

Interview with
QUENTIN C. MURDOCK

February 10, 2017

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QUENTIN C. MURDOCK

Quentin C. Murdock was interviewed by Randall J. Bunn on February 20, 2017 in St. George, Washington County, Utah. He related his experiences in World War II.

RB: I am going to ask [you] a few identifying information items and we will go from there. Mr. Murdock, where were you born?

QM: In Blackfoot, Idaho.

RB: When were you born?

QM: [On] July 29, 1919.

RB: 1919, okay. I would imagine not too many people of your high school class are still around?

QM: No. I do not know anybody that is around.

RB: [Laughter] Who were your parents? What were their names?

QM: My dad's name was Daniel Lewis Murdock. My mother's name was Pearl (Jones) Murdock.

RB: What kind of work did your dad do?

QM: He was a farmer.

RB: So you grew up on the farm?

QM: Yes.

RB: [Tell] a little bit about your background after the war. What kind of work did you do after you [were discharged]?

QM: Right after the [World] War [II] I was quite upset from the war.

RB: Yes.

QM: I did not know what I wanted to do. The way I got into military [service] was through the University of Idaho [Moscow, Idaho] ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps program]. They knew about me and gave me a job as an assistant agricultural agent in Bannock County, Idaho [for] a couple of years. Then I was

agent [for] Fremont County, Idaho. That is next to Yellowstone [National] Park [Wyoming]. Pocatello, Idaho is [the] Bannock County seat. I worked there for about five years.

RB: Did you ever graduate from college?

QM: Yes, I graduated from college.

RB: What was your major?

QM: [It was] in agriculture.

RB: Of course.

QM: I was raised on the farm and I loved farming.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: I had two majors. One was in agriculture and the other was in military science. When we [received] our diplomas [degrees] we had to cross the stage twice.

RB: Oh!

QM: [The] first [time] to [receive] our agricultural diploma and the other was to get our – they would pin a second lieutenant silver star on our shoulder when we come across the second time.

RB: What year was that? Do you recall?

QM: Let me see, 1942.

RB: From the University of Idaho [on] 1942?

QM: Yes.

RB: You worked for some time after the war. In agriculture?

QM: Yes.

RB: Was your career in agriculture? Or what did you end up doing the rest of your working period?

QM: That was not my career; but I think my main career was to go back and have a farm of my own.

RB: Ah! And did you do that?

QM: Yes. This county agent [employment] was a go between the university's experiment station and the farmers. [I would] tell them about fertilizers, the insecticides and the different practices that farmers wanted to know about. When I ran it, I was the instructor of the 4-H Clubs. We had the largest 4-H Club in the state of Idaho while I was there.

RB: Great!

QM: I enjoyed working with the young people and the leaders in the 4-H. When I [was at] Fremont County, I was county agent, working with farmers on tables and cattle.

RB: So most of your [working] career you stayed in Idaho?

QM: Yes, except during the war.

RB: Of course. [Were] you like a county agricultural liaison or agent most of your career?

QM: No, just about five years.

RB: Oh, five years. What did you end up doing after that?

QM: I just could not seem to stand that soft life. I always wanted to have a farm of my own. I did not have any money after getting out of the war. We did not have anything. Farms were quite expensive to buy and nobody wanted to sell [at the time] because they [had done] pretty good during the war.

So I went out on the desert west of Blackfoot and drilled about a sixteen-inch hole in the ground and hit [a] stream of water underground. I cleared the sagebrush off. I had about two other employees, I think. When I [had] the sagebrush [cleared], I [was] looking at the land and, my word, the only thing we knew to [do] was [to] flood irrigate, you know, run the water down the rows.

RB: Yes.

QM: I was looking at this ground and, my word, it was not smooth. It was sloping this way and that way. So [when] I was watering all I had were ditches, water holes and weeds. I thought I would go ahead and try to flood irrigate it. I thought: gee, people water their lawns and gardens with sprinklers, why cannot I do that to my farm. So I hired an engineer out of Idaho Falls to come down. He designed me a sprinkler irrigation system. It had twelve-inch pipes coming out and a pump that would pump that clear full, gushing out from there. Then I had to have a mainline across the center of the field. The field was half-a-mile by three-quarters [a mile]

or something like that. They had to have a mainline go down with the outlets. He installed that for us. We planted a crop [laughter] of wheat and potatoes.

RB: Okay.

QM: We did not know how long to leave the sprinklers set to get enough water for [the plants, so] had to cut [the water] back again. We did not know how far apart the hook ups should be to [inaudible] because there was not anything [guidelines] to follow. We figured all that out ourselves. The mainline came down to the center of the field and then it went three-quarters of a mile right and left. This pump pumped enough underground water to water that 240 acres.

RB: Wow! That sounds like a pretty good innovation.

QM: It was.

RB: Great!

QM: It did not default [inaudible]. It kept pumping.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [Laughter]

RB: Let us go back, you graduated from the University of Idaho in 1942 and you were commissioned as a second lieutenant.

QM: Yes.

RB: Then what happened? The war had already started [as] Pearl Harbor was [bombed] in December 1941.

QM: I was at the university when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor [Hawaii]. I was already signed in for military training.

RB: Okay.

QM: They did not draft me right away, because they had me, eventually, anyway.

RB: You were going to come anyway. Was it May or June [when] you graduated?

QM: Yes, about June 20, 1942. It seems like that [was] about [when] we graduated. I had a degree in agriculture and was a second lieutenant in the [United States] Army. [Laughter] The infantry.

RB: Yes.

QM: That was the bad part. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: We did not know any better being farm [fellows].

RB: Sure.

QM: We thought we were going to have a war. Just supposed to go over there and kill somebody. [Laughter]

RB: Right. [Laughter]

QM: Being in the infantry did not bother us very much.

RB: After you graduated and [received] your bar as a second lieutenant, where did they send you?

QM: In about a week or so they sent us to Salt Lake City [Salt Lake County, Utah] to be inducted. From Salt Lake [City] they sent us to Little Rock, Arkansas. I cannot think of the name of the camp right now.

RB: [Was it] Camp Joseph Robinson?

QM: Yes. All the officers [who] graduated from the universities around the west [were sent] to the same place. There was quite a bunch of us. When we [arrived] there, an officer was supposed to have a command or a job. But there was so many of us that we did not get separated. The company commander, [inaudible].

RB: Right.

QM: We were just all there [to receive] training.

RB: How long did that last?

QM: I think maybe three months or so.

RB: How was your introduction to the Army there?

QM: Well, we had had a little experience. Our junior year at college we had to go to Fort Lewis, Washington during our summer vacation. So we took some army training over there and learned how to fire [guns] and [were] rated [as] how good we were at shooting. I was rated "Expert" with the rifle and "Sharp Shooter" with the pistol while I was there. I was not too bad [of] a shot.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [Laughter]

RB: At the end of your training, where did they send you?

QM: After we were at Camp Robinson for three or four months, I do not remember [how long], we [were in] groups of second lieutenants and we just kind of more or less followed the normal [routine] and trained ourselves. We did not, really, have [the] command of anybody. Then about November, or thereabouts, I do not know for sure, that was seventy years ago. [Laughter]

RB: Sure!

QM: They gave us orders to go to [inaudible] up in New York.

RB: What was the name of that place?

QM: What?

RB: Where did you go in New York?

QM: To New York City.

RB: Oh, New York City.

QM: Some Army Depot [was] there. There they outfitted us to cross the [Atlantic] Ocean, I guess. They never would tell us anything.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [Laughter]

RB: When did you leave? [Did] you [go] to England from New York [City]?

QM: [We] crossed the ocean on the *Queen Elizabeth*. Of course, we farm [fellows] had never seen the ocean before. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] What was that trip across the ocean like?

QM: It was [very] scary at first, because when we went out, we went right past the Statue of Liberty. We all ran over to that side of the ship and about tipped the ship over. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: It was the *Queen Elizabeth*. That was about the biggest [ship] there was!

RB: Right. [Were you] going across in 1943 was it or still 1942?

QM: I think it was still in 1942.

RB: The Germans [had] submarines in the Atlantic, so was that a little scary?

QM: Yes. We were scared of that. We had some boat drills on how to get on the life boat and get off the ship. Most of the [fellows] were [from] farms or small city and they had never been on a ship before, just like me. Everybody [was] seasick. Pert near everybody. I did not.

RB: You did not get seasick?

QM: No. [Laughter]

RB: Wow! [Laughter]

QM: They just could not control themselves. The steps and everything were kind of slick with vomit.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: They put me in a state room with about six or eight other people. They had hammocks kind of stored in there. Mine was about half way up. I [needed] a sky hook to get on my hammock. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: I started to get a little woozy, so I went up on the deck and walked around. I watched the big propellers churning the water up behind and up front where the bow would throw water out. It had fluorescent colors in it. It was all quite interesting.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: When it was night and the water [inaudible] making a real [inaudible] kind of a sound.

RB: Yes. How long of a trip was it?

QM: We went across in five days.

RB: Five day trip?

QM: That was pretty fast.

RB: Pretty fast. Where did you disembark?

QM: We crossed in five days. We were all alone. There was no air support or anything.

RB: Wow!

QM: [The ship] just headed out all by itself.

RB: Did you [go] to Liverpool or Southampton or where?

QM: Liverpool, England.

RB: Liverpool? Okay.

QM: We worried about the submarines sinking us and we did not think it would be very good to drown out in the ocean. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] No that would not have been useful.

QM: [Laughter] When you [arrived in] England, where did you go?

QM: [We] rode on a train, I think, after we got off of that boat. We headed down through England. We started to realize that we were getting into a war zone, because as we pulled out of Liverpool all the ships and the buildings had these barrage balloons.

RB: What was it?

QM: They called them barrage balloons. They had these balloons, about like a little dirigible, hanging up there like the airplanes.

RB: They were called barrage balloons?

QM: Yes. That is what I think they called them.

RB: Okay, interesting.

QM: When we saw that [we thought:] gee, we are getting into something serious here.

RB: Right.

QM: [Laughter] Because there were a lot of those barrage balloons keeping airplanes [inaudible] on the way to where we was going. I do not know just where we were

at, but we went by — oh, I thought of this name a second ago. A little town there that the Germans had decided that they would show their power, they just blasted that whole city to smithereens.

RB: Yes. That was in Coventry, England?

QM: What?

RB: [Was it] in Coventry, England?

QM: Yes, I think that is it.

RB: Yes. They had bombed, I guess, in 1940 [or] 1941. Coventry was —.

QM: We kind of went by that and saw that a little bit.

RB: Yes.

QM: We are getting serious now! [Laughter]

RB: Yes.

QM: We went to some camp. I do not remember what the name of it was now. Again, we were just a group of officers taking care of each other. We would go out and do some kind of maneuvers and marching, but we did not have any command of our own. We were there for maybe three or four months. Then all at once they took us down to — I do not know which town it was — and loaded us on a transport ship.

RB: Where did you go?

QM: Well, we did not know.

RB: Oh yes. [Laughter]

QM: All we did was what they told us.

RB: Sure. Where did you end up then after the transport ship?

QM: This was part of a convoy that left. It went out into the ocean a ways. There were submarines around that area.

RB: Oh?

QM: We did not know where we were going. We were just on the boat. I think the boat I was on was a boat from India.

RB: A boat from where?

QM: India.

RB: India, I see.

QM: So we learned to eat curry rice.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [Laughter] The state rooms there were sure a lot nicer. I think we just had regular beds in the state rooms. In the morning there was a little place up there where they would bring us a cup of tea or something when we would wake up.

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [Laughter]

QM: So we thought: oh, that is not so bad.

RB: Yes. [Laughter]

QM: Next thing we knew we were in the Sea of Gibraltar. So we had gone a very long way [inaudible] trainings. We were the first replacements for the invasion [of] North Africa. The French had kind of signed a thing with Germany and they were halfway following Germany. We did not know whether they was going to fire at us or welcome us when we landed there.

RB: Was that in, maybe, [the] spring of 1943?

QM: No, it was not the spring, I do not think. It was more like the fall.

RB: The fall?

QM: Yes.

RB: I see in your book [*Quentin C. Murdock's World War II Experiences and Memoirs*] that you first landed at Oran, in Algeria? Had the Germans already been pushed out of North Africa?

QM: No, they had been fighting the British down on the Mediterranean.

RB: Right, I see.

QM: And they pushed the British port near down into Gibraltar.

RB: Yes.

QM: We did not have any Germans to fight when we landed; just the French and they put up a token resistance. I guess they decided we were their friends. We did not have too many battles. It seemed like they had quite a time taking Oran. It had been a naval [event] for the French. It did not get hit [inaudible].

RB: So, the Americans, the British and the French were there fighting against the Germans?

QM: Well, the French finally decided, I guess, [that] they were on our side.

RB: Right.

QM: And they had General [Charles] de Gaulle —

RB: Right

QM: — [who] was head of the Free French [Army].

RB: Yes.

QM: [Inaudible] Never did see too much of him.

RB: Did you ever see General de Gaulle?

QM: What?

RB: Did you ever see General de Gaulle?

QM: No.

RB: And you said that you did not see the French [Army] very much?

QM: Yes, not too much. We stayed not too far from Oran for awhile. Boy, it was the rainy season. We would put up little pup tents. [Do] you know what they are? Just a two-man little tent out there. It would just rain and rain. Muddy, so muddy [that] you could not help but get muddy. It was quite miserable trying to sleep in those [tents].

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [The] pup tents [were covered with all the mud. There were some wine vats over there that had a top over them and they were sealed [with] cement. So some of us went over there and tried to get in [inaudible] leave our bedrolls over —.

RB: Out of the tent and over into the —?

QM: What?

RB: Out of the tents and into the more substantial building?

QM: We was about ready to move back into the tents because if you were ever slept on concrete, dirt is a [very] nice mattress for you.

RB: Yes, compared to hard concrete.

QM: We would sleep on that and, boy, we could not hardly sleep because it was so hard.

RB: I can imagine.

QM: We finally found some boards some place and laid the boards in the bottom of the tent and slept on the boards. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: It was still hard.

RB: Oh, I can imagine.

QM: Anyway we left Oran [Algeria] and finally headed up into Tunisia. I do not know just what [the] dates were.

RB: Sure.

QM: When we unloaded off of the ship in North Africa then we [were] assigned, all of us were kind of replacements, I guess. I do not know how many casualties they had had. We were all kind of replacements for the casualties [from] the landing.

RB: What was your unit when you [arrived in] Africa?

QM: [Laughter] I [was assigned to] something kind of unique. I was assigned to the First Division, the Big Red One.

RB: [The] Big Red One?

QM: Yes. It was the most famous division in the [United States] Army.

RB: Oh? Who was the commanding officer? Do you recall?

QM: Yes. I will think of his name in a minute.

RB: Alright.

QM: He was a [very] good commander. I did not see much of him. I ended up being head of the First Platoon of A Company, which is the lowest numbered company in the First Battalion of the 16th Infantry, which is the lowest numbered infantry regiment in the First Division. There were twenty-six regiments. I had the first platoon of A Company, First Battalion in the 16th. So you could not get any more firsts than on mine. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] So you were in command or in charge of —

QM: The rifle platoon.

RB: — the rifle platoon. And what was your platoon number?

QM: What?

RB: What was your platoon number?

QM: I was First Platoon of A Company.

RB: You were First Platoon of A Company and you were the commanding officer of the —.

QM: In the First Battalion.

RB: Right.

QM: And the 16th is the lowest number in the Regiment. I was first. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: In the whole darn Army, pert near!

RB: Yes, that is great!

QM: We had never commanded or been in charge of a group or anything.

RB: What do you recall from that [experience]?

QM: What?

RB: What do you recall from your first experience of taking command?

QM: We were quite afraid. [We] did not know what we would do when we [were] in combat. [Would we] be able to perform, would we want to run or [inaudible].

RB: How many men were you over?

QM: There are three squads in a platoon of twelve men; so about thirty-six. Then there's a platoon sergeant, a corporal help and a couple of others [inaudible]. About forty-five or so total. They were all regular Army troops from around New York and Pennsylvania, that area through there. They had all been in the Army for two or three years. [Laughter] They knew all about the Army.

RB: You are in charge and you are brand new.

QM: I was brand new and never had commanded troops before. So we were pretty nervous. We heard stories about when you get in combat and you are out there and nobody knows what is going on. If they do not like you they will just up and shoot you and say, "We killed him." [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Wow!

QM: We [had] heard stories like that. We were pretty careful about what we said.

RB: Did you have any problems with any of your men?

QM: No, they were [very] good to me. We would go out and around and do little maneuvers, getting used to each other. I remember there was an old [place] where they had been [doing] some mining. There was a big hole in the ground out there. We would go out there, take our terrain rifles and practice shooting in there so that we would keep our aim up. After a while we got [inaudible] so we started shooting from our hip. Sometimes you will not have time to get your gun out and just shoot. We would pick a place where we were all over there. We got so that we could even follow that person without even sighting them. The first combat we got in was — the first thing we went up into Tunisia. While we were up in Tunisia, I think, that one of our first assignments was to guard a road junction.

RB: To do what?

QM: Guard a road junction.

RB: To guard a road junction?

QM: Yes, where two roads came together.

RB: Okay.

QM: I guess they expected Joes [troops] to use that road or something, [so] they put us on that road to guard [it].

RB: Did you ever encounter any Germans?

QM: Yes. You know, [inaudible] dummy and here I am a big old [inaudible] in charge of these [fellows], so I [had] to know what is going on. I got off [to] the side of the road, there was a cut in the road where there was a hill over there. It was the highest hill around there. I said, "Oh boy, I will get up there and I can just control everything from up there."

RB: Did that work out alright?

QM: No. [Laughter]

RB: What happened?

QM: It was about the second day or so [when] I [had] a pretty big hole. In those days we had [not been issued] radios yet. We were still using the old telephones, stringing wire from one place back to headquarters, just to have some way to communicate.

RB: Yes.

QM: All at once some artillery started coming in on us. I was there in my hole and the company commander said, "Where did that one hit?" I said, "Well, it is off over there some place." [I] sort of described where the shells were hitting. Finally, one hit right by my hole.

RB: Oh!

QM: If I had moved out of the hole it would have killed me.

RB: Wow!

QM: It covered me up with dirt and the telephone was hanging on my bayonet.

RB: Really?

QM: Yes. The company commander said, "Where did that one hit? Where did that one hit?" [Laughter]

RB: Oh man!

QM: I said, "Wait until I get the dirt off of me and I will tell you." [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Wow!

QM: I almost [was] killed that time. I do not think anybody else [was] killed. I sure come close to it. [Laughter] [The situation was] getting pretty serious so they sent me out on a patrol. Africa was all desert and no trees.

RB: Yes.

QM: Well, there were in some places. They sent me out on a patrol. I took my platoon and we went way out, four or five miles out, in the territory hoping to see what the Germans were up to. We got out there and I remember we ran into a fence. We opened a gate and went through that fence. Then all at once there were five or six big artillery shells right over our head. [They] lit thirty or forty feet behind us.

RB: Oh!

QM: They would 'whoosh' up over our head. They all exploded. Boy, that scared the heck out of everybody!

RB: Was it a pretty terrifying experience?

QM: Yes. We all hit the ground when that happened. Most of them just wanted to stay there. I knew that artillery shot the first shot to find out where the bullets would land, and they would adjust the second shot to hit the target. So I was finally able to get them up and move around forward. Sure enough when the next volley hit the ground, if I had not [moved] them up at that time we would have probably [been] killed.

RB: Wow! That was pretty good thinking.

QM: We did that two or three times and they would just shoot over our heads. We finally [moved] over to a place that was a little safer and they quit shooting at us. We about decided, I guess, that was the end of our patrol, so we turned around and went back. [Laughter] When I got back, I remember I was so damn tired. We had been walking all day.

RB: I bet.

QM: And scared [inaudible]. When we got back in camp, I just fell on the ground. I was so tired, [that] I could not go any further. That was the second encounter that we had. We fought all the way down to Tunisia. All the different towns through there. They all had Gaddes and different kind of names.

RB: All what?

QM: They all had different names.

RB: Oh, I see.

QM: We were pushing the Germans back up out of that area. We got up pert near — maybe, twenty-five miles from the [inaudible]. What was the name of the big pass up there? The mountains were quite large. There was this pass there called Kasserine pass [and] we got up to there. The Germans made a big counter attack going through there [with] all [their] tanks and chased everybody out [of] that cut in the mountains.

RB: Yes.

QM: I remember going up there once before the Germans [inaudible]. We were putting mines along the road up there. It was all solid rock so they gave us some jack hammers [to use]. We were putting these mines [out].

RB: The Germans were?

QM: No, we were.

RB: You were, okay.

QM: I walked up there. It was raining; water [was] flooding down the road. Just about the time I got up there, pert near, some [fellow] happened to turn around with the jack hammer and put it on one of the mines.

RB: Oh no!

QM: That killed about six [fellows]. Scalps and shoes [were] flying. Blood [was] running down the hill.

RB: Wow! That was awful.

QM: We started seeing that kind of stuff.

RB: Did you know any of those [fellows]?

QM: No. They were from [inaudible].

RB: A different —.

QM: [Inaudible] infantry.

RB: Oh, right.

QM: I went back and when the Germans made that big push through Kasserine Pass that was a pretty big [event]. The British had chased [General Erwin] Rommel back up [to] where we were [on] his tail end. [Laughter] So they decided to show us Americans something, I guess. They just went through there about ten to fifteen miles right through our lines. Blowing up all our trucks and [equipment]. I do not know why they ever decided to quit; but they turned around, went back out and quit, I guess.

RB: The Germans did?

QM: Yes. You see, they were fighting the British —.

RB: Right.

QM: — over there next to the ocean.

RB: Oh, okay.

QM: So they just made that [situation] over there. Why they did it, but they sure made a mess. We were in a position over there and they were shooting [inaudible] terrible amount of artillery [inaudible]. We just ran through our switch trenches that we had dug.

RB: Was there any air support for the Americans? No?

QM: No.

RB: It was just [an] all ground battle?

QM: The Germans had air support, but at that time we did not have any. In fact, [inaudible] we were not half-way equipped with the right [equipment]. Our tanks were those little tanks that shot — I forget what size — but they did [inaudible] seventy-five millimeter. The Germans had those big [inaudible] ought six tanks.

RB: Yes.

QM: Eighty-eight millimeter on them.

RB: Eventually though, [weren't] the Germans pushed out of Tunisia?

QM: Yes. They finally went back to [inaudible] armored patrol to see what was going on. I remember [inaudible] mountain come down over the Kasserine Pass. The Germans had all left. I was happy to see that. [Laughter] I went back and reported that. So we took Kasserine Pass back and we met with the British.

RB: Okay.

QM: There was [inaudible] [had] a map of that one.

RB: Tell me —.

QM: We met up with the British there. The British were pushing Rommel back up into Tunisia then. We were running out of Germans to kill when we met the British. So they loaded us on some trucks and hauled us back up. I think up north, I do not know.

RB: Yes.

QM: The Germans had built a [very] fortified line up there to protect [inaudible]. The British was coming here and we were coming there. There was a big hill there called [Hill] 809. It was a big tall cliff on the front so nobody could take it from the front. We had to take that hill to break through and end the war. There was another little hill called [Hill] 523.

RB: 523? Right.

QM: [It was] on the side of [the hill], yes. They decided that maybe we could take [Hill] 523, break through and get behind them [on] 609.

RB: And eliminate [Hill] 609?

QM: We were on the line that they were fighting and they called the Third Battalion out to go and take [Hill] 523. They went out and tried. They come back all shot up, bloodied up and could not take it. They wanted it so bad that they sent the Second Battalion out and the same thing happened to them. So then they decided the First Battalion should go do it. That was me and I had had quite a bit of experience fighting by then. I was used to my troops and they had always obeyed me — do anything with them. So I had to lead the attack this time. We went out and hit the base of [Hill] 523 and started getting fire there. Then we fought our way up to the top of [Hill] 523. Right along the top was a little ledge of rock, a cliff ledge, up about as high as this table right over there. Boy oh boy, [we] got behind that and we were pretty safe from the bullets were coming at us.
[Laughter]

RB: Wow!

QM: Since I and another lieutenant were leading that whole attack, I was going on and hitting my [troops] on the butt with my little [inaudible], “Come on, we [have] to get across the top of this.” So I got my platoon across. I had been hitting this one [fellow] on the butt. He said, “Hey Lieutenant, you ought to be careful who you are hitting on the butt.” It was the other officer [who] was supposed to be leading.

RB: Oh, no!

QM: [Laughter] [Inaudible] I remember running into a [fellow]. It was dark, pitch dark. We were doing this at night, out in the desert. We learned to do things at night. They could see everything in the daytime.

RB: Yes.

QM: So we were doing this at night. I ran into this one [fellow] and said, "Where in the hell have you been?" He said, "Remember that machine gunner [who] was shooting at us over there?" I said, "Oh yes." "You sent me over to get rid of him, didn't you?" I said, "Yes. Did you get him?" He said, "You do not hear it any more do you?" That was the last time I saw him. He [was] killed right after that.

RB: Wow!

QM: I do not know where he [was] killed. In a month or two we [were] down there at the front. The Germans did not like that at all. They were really shooting us up and down. They were so glad to divert around from one or the other trying to find out where we were.

RB: Yes.

QM: They would dart. They would try to find a place to get out of the fire they were getting. Every time I would stop [to] see where they were shooting at me, missing me and about getting them killed. It was really bad.

RB: It sounds like it.

QM: Because they had started to counter attack to take us back off of the hill.

RB: In your book you say that on May 23, that you killed 100 Germans.

QM: Well, I didn't.

RB: No, but the Americans and British [did]?

QM: Well, that day a little later, our whole Third Battalion disappeared that night. I was on the front and decided I was doing more damage than good to stop them and dispose of [those fellows]. So I started to find me a place to dig in and I found a little sway in a rock [inaudible]. It was all solid rock. I fell into that and if I laid real still, rocks and shrapnel [were] going across my back.

RB: I see.

QM: I remember there was a [fellow] setting up a machine gun out in front of us on the cliff. I wanted to get one of them to come falling off like in a wild western [inaudible] was that little [inaudible] much better pistol it would not reach him. So I would aim a little higher each time and, I think, I finally got a bullet up in there out where they were. About that time they just — see you are taking a place about as wide as from here to that house over there.

RB: Right.

QM: And the Germans do not want you there. They [have] artillery and mortars back there for six or eight miles. Then each [inaudible] all those up in there so they just turned everything on [Hill] 523 there until it was just chaos — no chances of standing up or moving or anything. In fact, after I shot up the [fellows] with the machine gun [inaudible] I crawled ahead and I did not even look out.

RB: Wow!

QM: It was really so bad. Seeing bullets and shrapnel streaming off of those rocks.

RB: In your book you say that you were taken prisoner.

QM: Yes.

RB: How did that happen?

QM: I guess the German [inaudible] anything that they wanted. They mobilized us. We ended up in Tunis [Tunisia] in a prison camp up there.

RB: I see.

QM: We did not [receive] hardly anything to eat. We were getting some water and they had some straw to lay on.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

QM: [Inaudible] had to [be] going right on [Hill] 523. We could come up over there right where you are and in front of [inaudible] down there. So I had gone clear down to the trail and mountain hill there. I guess the Germans came around that way and up the back side of the hill, same place we had come up, and caught the battalion commander and company commander and all those people. Caught them there and I guess those [fellows] surrendered there.

RB: I see.

QM: I was over here in this little swell that I had found. Pretty soon I, [inaudible] pretty well [inaudible] I had about had it. Pretty soon I heard a noise that did not sound familiar. I had my little gun at the side of me. I grabbed that gun and was coming

up to see what the hell that noise was. There were about six Germans [who] had come up right there behind me.

RB: They captured you?

QM: Not much further from here to the golf course. Right behind me. They all had their guns pointing at me. I come up out of there like I was going someplace. I did not know where the hell I was going, [laughter], but I was getting out of there! Because those bullets was going all over me, under my legs and arms.

RB: Wow!

QM: Just all over me.

RB: And you were not hit?

QM: No, I was not hit.

RB: Wow!

QM: I came out of there and I was going some place, but I did not know where I was going; but I was getting the hell out of there! [Laughter]

RB: Yes.

QM: [When] I came up, I saw them all standing there pointing their guns at me. So I let [put] my gun down and they were kind enough to take me prisoner instead of killing me.

RB: How long were you a prisoner?

QM: Ten days. They took everything off of us and then marched me over where they had the other prisoners, because I was all by myself then.

RB: Did they treat you well?

QM: What?

RB: Did they treat you well when you were a prisoner?

QM: Oh, not too bad. They took everything they wanted off of us, billfolds and guns, of course; everything that they wanted. They mobilized us. We ended up in Tunis in a prison camp up there. We did not [receive] hardly anything to eat. We were getting some water and [we] had some straw in there. We would lay on that straw to sleep at night. We were all smoking and [inaudible]. We did not own enough

cigarettes so we put a straw on the end of that cigarette and smoked it like that through the straw. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Yes.

QM: After a couple or three days there they decided to put us on this boat, an old boat that had come to haul us all across the Mediterranean.

RB: To where? Italy?

QM: What?

RB: Where did they take you? To Sicily or [where]?

QM: They did not take us.

RB: Oh, were they going to?

QM: They put us on that boat. The boat was in the Tunis harbor. It is a pretty big harbor.

RB: Right.

QM: They put us on that boat and started out. It got out about where the harbor ended and [into] the ocean. There were two great big rocks out there [that] stuck way up from the ground. I guess he [was] scared to go across them. He was waiting for an escort. We pulled into the two big rocks. We tried to hide [as] a couple of Spitfires spotted us and dropped a couple of bombs on us.

RB: Were [the] Spitfires American or friendly fire?

QM: [They were] English.

RB: I meant English. Were the English firing on the ship near you?

QM: They were aiming at the ship.

RB: Of course.

QM: They were doing the right thing.

RB: That was kind of scary for you.

QM: They did not know who was on [the ship]. [Laughter]

RB: Of course.

QM: Then the ship kind of started listing a little. I think that evening or the next morning they started sending quite a few airplanes over to finish us. You could hear those airplanes. We were just down in the hull. Part of the hull [was] where the facilities [were] down there [at] the water line. [The] kitchen and some of the planks had been pulled up off of the hull and we used that for our bags. They put us down in the hull [and it] was not quite as big as this table.

RB: Oh my goodness!

QM: There were a hundred or so [troops] down in there — French and English, quite a mixture [of] prisoners that they had taken. You would hear these airplanes come over, about five or six of them in a fleet; four or five, whatever it was. Then you would hear one of them peel off and dive at the ship. He would open all of his cannons, machine guns, and strafe the damn ship. When he pulled out he would drop his bomb. When he pulled out we knew that bomb was going to be close.

RB: Oh!

QM: We would just cover up our heads. [Laughter] And wait for it to hit. They finally sunk the boat. When it sunk it hit a sand bar out there [and] we did not go clear under. We would have all drowned.

RB: Were you able to escape from the ship?

QM: What?

RB: You were able to get out of the ship?

QM: When it sunk, the Germans took everything that would float and left us with the ship. We did not have any way to get off. We were a couple of miles from shore. We just had to stay there. We [went] up on the deck and there was a little cabin there that had some red velvet chairs and some sheets in it. We hung these sheets up on the deck and made POW [Prisoners of War] signs out of the sheets, trying to get those damn [fellows] to quit shooting at us. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: They just kept bombing us.

RB: You say in your book that you were freed by some Frenchmen.

QM: Finally somebody [went] ashore and [had] the airplanes stopped from bombing us. Then [inaudible] troops coming through that [inaudible] we laid in where we

[were taken] into Tunis. There were some little French [inaudible] boats around the harbor there. We got one of those to haul us back to shore. I was so damn sick with malaria.

RB: Oh?

QM: I did not care if the boat sunk. I remember I was going to take some pictures of it. I did not even get up off the bridge to take any pictures of that thing. Then I went to the hospital. [I was given] quinine you [inaudible] temporarily. I did not like it in the hospital.

RB: No.

QM: One [fellow] in the bed next to me was a German officer. So we were all mixed up. In our outfit we were back down around Oran. I got out of the hospital there, about 200 to 300 miles. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: Just to admit to the O.R. and then [inaudible] we took thousands of prisoners. We [inaudible] cooped up there. We took lots and lots of prisoners and equipment. That was the end of the Germans in Africa. I hitchhiked back to my outfit and back to Oran. I found out that about two months later there was not any First Battalion left. They had all been killed or taken prisoners.

RB: Wow!

QM: In the World War [I] they lost battalion that made big history. Here we had a battalion that we lost. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [Inaudible] Then they re-outfitted us and in a couple of months we heard that [inaudible].

RB: Right. That is a good stopping point right now. We have been talking for more than an hour.

QM: Yes. We have not [come to the good [part] yet!

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

RB: We are back and I am speaking with Quentin C. Murdock. Again, it is February 20, 2017. Mr. Murdock, could you tell me a little about the invasion of Sicily that you were involved in?

QM: Yes. After I got away from being a prisoner and found my way back to my outfit again, maybe [it was] a couple of months I was away, if that long; we were all outfitted again. We had our strength again and we [went] over to make the invasion of Sicily. There again, the First Division was called upon to be the first ones to make the landing in Sicily.

RB: Were you still in Tunisia?

QM: We [had] left Tunisia. No, I think I was in the Port of Oran in Morocco.

RB: So back to Algeria?

QM: Yes.

RB: Or Morocco? And from there the First Division made the assault?

QM: Yes. Then we got on another boat with landing crafts [and] we headed out. We did not know where we were going when we started out. As soon as [we] got going then they give [us] the orders and what was going to happen. We landed in Sicily just before daylight. The landing was not too bad. [We] had some fire and had some casualties. The main part was about a couple of days later. I do not know how far we fought our way into Sicily, but it must have been four or five miles at least. Then we ran up against a Hermann [Wilhelm] Göering Panzer Division. That was [Adolph] Hitler's prized —

RB: Yes, that was very famous.

QM: — outfit. We ran into them. Hitler gave them orders to put us back in the ocean. [Laughter]

RB: Did you get some stiff resistance from them?

QM: Oh yes, more than resistance. Those tanks come right through us, as if we were not there.

RB: Wow!

QM: We had to stop. We stopped the infantry [inaudible]. We just had to let the tanks go through. We did not have any way to stop those big Mark 6 tanks. [Laughter]

RB: Did you suffer casualties from that?

QM: Yes. Their orders were to get down to the beach. Mostly, they kind of ignored us heading for the beach to disrupt the landing and make the invasion a failure. There were two or three things that happened there. One is that a group of C-47s

flew over the landing — the boats out in the harbor. I guess they got mixed up and thought they were enemy airplanes.

RB: Oh, no!

QM: They shot down damn near every one of those C-47s full of paratroopers.

RB: Oh, no! Who shot them down?

QM: What?

RB: Who shot them down? The First Division?

QM: No, the ships. The fleet came over the ships there to —

RB: I see.

QM: — to help us out and the ships shot most of them —

RB: Oh man!

QM: — down.

RB: So friendly fire causing the casualties?

QM: Yes, we had a lot of friendly fire. That was not the first time. [Laughter]
[Inaudible] It was kind of hard for them to know where we were all the time.

RB: How long did that attack take place?

QM: I cannot remember for sure how long it took place; but I can tell you what happened to me. We got up to there and knew those tanks were out there, so we stopped and decided what to do. Every time we stopped for any time, I would dig me a little slit trench because those tanks had a lot of cannon on them and shrapnel. I would dig a little trench to get in. I just got done digging [one] and another lieutenant came over and wanted to visit with me. I had in mind laying down there and getting some rest while there was not anything happening, while I could. Pretty soon I said, “Well, I am going to lay down in this hole and try and get some rest because all hell is going to break loose here any minute. Where is your hole?” He said, “I have not dug one yet. I will dig one right here by you if you will loan me your pick axe.” I carried [a pick axe] because of the rock and [inaudible]; I can try to dig them with a pick axe and dig it out in a helmet. So I dug this hole. I said, “I am going slide down in this and try to get a little rest.” He said, “I will dig one here by you if you will let me take your pick axe.” I said, “Go ahead and take it.” I did not get down in that hole completely, and a damn big shell lit right on the edge where I had been sitting.

RB: Oh man!

QM: I was covered with dirt. When I collected my senses and looked that [way], this other officer [who] had stopped to talk to me, was still there on his hands and knees and still had my pick axe in his hand. I leaned over and saw that a bullet [was] in front of his head and out the back.

RB: Wow!

QM: His blood was running down the —.

RB: Did he survive?

QM: What?

RB: Did he survive or not?

QM: No.

RB: Wow!

QM: If I had not just barely —. I really had not straightened out and laid down in that [trench] yet, but I [was] down below that —.

RB: Enough! Wow! That was a close call for you.

QM: Oh, I had those things [happen a lot]. You know I was in combat for about two years over there, on the front with a rifle platoon and those things were happening all the time. Somehow I stayed alive.

RB: To sit here today to tell about it.

QM: Yes.

RB: Wow!

QM: Another time [that] I had a close call was [when] we had [inaudible] attack crossing an open field. The Germans saw us out in that open field and they turned all their mortars [on us]. [Do] you know what a mortar is?

RB: Yes.

QM: [It] shoots out of a tube and goes up without making a noise. You do not hear it coming. They [had] quite a few casualties out of us. One came down about from here to that wall, right there, from me and the damn thing was a dud.

RB: Oh man!

QM: It did not go off. That is how lucky I was all the time.

RB: Right!

QM: When you are getting bullets every day for about two years it gets kind of old. [Fellows were] getting killed. I had [fellows] killed closer to me than you are, quite often. I would be walking along and [a fellow] would get killed and I would not [be] killed.

RB: They say there is no atheist in a fox hole.

QM: Yes.

RB: Did you find that people would pray and would just be a lot more dependent on the Divine?

QM: Yes. It was kind of funny [when] you would hear a man praying when it was [very] bad. They would be there in a fox hole and you would hear them pray, "Oh Lord, if You will help me out of this one, I will be good forever," or something like that.

RB: Yes.

QM: [Laughter] The next time you would be in town, they would be looking up the whore houses.

RB: Right. [Laughter]

QM: They would be drinking up all the booze that they could find.

RB: Right.

QM: I did not drink too much, but I sure got hooked on those cigarettes.

RB: That was pretty common.

QM: I do not think there was anybody [who] did not smoke cigarettes.

RB: Yes.

QM: [Inaudible]

RB: I know my father and my father-in-law both started smoking in World War II.

My father quit in about 1960; my father-in-law about 1980.

QM: Boy that is a hard one to shake.

RB: Yes, it is.

QM: After I started farming I still smoked. I finally quit. Then we fought all the way on up through Sicily. It was mountainous and we got up to Mount Etna, a volcano. It had smoke coming out of the top of it.

RB: Oh, it did?

QM: Yes. We were afraid all that shooting and banging going on would cause it to erupt! [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Maybe so.

QM: But it did not. The English were already on the right and they were supposed to have a [very] short way into Tunis. Hell, they must have been sitting around there drinking tea or something. They did not hardly ever move to do much and they would come up and line up all around Sicily. There were not any Germans, just a couple of [inaudible]. So [General George Smith] Patton made them run all the way around through Paramore and come up the other side of the road by the ocean and make a landing. The Germans were already up there. [Laughter] Funny thing it was scheduled for the English to take Tunis. I guess it was Tunis, or some other town out there. [General] Patton had already taken the damn thing and had his tanks lined up all around. The British came marching in — big heroes.

RB: Yes. And General Patton was already there?

QM: He was already there. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Did you ever see General Patton?

QM: I do not think so. We were kind of enemies with [Field Marshall Bernard Law “Monty”] Montgomery. He was the head of the British.

RB: Right.

QM: We were always doing all the hard fighting and we did not think they were doing what they ought [to do].

RB: Right.

QM: [Laughter] When you are in combat it is not hard to make opinions. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: So we got down [to] Sicily and it was a [very] tough fight. We fought all the way up through the middle and the mountains. The Germans always had the high ground where they could watch us. There is a story in the back of the book there about Dillon. He was one of the greatest soldiers there ever was. I found his story [and] I liked it so well that I put it in the book.

RB: I will have to read [that]. [Is it] Lieutenant William T. Dillon?

QM: William T. Dillon. Yes. He was in Pearl Harbor when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. Then they sent him to America to become an officer. Then they sent him over and he joined us. He was [very] good. Prince of a fighter. I do not know if we [would] have won that war without him or not.

RB: Wow!

QM: Because he was sure good. There are some stories about Dillon. He took a prisoner once. He took quite a few prisoners and sent a couple of these [fellows] to guard them. Instead they misunderstood him and they took them back and headed to where we were. Then he had picked up another prisoner after that. He was talking on — we had radios then. He was talking on the radio and this prisoner jumped him, grabbed his gun and had his finger on the trigger. They were wrestling over this gun. Every time he would get around his head, the German would pull the trigger. He was in pretty bad shape then.

RB: Wow!

QM: Finally, he got the damn [fellow] on the ground and there was a rock over there. He [took] that rock and beat him over the head until he gave up.

RB: Wow!

QM: [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: He was always doing things like that. So we left Sicily and had to go back to England. First cleared the beaches where the rest of the invasion took place in Normandy [France].

RB: It looks like you left Sicily and I am guessing in the fall or the —.

QM: I think it was.

RB: Oh, no. Back in England it says on November 8, 1943 you were near Dorchester [England].

QM: Yes. We had a little town called Lime Regis. It was right on the English Channel. It had a bar! [Laughter]

RB: Is that right?

QM: Right there on the Channel and [we] officers would — it was cold over there.

RB: Sure.

QM: All we had was that damn coal to burn. We could never get it to put out enough heat. So we would go down to the bar and drink booze. [Laughter]

RB: Yes. [Laughter]

QM: [We went] about every night. We thought we were about alcoholics by the time we got out of there!

RB: [Laughter] So from November until —

QM: June.

RB: — June you were getting ready for the invasion?

QM: Yes. I had had this platoon all the time [and] they promoted me to be battalion motor officer. So I became part of battalion headquarters. Another lieutenant from New York took over my platoon. There wasn't hardly anybody there [who] we started [had] with; they had all been killed in action.

RB: Were you a first lieutenant [at] this point?

QM: Yes. My job was to get all the vehicles loaded up with what they were supposed to have for the invasion. The other [fellows] were out practicing the invasion. I think I only went on one or two of them. This is something that our side never did publish anything bad. There were a bunch of ships there in the channel, I guess doing some practicing, loaded down with troops. Some of those German torpedo boats — the [inaudible] that went [very] fast. Well, one sucker punched a boat, round about a thousand and some of our troops there, but they never would print hardly anything about that.

RB: Oh.

QM: Just like when we were taken [as] prisoners down there. Afterwards they hardly mentioned that.

RB: Really?

QM: During World War I they never lost a battalion — just lost and they all [came] back. But ours was lost and never got back.

RB: Never got back? Wow!

QM: Yes. Anyway, they got ready to make the invasion into Normandy.

RB: Tell about getting ready, shortly before the invasion. What was that like? What did people feel? Were [they] kind of getting kind of scared [about] that?

QM: No, we were pretty seasoned troops.

RB: Okay.

QM: We just figured that we had orders to do it. Our motto was “No mission was too difficult. And no sacrifice was too great.” So we would be expected, if it took to the last man out of the outfit to fight, we would still be doing it.

RB: [Did] most of your troops, you think, have that sense of bravery?

QM: Oh, yes.

RB: That is great.

QM: Yes. I do not think there was much fear when we were on the boats getting ready to land.

RB: By that point, was there a real strength [of] comradery among your platoon?

QM: Yes.

RB: And company?

QM: There were big poker games going on the deck out there. [The troops] thought: I am probably going to be dead tomorrow so I am going to do whatever I want. [Laughter]

RB: Right. [Laughter]

QM: Some [fellows] were really cleaning up the money. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Taking risks?

QM: Yes.

RB: So tell about the invasion.

QM: Well, I [did] not get on that invasion because just the day before we were supposed to get on the boat, I [was very] sick with malaria again.

RB: Okay.

QM: That was the fifth time that I [was very] sick with it. I went to the battalion surgeon and told him that my malaria was back and if he would give me some quinine I could go on this invasion. [Inaudible] He would not give me any.

RB: Why not?

QM: Because I was [very] sick and he wanted me in the hospital.

RB: He wanted you to get better in the hospital?

QM: Yes, he wanted me go to the hospital. That is what the doctor wanted.

RB: So what happened? You apparently —.

QM: [Inaudible] Finally, he gave me some quinine. [When] you take that, it kind of suppresses the —.

RB: The symptoms?

QM: Yes, of malaria. Temporarily. [Inaudible] enough to [inaudible] to get on that ship [inaudible] was all. Because that was my outfit, that was my home. I had been with them pert near two years.

RB: Right, and all the effort. This was leading up to the one of the biggest invasions —

QM: Grandest historic combat [inaudible].

RB: — [and] you wanted to be a part of that.

QM: Combat friends and real friends.

RB: Sure.

QM: [Inaudible] look after each other. Anyway, I got on the ship. The wind was blowing and raining so hard that [General Dwight David] Eisenhower had to make a big decision. He finally decided that it would kind of be impossible for us to make the invasion that day so he postponed it a day.

RB: The invasion took place on —.

QM: What?

RB: The invasion took place on June 6, 1943.

QM: It should not have, it started out to be on the fifth.

RB: On the fifth and so it was postponed —

QM: Yes.

RB: — because of the weather.

QM: Yes.

RB: What happened? Were you [fellows] all ready to go on the fifth and then they just cancelled it?

QM: Yes, I think we just stayed on the ship. You know, it was seventy years ago [and] I do not remember exactly what happened.

RB: Yes. Do you remember what you thought about the night before the invasion?

QM: When I got on the boat, we all had assignments in these landing crafts.

RB: Right.

QM: I could not find out which boat I was —.

RB: Oh, no! [Laughter]

QM: [Laughter]

RB: What did you do?

QM: I hunted all over — all the orders and everything. Finally, I [inaudible] R and R'd the battalion commander. I said, "I have looked all over and I cannot find which boat I am supposed to go on." He looked at me kind of silly and said, "You are part of battalion headquarters."

RB: Oh, I see. No wonder.

QM: I thought the battalion motor officer would come in a day late, or something, with the motor vehicles. They did not land the first day. So I thought: well, I have not

worried too much because I figured I would be going on the second day. Instead, hell, I had to go in about the second wave.

RB: Wow! So tell about that. How long of a trip was it across the Channel?

QM: It was not very far across. It did not take hardly any time [to] arrive at our embarkation place. Those [fellows] unloaded us about four or five miles out from shore. The wind was blowing so hard. You know how the front of the ship comes down like that?

RB: Right.

QM: My station within the boat, was right out over that bow. Those damn things [were] swinging back and forth.

RB: Wow!

QM: It was really terrible weather.

RB: Yes.

QM: Still, I remember I got down to where it was time to step off of the boat. I thought: well, I better look again; and I was looking where that boat was way down there just a waving drop boat. So if I had stepped off then I would have fallen in the ocean. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Oh wow!

QM: So I started climbing down again. The next [time] the boat come up [and] kind of knocked me off the ladder.

RB: Oh man!

QM: [Inaudible] boat.

RB: Wow! So the waves were really strong?

QM: Oh, really bad. Then they load these boats – you know they could not load them all at once. So you go out and make a circle out there. All of them would be circling around in the boat waiting for the time to go; waiting for the whole outfit that was going with you to go.

RB: Everybody [had] to get off the ship and onto those boats?

QM: Yes.

RB: Get ready [to] make a —.

QM: Then we would get on those boats. It was so rough out there. I remember that one time you would look off the side of the little boat and all you could see was water around you.

RB: Wow!

QM: And the next time you would look out and, hell, you were way up on top and you could see everything that was going on. [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Crazy!

QM: Oh yes! It was a bad situation. When we finally — the [fellows] got seasick, it was so bad.

RB: I bet.

QM: There were about thirty-six, thirty-seven [fellows] on one of those landing crafts [where] the front would drop down. Hell, half of them were seasick from what was going on.

RB: Sure.

QM: So when we were up on top why we could see the battle ships firing. [We could] see the fire and big old smoke where it comes out of the ends of those big guns that fire up a ways and left all those smoke rings.

RB: Wow!

QM: Everything else that was going on, so we were seeing the whole big shore. We got to the shore. If you look in that book you can see all the obstacles that were on the shore. [Inaudible] and everything that was put out by [inaudible] or not.

RB: These?

QM: Yes, all of this were the Germans and these were hedgehogs.

RB: I see.

QM: And they were sharp on the end. When the tide was in they would be under the water.

RB: Oh, I see.

QM: [Inaudible] broke the hull. [Inaudible] Then they had all of these kinds of things [inaudible].

RB: Yes, just [inaudible].

QM: [Inaudible] They had mines and you would step on them. They were in all this rough water.

RB: Oh man!

QM: [Laughter] It was hard to avoid them. A lot of times they would leave a space where they put those in. They did that on purpose.

RB: Why?

QM: Well, [inaudible] all over so you would have to come in [inaudible] and that [inaudible].

RB: Then they would be ready to attack?

QM: That is where they had all those things.

RB: Zeroed in on that? Was that the only way in?

QM: Zeroed in on that. [Inaudible] spots [inaudible]. We [had] so damn much [inaudible].

RB: Yes.

QM: They dropped me off out there. In fact, this boat here is supposed to be the one that I went in on. The general that sent it to me said, "That is the boat that you went in on."

RB: Yes.

QM: So if it was, I was one of the [fellows] out there and the bullets would just keep falling so bad. I dove under the water about three times getting from there to —

RB: Is that right?

QM: — shore. Getting out of the boats was like bees swarming around there.

RB: Wow!

QM: Oh! There are so many stories there. If you have time for a few of them —.

RB: I do, yes. If you could just kind of describe some of the [events] that come to mind about that day.

QM: [Looking at pictures] This was over in England just before D-Day. This is me and this is my platoon guide. This is one of the squad leaders. He is the platoon sergeant and he was one of the members.

RB: Mr. Murdock is pointing to a photograph on page 36 [of his book].

QM: After we landed there was barbed wire all through there. Have you heard of bangalore torpedoes?

RB: No.

QM: They are a pipe bomb. The pipe is about two or three inches around and about six feet long. They are filled with dynamite and [have] a fuse on them. So when we came to that wire, [we could] not get through there because they put them under the wire. They have threads on the ends so you can put three or four of them together and slide them under that wire.

RB: I see.

QM: Then you kind of hit the fuse and —.

RB: So when you hit the wire it activates the fuse?

QM: I am saying it blew a hole big enough for a truck to go through.

RB: Wow! Yes!

QM: And then this [fellow] [inaudible]. He was one of the first ones through the wire. He stepped on a damn mine and it blew his leg off.

RB: Oh man!

QM: It blew him up and he came down and landed on his stomach. It blew his insides out.

RB: Oh!

QM: One of my pals went over, talked to him and tried to give him some morphine. He said, "Well, now half of us is dead." He died then.

RB: He died then?

QM: Yes. The other officer [who] took my place led that platoon and he [was] killed there on that beach.

RB: [Did] he?

QM: Yes. [Inaudible] platoon sergeant that I had [had] a long time, he [was] shot through the chest and [inaudible] up to his lungs.

RB: Oh man!

QM: He must have [been] hit hard [inaudible] somehow because he is buried there in England.

RB: Oh, is that right?

QM: Yes.

RB: Came back to England and was buried there?

QM: [Inaudible] that university there in England?

RB: Where?

QM: The university there.

RB: [The University of] Cambridge or [University of] Oxford?

QM: Not Oxford, it was another one.

RB: I see.

QM: He is buried over there. One of my friends went over there. His [youngster] was graduating from that college. So I told him about this Sergeant Daniel [who was] shot and was buried over there. He looked him up and put some flowers on his grave.

RB: Oh, that was nice. Wow!

QM: [Laughter] Well, what else?

RB: Did you suffer any injuries that day?

QM: No. [Laughter] I dove under the water a few times to get [away from] the bullets. Then I [went] up to the beach and there was a little berm along there. You know how the water, the waves, will push up? There was a little berm there with grass growing on it. I [was] behind it for a little while. See, I did not have any

assignment, but I just had to be with them. [Had to] be with those [fellows] for some dumb reason.

RB: Oh.

QM: So when my vehicles came in, I was supposed to know where they were and how to get them up to where they were needed.

RB: I see. What I recall, the Germans were up high and when you landed on the beach they were able to shoot down at you. Is that right?

QM: Yes. Dillon here — he was such a hell of a soldier. I do not think we would have won that invasion if it were not for him.

RB: Has he passed away?

QM: Oh, yes. [Inaudible] I will tell you a little more about him. He is the one that pushed the vanguard of torpedoes up to the fence and blew it up.

RB: Oh.

QM: He was a [fellow] from down South. He used to hunt squirrels, so he could kind of track things pretty good. He saw this little trail coming down from up where the trail blocks were open. I guess he figured that must be where the Germans came down and took you right off the beach. And there would not be any mines on that trail. So he followed that trail up to where they [inaudible] road block.

RB: I see.

QM: I followed him up. About a month later up in France, he was out on patrol and he [was] shot up [very] badly. A hunk of shrapnel hit him behind the ear, I guess, and knocked him clear out. It [was] so bad the rest of the patrol could not get through so they came back and said he was dead.

RB: Oh no!

QM: That was just about the time I was leaving the outfit. When I left [inaudible] too bad, poor old Dillon died. Well, he did not die.

RB: How did he get back?

QM: The Germans come along, picked him up and I guess he was still alive. So they started marching them back out of the area. The Germans said, "If any of you [fellows] try to get away, we will just shoot the whole damn bunch of you." He said, most of those [fellows who] were prisoners were glad they were prisoners

[because] they did not have to fight anymore. Even if they shot the whole damn bunch of them! [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: So when they marched up this road, I guess there was a sharp place off the road, ten or fifteen feet down. So when he [had] a chance he just jumped right down off the hill and fell away. [Inaudible] Shot things up. He ended out in a corn patch. He said he was sure glad they did not have any dogs.

RB: Oh! [Laughter]

QM: They would have found him.

RB: Right.

QM: He got away that way.

RB: Wow! That is great!

QM: He was not away, he was way back with the Germans in France.

RB: Yes.

QM: That German army —.

RB: So how was he going to get out of there?

QM: That is the thing. Can you imagine? It was still quite cold. At night he had to stay warm somehow. So he would just find a haystack or a straw stack [and] roll into that. Hell, you cannot go for a month without eating anything.

RB: Right.

QM: [So] he had to find ways to get food and drink. He made it for about a month behind the lines before he could get back down south.

RB: Wow!

QM: He finally got back down south. Another part of that story is that about the time he [was] taken prisoner, my malaria broke out.

RB: Again!

QM: They sent me back to one of those little MASH [Mobile Army Surgical] Hospital where people would go when they [were] shot up.

RB: Right.

QM: [Inaudible] So I got some quinine and it went away on that day. I got out of that MASH hospital.

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

QM: So I got some quinine and [inaudible] that day and went back to the outfit. The first one I ran into when I got back there was [inaudible]. He said, "What the hell are you doing here?" I said, "Oh, I was hoping they would kick me out, but they sent me back." [Inaudible]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: He said, "Well, you are going back again. You are sick. You have to go back now [inaudible]. He just give me the quinine [inaudible]. He would not give it to me. Finally he said, "I will just go to the battalion commander and have him write out an order. Maybe you will go back."

RB: Oh.

QM: Pretty soon here came the ambulance. I got in the ambulance and this time they didn't take me to that little hospital, they took me back to the Channel and over to England. So I was in the hospital in England for quite awhile. When I got out of the hospital then they would have a place for the [inaudible] depot. That is where they sent [fellows who] got in trouble [inaudible]. Something [inaudible] then they would send them back to the outfit again. So I went out there one day to the mess hall and I looked at [the group]. That looked like, maybe, Dillon over there.

RB: Oh, no! Really?

QM: [But it] cannot be Dillon, he is dead!

RB: Yes.

QM: So I went over and my hell, it was old Dillon! I went over and slapped him on the back. I said, "I thought you were dead!" He said, "Do I look dead?" [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter] Wow! That must have been a really amazing reunion!

QM: That is not the end of that story.

RB: Okay.

QM: I do not know how come he and I kept getting together. He was a prisoner in Germany when I left the outfit. Then I ran into him in England.

RB: Yes.

QM: That officer that I had hit on the butt on Hill 523 was there and we ran into him. I said, "What the hell are you doing here?" He said, "I am leaving for America in the morning." Oh, did our hearts sink. We never thought we would ever see America again [after] all of the combat. We got excited and decided, oh hell, we had been out of combat now for about a month. After you [are] out that long, you did not want to go back anymore. [Laughter] [Inaudible] So Dillon and I — see, I had been taking [inaudible]. That is why this second officer was the same time I was recruited. He [inaudible] under the Geneva Convention [rules] [inaudible] prisoner [inaudible] suppose [inaudible]. In fact, [inaudible]. And here I had fought [inaudible].

RB: That is right, you did.

QM: I guess I was kind of tired. We [received] copies of [inaudible] that he had written in and we just made up our own copies and sent them to the same place. While we had that in, they could not send us back to our units again.

RB: Right.

QM: We had to wait there for a few days. When our orders came back, [the orders] said to send us back to the front.

RB: Oh no!

QM: But on the bottom of my line I had written that I had had malaria about six or seven times.

RB: Yes.

QM: [So] it said on Murdock's, "send him back to the hospital and if the situation warrants send him back to the States." So they sent me back to the hospital. The day I got to the hospital I [was] sick again. [Laughter]

RB: Oh!

QM: [Laughter]. It can get you. You would be so damn cold you could not stand it. No matter how many blankets you could not quit shivering. Then all at once [it] would go away. You would have a fever and would kick all the damn blankets off and [take] all your clothes off.

RB: Wow!

QM: You would be so dang hot. That is how malaria is.

RB: Did they send you back after that?

QM: What?

RB: Did you get shipped back to the States then?

QM: Yes. Dillon said, "I am not going to go back to that damn outfit or anything that would be combat or all the bad [places] where we are the first ones there. [Inaudible] Sicily the first team. No one would [inaudible] by all the invasions.

RB: Yes.

QM: So I copied them. When I came back, it said the same, "back to the Front." But for me that meant to go to hospital. I was sick of being in that hospital. They ended up sending me back to the States. That is how I got home. Dillon said, "I am not going to join up and go back to that outfit. I am going to go join the paratroopers. It cannot be any worse than the outfit." [Laughter]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: "At least I will get \$100.00 jump pay."

RB: Right! [Laughter]

QM: So that is what he did. He joined the paratroopers and jumped a few times. I do not know whether [inaudible] he got banged up, [but] he did not get killed.

RB: No?

QM: [Inaudible]

RB: Did you keep in touch with Dillon?

QM: No, he went one way and I went another.

RB: Oh.

QM: [Inaudible] I was home for [inaudible]. He actually [did] get banged up and went to school to become a pharmacist. He was working down in California as a pharmacist in a VA [Veterans Administration] hospital down there.

RB: Okay.

QM: There was a Dr. Christy. He was an eye doctor [inaudible]. Meanwhile, they have these conventions [and] this doctor [inaudible] Dillon worked [with] the same one. When you are at those conventions you have to get up and say who you are and where you are from. He got up and says I am Dr. Christian [from] Blackfoot, Idaho. Dillon said, "That is where old Murdock is from!" So he went over and talked to him. He said, "Yes, I know Murdock." So he gave us [each other's] addresses and I got back [in touch with] Dillon.

RB: You did?

QM: He came up [here] and I took him to [Zion National] Park, Yellowstone [National Park, Wyoming] and places like that.

RB: That was really nice.

QM: We went down to California and had dinner out on one of those ships there. [Inaudible].

RB: Yes.

QM: I had just married [inaudible]. So that was part of our honeymoon.

RB: Oh, alright.

QM: So we got together again. He retired right after that. He said, "I am just going to take this motor home [and] travel around the United States. Whenever I find a place I like I will settle down and stay." He ended up in Florida at a place there. We went to Jamaica or some damn place like that. We stopped in Florida and went to Disneyland. I had his address so we went over, found him and saw him in Florida. [Inaudible]. We were corresponding back and forth until he up and died. We corresponded with his wife for a little bit after that and then she up and died.

RB: Wow! It happens.

QM: Captain Pence, he had been our captain all the time in the war. He [was] shot on D-Day and never did come back to us. He was from Indiana and I am wondering if he was related to Mike Pence.

RB: The current [United States] vice president?

QM: Yes.

RB: Could be.

QM: Because they are both from the same place.

RB: Yes.

QM: And the same name. I never found out about that link there. So that is what happened to Dillon and me.

RB: Yes.

QM: I told you I was starting to farm out in the desert, didn't I?

RB: Yes.

QM: So we went through that part [of my life].

RB: Right.

QM: And my farm did become quite successful.

RB: Yes.

QM: I ended up farming 1,000 acres.

RB: Wow!

QM: Finally, with sprinklers and everything. [Inaudible] process pumping [water] in the black clay. I knew that cattle liked potatoes and that they would have waste from that. When that processing plant [inaudible] I got concession [inaudible]. To get the waste out, I started this feed lot. It was America's Potato [inaudible] Store and feed got bigger and bigger. My feed yard kept getting bigger and bigger.

RB: Wow!

QM: I do not know how many [cattle] I fed out of that [feed lot].

RB: Wow!

QM: Around 600 or 800 head and the feed lot [inaudible] five feet. All confined in the feed lots. I would buy the cattle and have feed for them. I had a lot of trouble at first. Our first cattle would get some hunks [of potato] in their throat and then they could not burp. Then they would bloat up and die. So we had to watch for that. [When that happened, we] got them in the chute and held the hose down their throat to get that piece of potato out. [Laughter]

RB: Wow!

QM: I know once [inaudible] potato made a hole [inaudible]. She died.

RB: Oh dear.

QM: Then I had to sell. They were fat. We were getting choice cattle. I would buy them, get the feed for them and sell them. I was pretty busy running that 1,000 acres.

RB: Yes, I bet. Let me ask you this, what brought you to St. George, Utah?

QM: I farmed there for quite a long time. I [had] up to 1,000 acres of potatoes, wheat and sugar beets. [Laughter]. [It was] the most extensive kind of farming. It would take a lot of equipment for each one of [those crops] and all the tractors and everything. When I started out the farm there were not any houses or anything around. So I went down to Pocatello and bought me a little [inaudible]. It was the real thing. [I] brought it up and set it down out by the well that I had drilled. Kind of cleaned it up, wall-papered it and, hell, it was not a bad place at all. It had a kitchen and water from the well. After awhile I did build a bedroom on the end on it. I put a bathroom. We had been using an outside toilet. [Laughter]

RB: Yes.

QM: [Inaudible]

RB: [Laughter]

QM: [Inaudible] using an outside toilet. [Inaudible] for a toilet, a room for a washer, a dryer and a shower in there. So we were fixed up. Then about eight or nine years after that, I had made enough money to build a nice big home there.

RB: That was nice.

QM: I still go there in the summertime.

RB: So, you finally retired and then decided you wanted to come to St. George?

QM: Yes, I retired and so we took a trip. We had heard a little bit [about] St. George. We came down [inaudible]. Gee, it looked like a nice warm place.

RB: Yes.

QM: But we went on down to Phoenix, Arizona and stayed there. I had a brother down there. Then we went on over to see if San Diego, California would be an ideal place to stay. We went over to San Diego and crossed the border [into Mexico] and they made us pay for the gas before we could fill up.

RB: Yes. [Laughter]

QM: I did not care for that. We were in San Diego for awhile [and we] just decided that was not the place after all. So then we went on back up the [Pacific] Coast Highway 1 to Sacramento. It is the capital of [California]. We dinked around there for awhile then we come over the pass and came home. After awhile we decided that [St. George, Utah] was the place [where] we would come.

RB: Oh, that was good.

QM: We came down, rented a place for awhile and then we got a chance to buy this lot here. Then we built our home [inaudible] crazy [inaudible].

RB: You said you have been here about twenty years?

QM: Yes. We had this house built about twenty years ago. It is a real pleasant place to be; right on the golf course.

RB: That is nice.

QM: Anything we want to do [is here]. I played golf all the time up until —.

[END OF RECORDING THREE. END OF INTERVIEW.]