

2015-07-13 SIDE A

Joe Prejean, Anthony Mouton, and Paul Francis talk about their experiences while in the military and working on the Alaska Highway in the Yukon during WWII

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An unidentified interviewer asked the interviewees to talk about their war days and what they were doing. An unidentified person said he remembered one time while he was standing in the line in the mess hall and there was a black bear behind the tent. Someone got a rifle and shot the bear. The interviewee told a story about Ben Johnson running into a bear. He survived the attack. Another man said he would hear the bears at the garbage holes at night. He carried his rifle with him just in case they saw a moose. He did finally get a moose and everyone ate for two days. They skinned the moose and cut it up. They all talked about hunting grouse and eating them. They also hunted showshoe rabbits. They were only getting corned beef hash and Vienna sausage for their regular food. They would also fish. One man said just three fish were enough to serve the company. They could just grab a salmon out of the creek. One man said Polly Charles would cook everything up for them.

One of the men talked about waking up on cold mornings and seeing paw prints of wolves. Another man talked about seeing a pack of wolves.

They talked about going out and cutting their own wood for fuel. They would store the wood in their tent. Someone would have to get up in the night and put wood on the fire. The cold would freeze their eggs. They would have to use a hack saw to cut up the beef.

[conversation about a heating device in the room]

Someone asked if they knew Eddie Padillo. Someone said he was in A Company. They talked about a photo Padillo had of constructing a bridge when they were at Camp Claiborne.

One of the men said when they first went over there (Normandy?) there were a bunch of guys from Mississippi and New Orleans. All they did was cuss and he wasn't used to that. They discussed the different ways people talked. One of the men talked about Paul Shamon (?) who organized a quartet. He was a good singer.

[background conversation]

One of the men talked about Chris Jones who was a saxophone player. They talked about one of the soldiers from Baltimore, Maryland. One of the men talked about Ducky Rice. They talked about Chatters from New Orleans. Ducky Rice was in D Company. They discuss another man from Buffalo, New York. They talked about conking hair.

Someone asked how they got along with “The Gopher” and one man said there was no problem. One man talked about traveling to Skagway and getting on a little train to Carcross. He was in A Company. The B Company had got to Carcross before them. They had already built the latrines. He had a fever and was sent to the infirmary. When he went to the latrines that the B Company had built and “The Gopher” came up to him and wanted to know why he was using B Company’s latrine and told him to get out. They talked about “The Gopher” being beat up. He was considered a bad man. They talked about Sergeant Honesty.

The interviewer said he was going back to Houston and would return in a month.

Discussion about Fenton, Louisiana. They had snakes and armadillos. The snakes would crawl into the tents with the soldiers.

One of the men said he would change the experience he got. He wouldn’t want to go back. They said they had wonderful memories. One of the men said when they first went over Green was the mess sergeant and Joe was the sergeant on the field. Green stayed with them a while and then was sent back before they left Alaska. They went to the Aleutians and Joe said he was a tech four and a first cook. He was sent to cooking school in Alaska. Raymond Wood brought him into the kitchen. Joe said he was the first cook on one shift and Alvin Lawston was the head cook on the other shift. They talked about some of the other cooks. They weren’t allowed seconds except on Sundays.

They discussed some of the soldiers in their company. They talked about Clarence Green. Nolan Hamilton went to officer’s school. Joe Cobbler made colonel. Lenny Washington went to officer’s training. They talked about Little Bruno. They talked about Chester Sawyers who became a master sergeant. One of the men said he was asked to go up on the stage and speak French with another soldier. He said Talright was made their first sergeant. He told a story about being disciplined and a snitch.