juice kitchens that went all day, and donuts, and all kinds of things, and a lot of guys ate too much and got into big trouble. And my second day at Lucky Strike I turned yellow. My skin turned yellow. I guess they call that yellow jaundice. And then somebody said, â€œGee, this could be hepatitis,â€ and they didnâ€™t know the first thing about hepatitis. They thought it might be contagious. So I wasnâ€™t at Lucky Strike very long - maybe three or four days, three or four days - April - and they put me on a boat, in the hospital. And I couldnâ€™t eat; I was hungry but I couldnâ€™t eat. In fact, again, at Lucky Strike I ran into a fraternity brother of mind, and I said, â€œYou were the Colonelâ€™s Radio Orderly.â€

He went in in â€˜42, older than me. And I said, â€œHowâ€™d you get captured?â€ He said, â€œAre you kidding - they captured the Colonel.â€ So he ate six meals a day -

Interviewer:

Holy cow.

Milton Norman:

This fellow, and I donâ€™t think Iâ€™ve seen him since. I donâ€™t think he ever thanked me. Anywayâ€¦we landed at Camp Kilmerâ€¦well, we got the bus, train to Camp Kilmer.

Interviewer:

Where is that?

Milton Norman:

Thatâ€™s in New Brunswick.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Jersey. I think itâ€™s long gone. And I was there a couple of days, and I wandered over, and they hospitalized me, and they said, â€œWe got some specialists coming up.â€ Nobody knew anything about hepatitis then; all they knew is it has to do with your liver. And I wandered around in my pajamas, and I saw a phone, and I put a nickel in, and I got my mother. And my mother had gotten a telegram the day before - the day before. She had never heard anything since the initial telegram, â€œMissing in action.â€

Interviewer:

Yeah?

Milton Norman:

And the day before she got a telegram that Iâ€™d been liberated and I will be home soon, you know? And the letter I wrote on April 4th - I wrote that from the prison camp - I donâ€™t think she had gotten that yet. And the next day, my brother, who was a - he was a First Lieutenant, maybe a Captain, in the Dental Corps - came out to visit me with my mother

and my sister at the hospital at Kilmer, and that was nice.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

Another two days later, they transferred me to Fort Dix to the hospital.

Interviewer:

So right back where you started.

Milton Norman:

Yeah, right back where I started from. And as a matter of fact, they have since built a big hospital in Fort Dix, and I think they built another one since then. But when I was there right after the war, there were barracks converted into infirmaries, you know, and they connected to each other. And I was isolated for a couple of days till they decided I wasn't contagious, so I wasn't permitted to drink any liquor for a year - not that I was a big drinker, you know.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And I eventually, I never, I was transferred to Camp Upton out on the Island for discharge in November. So I got back at the end of April, and I was hospitalized, but I kept getting 30-day passes, you know, and I'd report back and get another pass, 'cause I was okay. I was getting my weight back, and so in November I was discharged. I got a medical discharge.

Interviewer:

Okay. Take us back to the camp. Can you describe your quarters in the camp?

Milton Norman:

You know what World War II barracks look like?

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

About the same. Big, open space, and there was an entry room with us right next to each other. In a way, that was good; it was very cold, you know. It was very cold.

Interviewer:

And you had bunks?

Milton Norman:

No bunks - on the floor.

Interviewer:

On the floor. So no beds at all, just on the floor?

Milton Norman:

No beds. No beds.

Interviewer:

Okay, no beds, no blankets.

Milton Norman:

They couldn't have gotten that many people into that room if they had beds - unless they were the -

Interviewer:

How many people were in the room?

Milton Norman:

You know, I never counted them, but I bet there were 100.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did it have any sort of heat?

Milton Norman:

I don't recall any heat.

Interviewer:



All right. And what was your camp routine like?

Milton Norman:

We sat around and talked. Nobody bothered us. We had no chores. I can't remember whether or not the latrine was something outdoors, or whether there was a latrine in the barracks. I can't remember.

Interviewer:

Okay. Did you have a formation in the morning to count you?

Milton Norman:

Never. Nope. Nope.

Interviewer:

Okay, so they - all right. And -

Milton Norman:

Nope.

Interviewer:

How were you treated?

Milton Norman:

We weren't treated, period.

Interviewer:

You were.

Milton Norman:

We were treated poorly in terms of food and medicines.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

You got sick, you were in big trouble.

Interviewer:

Now, did the German guards you interacted with, like did they bring you the food, or was it all other prisoners?

Milton Norman:

Yeah. No, I think it was delivered to a room -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

In the barracks, and we had leaders who distributed it. So I never! I never interacted with guards. And as I said earlier, I would have my doubts that they were all Germans.

Interviewer:

Right. So not self-selecting when they said for all the Jewish folks to fall out probably was a benefit to you, in that you just were left alone, then.

Milton Norman:

Oh, I was very lucky. Had I been there two weeks before, I would've had to make a decision as to whether to fall out.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And you know, in the scrapbook that I have, in the monthly publication that the American Ex-POWs put out, there was a letter from a fellow who was criticized because he didn't fall out, and that meant that somebody else had to go to fill the quota. And he felt that he did nothing wrong, and I wrote him that he did nothing wrong.

Interviewer:

Of course.

Milton Norman:

And so there were others, I'm sure. But as I said earlier, there was no talk of religion; no discussion. We discussed home towns, you know, things like that, where you're from, and some of the fellows talked about their families. But it was innocuous.

Interviewer:

Yeah, sure.

Milton Norman:

A lot of silence. A lot of dozing, and you couldn't really do much.

Interviewer:

You just waited.

Milton Norman:

We didn't play volleyball or softball or anything. When I stood up, I had to stand still for at least 60 seconds to get my equilibrium. That's what I remember.

Interviewer:

Due to malnutrition?

Milton Norman:

Yes.

Interviewer:

Okay. Do you know how much weight you lost while you were in the camp?

Milton Norman:

Yes. Yes. Yes, I think I weighed myself at Camp Lucky Strike. I think I weighed either 98 or 101, something like that, down from about 160.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

Yeah, 155.

Interviewer:

So about 60 pounds, plus or minus, that you lost.

Milton Norman:

Yeah. My prediction is that if we hadn't been liberated, in another two months, our casualty rate would've been tremendous.

Interviewer:

Did you lose many prisoners while you were there?

Milton Norman:

A couple.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Yeah. I don't know what the percentage is.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

But if they lost 20% plus at Berga, which was much higher than in the camp, I would say our loss was probably between 5 and 10%, you know. For example, you got pneumonia -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

I was a very healthy 19-year-old.

Interviewer:

And when you got home and - tell me what it was like the first time you saw your parents again.

Milton Norman:

Well, I saw my mother at, in Jersey, Camp Kilmer.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

In fact, my mother started to feel my legs underneath the sheets, and I said to her, "What

are you doing, Mom? and she said, "I want to see if you got your legs." I said, "Well, ask me." Anyway, it was then I said, "How's Dad?" and they told me had died.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

He died without knowing that I had been missing in action, you know.

Interviewer:

Thank God for that.

Milton Norman:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Yeah. And so after you got discharged, you came home, and what did you do after that?

Milton Norman:

Well, I was discharged in November. I think in February I started a semester back at City College.

Interviewer:

And what courses were you taking?

Milton Norman:

Business administration courses, not knowing really what I wanted to do. And then a recruiter came from Saint John's School of Law, and because most of the soldiers hadn't come back - you know they had a point system - and they had vacancies to fill. And they looked at my record, I had two years, and so I was admitted, at the age of - in June of '46. I was 21.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And they went on a trimester system, meaning no summer vacation, so I made three years in two years, because instead of being off from the middle of June to the middle of September, we had a semester. And I graduated law school in June of '48, took the bar exam. I was just 23. And in September I was notified that I had become a lawyer. I passed. And then I got a job with a lawyer in just about the time I was admitted, which was in November of '43.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

I was with him for two years until he became a Federal judge.

Interviewer:

Okay. And who were you working for?

Milton Norman:

His name is Edward Weinfeld, one of the great judges of the Southern District in New York; Federal District Judge. Never reversed.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Wow. And so you did that for two years -

Milton Norman:

Then I formed the firm.

Interviewer:

Okay. And what sort of law did you practice?

Milton Norman:

Well, at the beginning I did everything, because that's what you do when you don't, when you're not with a big law firm; you do everything. I did matrimonial work. I did some tort work, negligence work. I did some real estate. Later on, most of my practice became estate work and real estate work.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And I was in a partnership until about - for about 25 years, until 1990. Since 1990, I practiced on my own, and I retired last year. I'm winding up my practice. I have one matter. I'm winding up an estate, and that's the end.

Interviewer:

Okay. But in there, you got back into the Army.

Milton Norman:

Yeah. Well, yeah - I forgot about that. A year after law school, I read that you could get a commission in the Army Reserves in the JAG Corps, so I made an application, and in November of '49 I became a First Lieutenant - there are no Second Lieutenants in the JAG Corps, like the Medical Corps.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

I became a First Lieutenant in the JAG Reserves, and I stayed in the Reserves, but I really wasn't cognizant of the Reserve Program. I didn't even know that there was a pension for Reservists. But somewhere along the way, I guess ten years later, in '59, the Army formed JAG units - Third JAG, Fourth JAG I don't know where all over the country; I only know that the Third JAG was in Boston, and we were the Fourth JAG. The names changed twice. It became the Fourth LSO, and now it's something else. If you want to know, I can look it up; I can't remember.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Milton Norman:

But it doesn't matter, it's still the same unit. So they were organized in '59, and the TO&E called for 65 Officers, and in fact, I still have the Order Number Two, which sets up, assigns 65 Officers. As far as I know, there are four of us left from '59.

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

'Cause some of them were older, you know. Some of them -

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

Went into the unit as Majors and Lieutenant Colonels. They didn't last very long, because you know the Reserves had some rules. And I went in as a First Lieutenant, and then that was in - no, I was already a Captain in '59. Yeah, I was a Captain, and then you know in the Reserves, I don't know what the rule is today, but in the Reserves you get promoted automatically after seven years in-grade, unless you can find a slot earlier. And then when you hit Lieutenant Colonel, the promotion to O6 is discretionary with a board, so there are lots of L5s who never make it to O6 - O5s to O6. I made it in four years, so I became an O6 about 1974 or '75.

And 1980, I already had 30 years of commissioned service, or 31, and I was 55, so I was out. I never applied for Flag Officer, because I knew I couldn't handle it; I'd have to give up my practice, because there are always two Reserve Generals at any given time, and they overlap. And it's a lot of traveling, and two or three of our guys have made Brigadier General from the Fourth JAG.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

But then we formed an Association in '79, because we felt we wanted to stay in close touch with the unit.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

The unit is still around, as I just said. It's a different name, but it's the Fourth something or other. And they've all been to Afghanistan, they've all been to -

Interviewer:

Iraq?

Milton Norman:

Iraq, and elsewhere. And so we formed the Association in '79, and I served as President from '79, as one guys says, "Longer than any Pope I know," till 2013, when I was -

Interviewer:

Wow.

Milton Norman:

When I decided - well, but let's be honest. We were basically an eating and drinking and networking -

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

Association.

Interviewer:

That's the best kind.

Milton Norman:

You bet. And you know, we were very helpful to the guys who went over. We used to send stuff over there.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Correspond with them. And it's amazing today in this era of e-mail what they can write without being censored, you know. And one of the Reserve Officers, one of the Reserve units, I think it's the 818th Military Battalion or something, they were in charge of the - what's the infamous jail where -

Interviewer:

Oh, Abu Ghraib?

Milton Norman:

Abu Ghraib, that had a female Commander.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

A General, one-star General, who was relieved at some point, and I think a lot of the fault of what went on had to do with that unit. But they were part of the Reserves, so of course, all of our Officers have been over there, and I am the remaining - well, there's one other guy, but he's not active at all. He's 95, and he's Jewish. But I don't think you want to interview him. I think it would take you two hours to get what you hear from me in ten minutes.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

You know, I talk straightforward. Anyway, where were we?

Interviewer:

Well, you were telling me about your Association.

Milton Norman:

Yeah, so we're still active, and it's very nice.

Interviewer:

Yeah. Did you have to deploy anywhere as a Reserve Officer?

Milton Norman:

Never.

Interviewer:

Or did you stay in your practice?

Milton Norman:

Never. Never.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Never.

Interviewer:

Well, thatâ€™s very nice.

Milton Norman:

In fact, my daughter, whoâ€™s sitting behind you, will tell you that every summer, she and her brother would announce to each other, â€œDadâ€™s going to sleep-away camp, with tennis rackets and golf clubs.â€

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

It changed after a while. Itâ€™s not true today at all.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

AS a matter of fact, the Army seems to take pride in assigning Officers to units far away from where they live. For example, the Commander of the Fourth JAG now - I use Fourth JAG because someday itâ€™s going to be called Fourth JAG again. Itâ€™ll go back. What goes around comes around.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

The current Commander lives in Georgia.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

And he comes up here - they meet at Fort Totten in Queens.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

He comes up here at his own expense, probably at least once a month, maybe twice a month, you know, and I donâ€™t get it. I mean I donâ€™t understand what the test is. If youâ€™re really interested in getting ahead in the Reserves, you got to do this. Thatâ€™s what the Army is saying.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

You know. I also attended Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

You need that for promotion to bird.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

I think today - I'm not sure - you also need the Army War College at Carlisle; is that correct?

Interviewer:

Right. I think so, yeah.

Milton Norman:

Yeah. Well, you better find out if you want to be a bird.

Interviewer:

Yeah. So what was your most interesting time in the Reserves?

Milton Norman:

Oh, I think for a while, the two weeks that we went away. They called that an ACDUTRA, Annual Training.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

That was not Active Duty. For example, we couldn't do Court Martial work, because you can't do a Court Martial in two weeks.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

But we did a lot of administrative stuff, a lot of Boards, a lot of advice. And in the early days we used to go away as a unit, which was really a waste of our talents. Subsequently, probably by the middle or early '70s, they woke up, and we were doing what the Medics would be doing all along. The Medics would go on annual training, set up an infirmary, you know, and they'd function as doctors. Now, what they did with us - eventually - they stopped sending us away as a unit, you know, 50 Officers, and they sent us away as small groups, like three Officers and five enlisted people. And we'd be detailed to the Post Judge Advocate's Office, and you'd arrive there, and I'd been to every Post, almost, east of the Mississippi -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

At one time or another. You'd go to a JAG Office, and the Head is probably a young Major, you know, and he welcomed us, because we had a wealth of experience, you know, and that was fun. Fun; it was interesting. It was like having an office, a law office in a neighborhood, you know, where people wander in, and the dry cleaner screwed them, or their auto mechanic didn't do a good job.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Or they're having a problem with their husband. You know, bread and butter things, that if you're in a high-powered law firm, you don't run into. And that was fun, and we felt we were doing something worthwhile.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's good. And so it was a good career for you.

Milton Norman:

Yeah. Yeah, it was fun. Yeah, I enjoyed that. We went to Governor's Island. You know, the Governor's Island was Fifth Army Headquarters in World War II.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

Then the Army turned it over to the Coast Guard, and now the City of New York got it, and we don't quite know what to do with it, because transportation is a problem. It's just a ferry there, you know. But Governor's Island is a beautiful place. We used to go to Fort Dix. We used to go to Fort Monmouth, and a few other places around, where we'd give legal advice.

Interviewer:

Sure. And so how was your private practice; was it -

Milton Norman:

It didn't suffer.

Interviewer:

No?

Milton Norman:

I was able to handle both.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

That's good, 'cause sometimes -

Milton Norman:

It would interfere.

Interviewer:

Exactly.

Milton Norman:

In those days, in those days, for example, the fellows who made General, one of them was a partner in a fairly large firm, and he was the senior partner there, so no one was going to talk down to him and say, "You can't go traveling all over the country." He was the boss, so he did it. And some of the guys worked for companies which permit them to do this. For example, the current Commander of the Fourth JAG, I knew him when he was a Lieutenant -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

And when he got transferred to Georgia, he said to me, "Please keep me on the Board. Please keep me on." And then when he became Commander, it was the fulfillment of a life's ambition, which I find that a little hard to understand, but he's a very conscientious guy, and he's terrific, and he's doing a terrific job.

Interviewer:

Yes sir. So it sounds like you've had a wonderful career, and a wonderful life.

Milton Norman:

Thank you. And I have two kids who really understood what I was doing. They made fun of me early on, but they eventually took my career in the military seriously.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

They may not take the Army seriously, but.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Milton Norman:

But okay.

Interviewer:

Sure. And to think all that started with an 18-year-old kid.

Milton Norman:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Enlisting.

Milton Norman:

Well, don't give me too much credit for enlisting. I had an ulterior motive. I



wouldâ€™ve been drafted. In any event, I wouldâ€™ve been drafted, you know.

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

But it gave me some time to get some more college in, which I liked, you know.

Interviewer:

Yes. Now, we have a Law Department here at the Military Academy, and all Cadets, regardless of whether or not they take Law as a major, are required to take a legal course. So what advice would you give Cadets these days about what they need to know about Military law?

Milton Norman:

Well, I think the Military is mostly involved in crowd control - riots. I think they ought to acquaint themselves with what they can do and what they canâ€™t do.

Interviewer:

So rules of engagement?

Milton Norman:

Yeah. Yeah, things like that.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Milton Norman:

Basic things like that. I think thatâ€™s where the Military - where the Military has Law Enforcement people should know that, what to do. I remember that one year where there were riots all over the country. The 28th - I donâ€™t know - the Army National Guard in Pennsylvania at Fort Indiantown Gap, they were having their two weeks, and they were doing all kinds of field exercises. And they wanted a JAG Officer to monitor their maneuvers -

Interviewer:

Right.

Milton Norman:

So to speak, and I was detailed to do that. And they had questions like what do you do with the gun store, you know, and how do you handle the liquor stores during all this? And so that was very interesting, and they were - most of these guys in the Pennsylvania National Guard in civilian life were civilian police officers, a good many of them. So this was nice; this was very interesting.

Interviewer:

Okay. Is there anything I havenâ€™t asked you that youâ€™d like to say?

Milton Norman:

About my military career.

Interviewer:

About anything.

Milton Norman:

Well, I think the men and women today who wear the uniform, theyâ€™re the real heroes; not my generation, because we were all subject to a draft. And I might add that I had a 90th birthday party recently, and one of the birthday greetings that I got was from your Commander in Chief, who was approached by - I think I told you - by the Secretary of the Treasury. And he wrote me a letter thanking me for my service, and telling me about, you know, my generation. Weâ€™re all heroes. Weâ€™re all heroes, including Senator McCain. I donâ€™t agree with anything he says politically, but in my book, heâ€™s a hero, particularly when he refused to return home when they offered him the opportunity to come home, you know, â€™cause they wouldnâ€™t send his co-prisoners home with him.

Interviewer:

Right. Right. Well, thank you very much, sir; Iâ€™m so glad you could be here with us today, and tell us your story.

Milton Norman:

Thank you. I'm pleased to be here.

Interviewer:

Yes sir.

Milton Norman:

I'm very happy to tell it.