

## Part 2 of 5: Normandy - Operation Overlord

### Normandy - Operation Overlord

John: You were in Nottingham, England getting ready to jump somewhere. Did you know where you were going to be jumping?

Bill: No. We didn't know when D-Day was gonna be.

John: And you didn't know where you were going either?

Bill: No. Not until that morning. They got maps that said we were going to jump in France on D-Day in Ste.-Mère-Église.

John: You knew that on the 5<sup>th</sup>?

Bill: The 5<sup>th</sup>. But we didn't know when we were going to take off.

John: But you actually jumped on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, right?

Bill: The sixth. It was 1:30 in the morning. It tears my heart out.

John: I guess that day you were then quarantined to the airport?

Bill: Oh, hell we were in a big air hanger. The whole regiment was in there. We got assigned to our planes, got our parachutes, our equipment. Boy, did we have equipment. Bundles, that you put underneath the C-47. That was a good airplane. Anyway, we lost them. I had a .45 and a Tommy gun. It was midnight. We boarded the planes about quarter after midnight. They had to get them all warmed up and everything. Here came Bob Mathias, I didn't know what plane he was on.

I shook his hand and I said to him, "Bob, I'll see you on the ground, old buddy."

Mathias said, "OK, Sergeant."

He went that way and I went this way. We got on our planes. I was pusher. I was the last man out. I always got to push. So we took off and at 1:30 in the morning we started jumping. It didn't take long to get over that channel. But, oh boy, you never saw so damn many planes. When we hit that channel, the beach landings hadn't started yet. The fire from the antiaircraft guns, man, bullets came up through the plane. Well, I didn't know what happened to Bob. He was hit. He was standing in the door and a piece of flak got him above his reserve and knocked him down. Cheznek, one of the guys that was in his plane who was in our platoon, told me later what happened. I didn't know this until three days later when I found the 82<sup>nd</sup>. He said, "They wanted to unhook him and take him back to England but he wouldn't do it. He struggled back up and shouted 'Follow me'. And out of the plane he went." That's the kind of a man he was. Everybody went with him. We went out, too, out of our plane. Those planes were so damned crazy. You read about how fast they were going. When we're flying and you're gonna jump the plane lifts the tail up so you don't hit it. These planes were going 100 mile per hour and going every which way. The Germans were shooting at the planes. I couldn't blame those pilots. They never ran into anything like

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that before. We didn't either. We were going all over. When I got out I was on the ground quick. I mean fast. I just lay there and thought, "OK. Where the hell am I now?" I could see some Germans but I left them alone because I was by myself. I wasn't about to mess with them because I didn't know how many of them there were and I didn't know where I was.

John: Did you know if there were any Americans around?

Bill: No. Not until it got daylight.

John: Did you know you were not where you were supposed to be?

Bill: Yeah, because if I was near Ste.-Mère-Église I would have known that. That was a pretty good-sized town. But when it got daylight there were seventeen 101<sup>st</sup> guys there. Boy, was I glad to see those guys.

John: How many from the 82<sup>nd</sup> were there with you?

Bill: None. Just me. It took me two days to get to the 82<sup>nd</sup>, to my Company. But me and these seventeen guys, we guerrilla fought. Hand grenades. When I first got to the ground my heart was going thump-thump, thump-thump. If they would have had a stethoscope, they would have heard my heart. But you know, I got a good heart, but every time we jumped, my heart was up in my mouth.

John: When you reached the ground . . .

Bill: Yeah. Boy, I hit hard. I tell you what, that D-Day was one hell of an operation. I know when I went out of that airplane, I was on the ground. I got there so damn quick. Those planes were going everywhere. You take those airplanes and then those damn Germans start shooting at you . . .

John: Were you bruised at all?

Bill: No. I landed partially into the hedgerow and then on the ground. I put a mark in the hedgerow. I knew where I hit.

John: So you cut yourself loose from the parachute.

Bill: I sure did. I took my trench knife and cut my chute off. The hell with that chute.

John: Then you grabbed your rifle and sat there for a while?

Bill: I had a Tommy gun. Then I saw those Germans, I didn't know how many of them there were.

John: You could see them?

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Bill: Yeah. I could see the outline of them. I knew who they were by the helmets. I was only about fifty to seventy-five yards from them.

John: Did they know you were there?

Bill: No-o-o. Very quiet. I just lay there. I'd not move. Whenever they got to wherever they were going I would move to the west. I was going to the west because that was where the 82<sup>nd</sup> was supposed to land. And then it got daylight about 5:30 or 6:00 AM. I saw these soldiers and they weren't Germans. I knew they weren't. They had that 101<sup>st</sup> patch on. I said, "Hey guys!" Boy, they were ready to shoot me, thought I was a German. "No, no, no. I'm 82<sup>nd</sup>." I came over and got to talking with them.

I said, "How many of you guys here?"

They said, "Seventeen of us."

I said, "Well, there's eighteen now because I'm with you. I don't even know where the 82<sup>nd</sup> is."

They said, "Well, we don't even know where the 101<sup>st</sup> is."

I said, "Boy, they sure scattered us around, didn't they?"

A lot of those boys were killed. Some of them even landed in the channel. We fought for two days. We guerrilla fought. We used grenades. We were getting low on grenades. I had them in my jump pocket. Boy, did we use them. We were almost out of grenades. I got with this French teenager and I told that boy, "This is what we want. These."

The teenager said, "Oui. Oui. Oui." He couldn't speak English.

We waited there I said, "Just hold on guys." They came back, about ten or twelve of those kids, and they had crates of hand grenades. I don't know where they got them. I found out later that they were with the French Underground. We put the hand grenades in our pockets and hung them on the straps of the musette bag. Anywhere we could. Just to get them. Boy, oh boy. We used them, too. Two days.

John: What were you thinking when it was just the eighteen of you? You didn't know where anybody else was. You knew you were in enemy territory.

Bill: Scared. When you can hear your heart beating, you're scared. Anybody say they weren't scared, they're full of shit. I was rough as hell but, boy, I was scared. I knew we were in a war then. I could hear those shells busting and everything.

Theresa: And you were the head of that group.

Bill: Yeah. I was the ranking non-com. PFC's and privates were all they were. I was the commander for two days.

John: What did you do with them?

Bill: We would move and find out where targets were. Like machine guns or whatever they had. We'd get in there and surround them. We did most of that during the day, when you could see.

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John: How long was it before you really knew where you were?

Bill: When I got with “E” Company.

John: They knew where they were?

Bill: Yeah, the 101<sup>st</sup> boys found their outfit. I couldn’t find mine. I had to go west to find mine. I finally got to my outfit.

John: Did you ever figure out where you actually landed?

Bill: No, I didn’t know where I landed. Never did find out. We got together before we got to Ste.-Mère-Église. When I got with “E” Company.

John: When did you find the 82<sup>nd</sup>?

Bill: It took me two days to find them. I had a clear shot. I come to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. Colonel Mendez. He was the Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and I got with that.

John: And he was with the 82<sup>nd</sup>.

Bill: Yeah. He was the Colonel of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. I was 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. Our Commander was Colonel Shanley. Our regimental Commander was Colonel Roy Lindquest. But, to this day, Colonel Mendez remembers me. We went down to one of the reunions and went to the hotel where we were going to stay and I told Theresa, “Let’s go help that old man get his balloons.”

I walked up to him and said, “Hey, Pop. Let me help you.”

He turned around and said, “Sackenheim!”

*Laughter.*

I said, “Col. Mendez!” We hugged. Oh, Lord! This was a great feeling for me.

John: He retired as Colonel?

Bill: As far as I know. But we made him a General at the last reunion, Honorary General of the 508<sup>th</sup>. We had a good Commander, Jim Gavin. He was good boy, I tell you. He was the General of the 82<sup>nd</sup>. He was a good one. Jim Gavin, old Slim Jim.

John: OK, you’re on the ground and you find seventeen guys from the 101<sup>st</sup>. You’re going around fighting these machine guns and doing all that.

Bill: But I was always heading west. Trying to find the 82<sup>nd</sup>. We found the 101<sup>st</sup>. I don’t know how many they found but as soon as they found the 101<sup>st</sup>, I went the opposite of where they went.

John: So you were by yourself again, then.

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Bill: Yeah. But it wasn't very long.

John: How many days was it before you found the 82<sup>nd</sup> then?

Bill: Two or so. Where there were guns firing was where I headed. And boy, you would hear shells. You'd hear a lot of them. I knew the Germans when they were firing, rat-tat-tat. Their machine guns were very rapid compared to ours. So wherever those sounds came from, I would go the opposite.

John: You are doing this by yourself now.

Bill: I'm by myself. Yeah. Finally I got to "F" Company and I asked them, "Where in the hell's "E" Company?"

They said, "Go that way."

I went that way and I found "E" Company. Red Aaron was the first one I saw. Old Red. He said, "We thought you were dead." Now this is going on the third day. That's when we all got the regiment together, the 82<sup>nd</sup>. We took Ste.-Mère-Église and we found my buddy, Bob Mathias. That tore my heart out. Man. He was hanging in a tree. We had a big battle in Ste.-Mère-Église. Going into Ste.-Mère-Église one of the Staff Sergeants, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon I think it was, he was leading. Smitty was his name, Frank Smith. He was married and had six kids. I asked him many times, "What the hell are you doing in this outfit?"

He said, "The money."

We were only making \$21 a month! And we were paying \$6.95 each month for insurance. But with our rating of Staff Sergeant and with jump pay, we were making a little more. And no bed to sleep in. Dig foxholes. Anyway, we were coming up on a hill and our platoon was coming up on his left flank. I was watching him. All of a sudden I saw a puff of smoke above his helmet. I went up. There was a lot of firing going on. I got there and, oh man, when I got to him I rolled him over and all that was left was this much of his head (*Edit: Note: Bill indicated only his face*). That was all. The rest of it was gone. Well, I stayed there and I prayed and I cried. He was a nice guy. In the 508<sup>th</sup>. He was with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon. Mackall is where I met him.

War was hell. I don't talk much about the dead. Because it just tears you up. You just . . . you don't believe it. All these dead. We had to put our name and the last four numbers of our serial number in your boot. Mine was 1770. It turned out to be a smart thing to do. I remember one guy, all we found was his boot. We didn't know who it was, no dog tags, nothing. We found a boot. His foot was still in it. I forget what his name was now. He probably got hit by a big shell and blew him to pieces.

Another time, I saw one guy, I don't know who it was, who got his head blown off. He ran about 50 yards before he fell. Kind of like a chicken. A shell tore it right off. That was in Normandy.

Anyway, we fought and then we went through Ste.-Mère-Église east to Picauville. There was a hell of a battle there, man. I never saw so many dead. They estimated over five thousand dead. . . English, Americans, Germans. I never saw death like that.

John: Do you ever get used to it?

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Bill: No. And you can't get it out of your mind because you've seen it.

John: This is what I mean when I say we owe so much to the WWII veteran's because, for them, the war wasn't over when it was over. There are things you carried with you for your entire life. Things that people who haven't experienced it couldn't understand. And, even today, people can't really appreciate enough what you all have done for us.

Bill: I was just a kid with no education like you were supposed to have. But I loved the treatment. But if I had had any common sense I wouldn't have taken all that training. But I loved it, though. My brother Bob was in the Navy for seven and a half years.

John: What else can you say about Normandy?

Bill: There was one of those little towns up there I said, "Today we were fighting the damn Japs." I said, "Look at the guy there. He's a Jap." He was dead.

They looked at it and said, "That isn't a Jap."

I said, "Yes it is. Look at him. Eyes all slant and flat, glasses.

A Lieutenant said, "That's a Mongolian."

It looked like a Japanese to me. I hadn't seen any Japs before. Mongolians fighting with the Germans.

John: Well the Germans impressed a lot of men into the fight.

Bill: But there were dead laying all over, every place. Picauville was a hell of a battle. There was a German laying half way out of his tank. I made sure he was dead, though. I checked him out real close. He was. But they were all over. A lot of hand-to-hand fighting. Bayonet. I didn't like them. I never did use my trench knife. I used the bayonet but I didn't use my trench knife. I peeled potatoes with it or something but otherwise, I just had it on me.

We had a priest. After D-Day we had an Aide Station set up in the Transport Section. And they were taking care of wounded Germans and ours, too. A German tank came up there and blew it all to hell. Killed our Catholic priest and everything. That was wrong. We didn't get there in time to stop that. That's when I became Protestant again. I started going to the Protestant church. I asked the Chaplain if it was all right and he said, "Sure." We sang right with them. Then we had a priest that didn't jump with us. He had two Aides, two troopers with him. He was a Captain.

I also knew a guy named Dick Stanley. We saw him at a reunion down in Daytona, Florida. I said, "Dick, where have you been?"

He said, "I'm a judge."

I said, "You sure as hell look like one." They captured him. He was a P.O.W.. I said, "What happened to you?"

He said, "They captured us."

I said, "Did they interrogate you?"

He said, "Yep."

I said, "That shot your wad." When they interrogated you if you escaped and went back to fighting and they got you again they would shoot you for spying. I don't know how

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long he was a P.O.W. He never told me. . . I asked him if they fed him good. He told me the Germans made cabbage soup and all they got was the water and the Germans got the cabbage. I said, "Well if they interrogated you, what did they ask you?"

He said, "They asked me if I took prisoners."

I said, "What did you tell them?"

He said, "Hell yes."

I said, "You lying bastard. You didn't take any prisoners. You never even saw a prisoner." And he was a judge. He's dead now, though.

One time in France, after D-Day, Aaron, O'Conner, Simerson and I were going to take a bath. There was a hole of water out there and we were gonna wash. We all stripped naked. I don't know how the Germans had that spotted but they started throwing shells. We grabbed our clothes and went running. We never lost anybody. I said, "Let's watch for the hogs. If the hogs are in the water, it's safe to get in there." There weren't any hogs in the water. It was nice blue water.

There again, July 4<sup>th</sup>. We moved into position for Hill 95. At six o'clock in the morning, we blew the whistle, attack! Well, I would say about two or three minutes before that whistle a shell hit in the tree. We were in the tree line. My buddies were there with me. We were sitting there talking. A shell hit in the top of that tree, knocked me out. When I came to, I felt my legs burning. I just got little pieces of shrapnel, the medics took them out later. But anyhow, the whistle was blowing. "BJ (*Edit: Note: This was Bill's buddy, Benjamin J. Lavenda*). Come on BJ let's go." He was eighteen. He was lying out with his head split wide open. A piece of that shell got him right between the eyes. Red Aaron had part of the calf of his right leg blown off. They bandaged him up and he went anyhow. Wade lost his leg. And there were three other guys who I didn't know who were dead. One shell. You want to know what I said? You don't want to know what I said. It wasn't good. I cursed and I hollered. I don't know what all I did. I went crazy. We took that hill. But I also prayed.

When BJ got killed, he was a close as you are to me. I came to and was wounded but I didn't know it at the time. The whistle was blowing. We crossed an open area there and Yates, a big Tennessee boy, was hit in the lung. We were in a trench and there was water in there. I pushed him up but I knew he would die because he was gurgling. This was July 4<sup>th</sup> of 1944. We took that Hill 95. When I came back, the French had flowers on BJ's grave. Graves Administration came through there and picked up all the dead then. We never picked up the dead. When they were dead, they were dead. Graves Administration took care of them.

We were going to the reunions, Joe Watson, he was a Staff Sergeant, he always asked me, "Didn't you like me, Socky?"

I said, "Yeah, I like you, Joe."

He said, "Why didn't you like me then, though?"

I said, "What are you talking about?"

He said, "Hill 95. You tried to kill us."

What happened was I was down below and they were up on the hill. Pollette was our Company Commander.

He said, "Have Socky drop mortars over here."

I looked at that hill and thought, "Oh shit. I know our guys are up there." I said, "I can't do that. I could hit our own guys."

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Pollette sent back, "Fire the mortars over here."

So I laid that old tube down and I fired. I just used the tube without the base plate or anything else. I got over the top of them but it was close to our guys. At one reunion I asked Joe if I hit any the guys. He said, "No, but it was damned close."

Joe was a boxer. He wanted me to box. I didn't want to box. He boxed with Bob Mathias. And Bob Mathias was a . . . His picture was in a magazine. Ambrose wrote in one of his books, "Robert M. Mathias" around about the first page. When I saw that I said, "I don't believe this." God he was a man. Phew. He was the first dead. He was the first dead. It tears the heart out of you. I know I was mean. I was crazy and mean. But hell, I loved all those guys. I lived with them. You live with them, you love them. BJ, he was only eighteen years old. That hurt. That one hurt. BJ was like a brother to me. And he was only eighteen years old. His folks wrote letters to me while I was over there. And I would write them back. They wanted to know about BJ.

Leonard was another one he was our radioman. Oh man, his wife kept wanting to know what happened. I took it to the chaplain. I showed him the letters. I had six of them from Leonard's wife. And about four from BJ's folks.

I said, "What am I gonna do with these?"

And he looked at them and read them. He said, "Tell them what they want to know."

So on that V-Mail or whatever you call it, I wrote just what happened. That was the end of it. They stopped.

He said, "They got satisfied."

But, oh boy.

John: That must have been hard, Bill.

Bill: Oh gosh, yeah. I cried enough.

John: Well, what happened to you? You were wounded in that action.

Bill: Yeah. I didn't know about the ones in the back. I got it in the legs. They took them out. Little pieces in there. Just enough to bring blood. They dug them out with what looked like a spoon to me. I didn't know what it was.

John: BB size pieces?

Bill: A little bigger than that. They put sulfa powder in it and put a band aid over it. Both of them (*Edit. Note: Both of his legs*).

Theresa: After we were married he was still having shrapnel pieces working out.

Bill: Yep. Little pieces. Stuff like that. All over. I was so mad. I was so shook up I didn't even think about myself. BJ. Aaron, Wade. And I was cussing. Man I can cuss and I can fire. I had everything. I had a Tommy gun. I ran out of ammunition. I grabbed . . . when somebody would fall, I grabbed whatever they had. Didn't stop. That was July the 4th, 1944 at 6 o'clock in the morning when that happened. And we took that hill. They got the wrong guy mad. I didn't take any prisoners.



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When I found out what that war was about. I said, “What the hell am I doing over here anyhow. This ain’t my country.”

The French were nice. But it took them fifty-seven years to decide they were gonna give a certificate of some kind to anybody who participated in the D-Day landing. I just signed up for that the other day. I had to go up to the VA and take my discharge to prove that I was there. This old boy that was talking with me he was from the Desert Shield, Desert Storm. He showed me a picture of a tank he has on the wall. That gooch had a shell in his tank. I told him that I’d seen a lot of tanks that looked a lot worse than the one he had. I can remember them blown all to hell. I was scared of that Mk-6 Tiger Royal. Whew. We knocked out three of them, though. I was scared of them. They were big.

John: OK. So you fought at Ste.-Mère-Église, Picauville, and Hill 95.

Bill: I remember one night we got the Navy’s 16” shells coming in. The USS Arkansas and the USS Texas were out there in the channel. By accident our radioman got a hold of them. And the Germans were moving stuff up to blow us off the high ground. We made contact with them but we didn’t know who they were. We wanted artillery support. We gave them our location, where we were according to their map. They got all that and the guy on the radio said, “Fire for place” to see how close they were to us. They were too close. That old boy said, “Boy, you’re too close.” From where we were, we were up so high that you could look out to the channel and see them firing. You could see the flash. Boy, it looked like a house coming at you. That old boy said, “Raise it up about 200 yards and fire for effect.” You couldn’t see the ships but you could see the flashes and then all hell would break loose. This was near Ste.-Mère-Église. I could see the shells coming in. They were traveling. They fire a far piece. I liked it. We sent patrols out to see what happened. Boy, they blew those Germans all to hell. They really did a number on them.. They went “whir-r-r-r” as they passed overhead.

Oh, another thing I remember. Chef-Du-Pont in France. General Gavin, there were about twenty-five of us, he was on one side of the street and I was on the other side of the street, covering each other. We took that damn town. They had a creamery in there. Boy, did we eat that cheese! What I had in my jump pockets I took out. Big round cheese. I cut them in half with my trench knife and put them in my pockets. We didn’t have anything else to eat. K-Rations, pffft, damn K-Rations.

Dale Rodebush was there. He was a machine gunner. He didn’t get killed over there. He came home and died.

John: Do you remember what the differences were between the different rations?

Bill: Yeah, I know what they were. C-Rations came in a big box. Ten in one they called it. One box would feed ten guys. That’s your C-Rations.

John: What was in the C-Rations?

Bill: Oh hell, they had what I called bully beef. It was good stuff. Big cans of meat and everything. Good biscuits. It wasn’t bad at all. They also gave us those D-Ration bars. D-Rations were supposed to be for breakfast, dinner, and supper. I was so hungry one day I ate

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the whole thing and boy did I get sick. I told Red. And he said, “You dumb son of a bitch. Serves you right. Read the label. It says, ‘Breakfast, Dinner, and Supper.’”

I said, “I know, Red, but I was hungry.”

Theresa: And the chocolate bars you never ate?

Bill: They didn’t have any chocolate bars in them. We would trade them off for something. Then there were K-Rations you just carried that yourself. We had two days when we jumped. Shit on K-Rations. The only thing good in it was the cigarettes. Those biscuits? We killed a lot of Germans with those things. Throwing them at them. Hard! They were so hard. They had Nescafe and in the morning there was little round can that had eggs and cheese. At noontime you had cheese for lunch. At night you had ham or whatever in the can.

John: Was it ham or Spam.

Bill: I don’t know but it was good. Anyway, then we were going to go to St. Lo or wherever the hell it was. I don’t know. But then they pulled us out. We came back to the beach. Took us to where the beachhead started. We went in on June 6 and we came out of there on July 13 via Utah Beach. We came down through where the Rangers busted through. Those Rangers, they’re hell. I have a nephew in the rangers. He went in the paratroopers, now he’s a Ranger. By the time we were coming down through where the rangers broke through, the clothes we had on, which were impregnated against gas in case the Germans used gas, were falling off of us. They were rotten. And so were we. Crazy stuff.

Boy, you should have seen that mess at the Utah Beachhead. One thing I remember is there was an LST out in the water. I was talking with one of the sailors who was bringing supplies in.

I asked him, “Hey, what’s the matter with that LST out there?” He said, “It’s full of troops. When that front came down, 88’s from up on the cliffs went right in that thing.”

The troops were still in them.

I said, “When are they going to get to them?”

He said, “They’ll get to them”.

Graves administration. They have some beautiful cemeteries over there.

Yeah. Boy I tell you. When we came back, it was hell on that beach. I saw some of the boats in that channel that wasn’t . . . they had all those things. Barbed wire through all that damned stuff. Nasty stuff. The only troops that Germans had that were any good were the damned SS. We didn’t take prisoners. We shot those sons-a-bitches.

John: So when you parachuted in, if I remember the strategy correctly, you guys were there to protect the flank of the main invasion force.

Bill: Right. We had radar, guys who were trained in this, they set up crosses out and those were our drop zones. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions. We saw a couple of them but the Germans captured them and set up machine guns around them. We started to go for them but the planes were going every which way. Whew. We got together, though. And they pulled us out on July 13.

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John: Did you go back to England then?

Bill: Yep. Back to Nottingham and lick our wounds. Get refitted and replacements. See the 17<sup>th</sup> Airborne jumped over there, too. But they got disbanded because we needed replacements. So we got replacements from that Division. So then there was just the 82<sup>nd</sup> and the 101<sup>st</sup>.

John: Didn't the British 6<sup>th</sup> also jump?

Bill: They jumped but they were over on the North side. "Yay, Hoy, Mate! Bloody bloke, ya know!" I had fun with them. I talked to one one night. We were in Picadilly Circus. It's over there somewhere. I was talking to these English and they are hard to understand. I was trying to talk like them. One of them came up, a big guy, and said, "Hey Yank. You making fun of the language."

I said, "No, I'm trying to speak it."

Oh, we had fun. And we came back and we took a while. I think it was July or August.

Our Company had our own Supply outfit. In Normandy we had captured a German PX with all their supplies in it. When we came back to Wollaton Park, we were going to the PX to get some stuff and they were trying to sell us that German stuff. I looked. Some of the guys started out before I got there and they were buying some of that stuff. I said, "We captured that stuff. Hey guys, you take whatever you want. We ain't paying for it." And we did.

We were getting a little rest. Training. Resting but still training.

Well, I'll tell you what, did you ever hear of anybody having a angel? I had one. But I didn't know it until what, about five months ago, Pat? When they gave me that that angel book. I've got an angel. I've got the big one, St. Michael the archangel, patron saint of the paratroopers in Normandy. It's in that book over there. And at the Battle of the Bulge he was big! I mean he was gigantic. He didn't keep the snow off of us, though. I never saw so much snow. I don't mind cold. I hate snow. But I had a purpose. I came back for a purpose. I'm finding out what it was. It was to raise a family.

**Continued – see Part 3: Holland -Operation Market Garden**