

BOB DESHLER

Amthor: This is a portion of the *Oral Histories of Northwest Missouri in the 1940s* program. The Nodaway County Historical Society is sponsoring this program in partnership with the Missouri Humanities Council and with support from the National Endowment of the Humanities. Today's date is February 2, 2009, and we're here at T.J. Café, in King City, Missouri, in Gentry County. The interviewer is Joni Amthor, and assisting me is Margaret Kelley, and we are here to interview Robert L. Deshler. His birthday is July 24, 1919, and he lived during the 1940s and this interview is his story during this time period, including World War II, where he served in the Army, and his highest rank was Sergeant.

Bob, we're going to start out a little bit with some of your background, your biographical details; like tell us about where and when you were born.

Deshler: I was born at Ridgeway, Missouri, its up – I forget what county that is; it's up north of Bethany. I lived there until I was 5 years old, then we moved to King City, in the spring that I was 5 years old. I was 6 that July, and started school here, where all my high school was here in King City. I've been here all my life except for what time I was in the Army and a year – almost a year I lived in Hiawatha, Kansas. We had a café and sold the café, in fact we had to lease part of this corner café, and sold it and moved to Hiawatha, was over there about 9 months, and sold that one, and come back and started another one, and stayed the rest of my life here.

Amthor: Tell us about your parents, their occupations, and if you had any brothers or sisters.

Deshler: I had one brother, he passed away early in life, and he moved to Florida, he didn't stay around here too long. My mother and my father both worked in the café, and I guess that was their occupation then. Mom did part of the cooking and dad run it. That's about all they ever did, I guess.

Amthor: Tell us about your life in 1940 before you entered the military – what were your concerns, your joys, what was life like?

Deshler: Well, we'd only been married about 14 months when I enlisted. I didn't think the war would last that long, but I got two months longevity pay – and that's after you're in there three years, and we didn't have any children, we didn't lose the war, but at that time, I didn't think about being gone that long. She got to come . . . Lloyd, who you interviewed just a while ago, he wasn't married, and when we completed our basic training in Mississippi, my wife Bonnie and his wife Jolie came down; they got married down there. I stood up with them down there, he got married then. Then when I was in California, she came out there, and till my furlough, and we came back to Missouri. Then I was sent to Michigan, to training, and she came up there and brought a car up and she worked in the ration office and I got coupons so we could get back home. She came – no she didn't come to Fort Bliss, and from there they sent me to New York, she didn't come there. Anyway, she always – she did get to come different places where I was.

Amthor: Did you have any other family members that participated in the war?

Deshler: No, no, just the one brother was all I had.

Amthor: Now we're going to talk a little bit about propaganda. What did you know about the war in Europe or China?

Deshler: I didn't know much about the war in China, and the one in Europe, just what I read in the paper, we got the paper Stars and Stripes, and that was about as – it was supposed to be the truth; I think mostly it was ; we'd read about it. Of course, you never know; one day when you're in the service, there's all kinds of movement around you. One day we were being sent to Japan, next we were coming home. When the war did end in Europe, why, they did pack us up we were ready to go to China, before they dropped the atomic bomb. I know it will sound bad, but I was glad they dropped it so we didn't have to go to Japan.

Amthor: How did they U.S. portray the war, and that of the Japanese?

Deshler: I don't know. Well, in the U. S., they just said we had to stop them, for if we didn't, Hitler was going to control all of Europe, and Japan would be their ally. They did give us a sneak attack at Pearl Harbor, and I've been there, and saw the Arizona while it was down and its . . . If they'd had had more gas, Europe - it would have been a longer war, I know that. He had to be stopped, he was a mad man; he was crazy.

Amthor: How did you learn about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

Deshler: I heard it on the radio. We were going to my wife's brother lived at Rock Port, and we were about half way there, that Sunday it came on the radio that was the first. But I had heard that Japan was going to do something; everybody seemed to know that there was going to be some kind attack. I don't know why the ones in charge didn't do something about. Everybody that you talked to that was in service and all, they said, when Japan attacks us - so they knew something was going on.

Amthor: How did you learn about the progress of the war?

Deshler: Well, the Stars and Stripes kept us up that way. Each day when it came out it would tell which armies were advancing and which ones wasn't and where you were, and it was just about the best report, because that was about the only way. Now I heard things that sometimes – my wife would send me a paper, and sometimes it was nothing like it actually it was. But most of the time you weren't sure when you heard something whether it was right or not.

Amthor: So you probably – most of the news that came back, did they not portray it as actual as what you experienced?

Deshler: They didn't – no, I didn't think they did. Of course, and they might have been through that. Like when that time ---- was trying to take – kept losing so many people – when General Patton come in, General Patton said to lose a few each day and not get involved, I'm going to take it. His losses were great. In fact, they would spread them out. They wouldn't sometimes they wouldn't put it in there, and I think they didn't want people to know how many –

sounds bad, but he got the job done. They could have been fed misinformation too, just as well as the rest of us was.

Amthor: We're going to talk about your early days in service. Were you drafted or enlisted?

Deshler: I enlisted.

Amthor: How old were you and what year?

Deshler: It was 1942, and I was 22 I would have been, yes.

Amthor: If you enlisted, why, and what branch of service?

Deshler: It was army, and I enlisted, because – well they . . . gosh, I don't know, I guess I thought I should go. There were five of us that enlisted at the same time. Well all enlisted there, and I was married, and one other one was married, and Lloyd got married after he went in. The younger boys were not married. But I really thought the war would last a year, a year and a half, but it lasted three years. That was – and like I said, I had been married 14 months when I enlisted.

Amthor: What was your wife's name?

Deshler: Bonnie.

Amthor: Your basic training camp memories; can you tell us a little bit about that and how long.

Deshler: Well, it might be kind of repetition of what Lloyd told you. We were down in Jacks, Mississippi, it was just a wilderness more or less, just a timber like – we made that camp; we cleaned all the brush out, and made all the roads, and worked down there. It was a pretty nice camp once we got started, but . . . That was the first place that we went. Then they sent us to California, and I forget how long we were out there. We were in the town near Santa Maria where they had the trial. Jackson. That was a pretty little town. Every citizen, - like the army does, they sent us from California clear to New York, to Fort Solgrum. I guess before that they sent us to Fort Bliss, Texas, then from Texas us to Weisken, then back to Texas, then Texas to New York, and then from New York we shipped out overseas. Seemed like we were always – and they'd move you the farthest they could, it seemed like. But I was lucky enough that Bonnie did get to come at least three places, where I was stationed, and I'd take my furlough the last one. So I told them I was getting married three or four times that way.

Amthor: Did you have any specialized training?

Deshler: Yes, that why they sent me to Michigan. I was trained on – well, mostly guns, because I was in the artillery section and I was trained on the 40mm bulffos, that's what they called the 40 mm gun, and then for the machine gun mount. It was four machine guns on a turret, and they all fired simultaneously, 1500 bullet a minute, boy, and we used – guarded the air field in Mohave Desert in California while we were there. I was also trained on big guns because I left

overseas I was attached most of the time to a tank outfit and they had and 55s and 155s. So I guess I mostly all mine was gun training on that.

Amthor: How did you adapt to your military life? Tell us about your duties, your experience.

Deshler: It wasn't too bad. First, when I went in, they knew I'd been in a restaurant. They offered me a sergeant's rating if I'd go into the kitchen. I said, "No, I can do that at home." I went in as a private. We got 21 dollars a month; we got paid real well. Eight dollars of that was an allotment went to the wife and they mashed it. Of course that was probably in those days because when we got married I rented a house there in town for five dollars a month, so it was more than it looked like. Then we got by enlisting and not being drafted why we enlisted as PFC's and we got four dollars a month more for that. By enlisting, our number started with a one; you had your MRS number 1760534 I remember mine – it started with a one. If you were drafted it started with a 3. We enlisted it was about two days before Thanksgiving they let us go home from over at Fort Leavenworth and we came home. Anybody that wasn't enlisted, that was drafted, they wouldn't let them come home. I guess they were afraid that they wouldn't come back. So we got to come home. I thought when I enlisted - it was just before Christmas, that I'd see Christmas there, but I saw three Christmas's in the Army. But there were some good places. One, we was in Jackson, Mississippi, saw one in California, and one overseas.

Amthor: Now we're going to talk about your war time service. Where did you serve, and tell us about the places and your duties in these places.

Deshler: Well, we were in England first, and we crossed the English Channel, and then we went in in the Invasion, and then we were in the European theatre. Patton moved everybody I was in the – even orders. Like your rations. If you were in the front lines, more or less, in certain amounts, you got five packages of cigarettes, 2 cans of tobacco, and a can of peanuts. But if you further back, you only got three packages of cigarettes and one can of tobacco, and no peanuts. Most of the time I was what they called in contact, and they would send me out. Me and one other would go out and we had a long pole with a pad on it, and these 150, and 55's, when they would misfire, one of us would stop and dropped the breech lock and hold it and the other guy would tap it and drop the shell out. Then we'd put it back it in. The captain said the first time we went out, he said down there in that timber is a bunch of Germans; shoot down there. Of course you couldn't see them. But if it fired, okay, but if it didn't, we'd take it back out and an orderly would come get it and destroyed it. Most of the time I was on – that's what they'd send us, because we had an artillery section, then the one that kept the books and such, if we like that. So most of my time was travel. I know when we got to Paris, we went around Paris, it wasn't taken yet, but we went around it; they were going to clean that up later. But we moved – when General Patton moved, he moved everybody. I got four battle stars, like invasion of Europe, Argonne Forest, and I don't know, I forget what the others were. I know when the war ended I was at Metz, Austria, and I know I crossed the Blue Danube, it was really blue; I was surprised it was, but I was about 100 miles from my company, so I never knew where I was going to be from one time to another. But that was better than - I got to move around a lot. And when you were worked with those the - they had tanks and anti-aircraft on trailers and things, and mostly it was a tank outfit. The treated us good. We had good food, because, I know, I guess

because it was front lines, seemed like they got better food. General Patton nobody wanted to fool with him too much, he _____.

Amthor: Did you see any combat duty?

Deshler: They called where we were, that was combat duty when you were within that radius of that miles, a certain amount. It wasn't hand to hand fighting, I mean, like, you think about the Civil War and things like that. Like I say, you'd fire, and your cannons would go miles, you didn't know if you were hitting anything; I guess they knew what they were doing. But when you were within that certain miles – like I said, I got the full rations all the time; they called that combat duty. Now when we landed, why, I didn't go in with the first wave, but later when we went in, why, we sat out there in the ocean in those boats, you had to sit down. You could smoke in the daytime, but not at night, we couldn't light them. When they dropped, they ran us up on the shore, and we went in and I guess we were in late that afternoon, so they'd been going in, I know that there were bodies. I was scared to death like everybody else, too, I know that. Then we – of course we unloaded tanks, unloaded trucks, and things, and started going through the French villages, and they came out; they had bottles of wine, trying to give you wine. We worked that winter, the fifth winter; it was cold there. Later on why we worked in a big factory; they had us stay there in this factory. They were still using it part time but – men and women all worked together, they all worked together, I couldn't get use to them. Men and women went and used the same restroom, went in together; I couldn't get use to that. It was insane, but they was . . . They didn't realize.

Amthor: How did you handle emotion in combat, if you witnessed any casualties, or destruction?

Deshler: Well, we didn't actually - we would see bodies, but we didn't actually – not like the infantry did, I mean, but there was plenty of bodies to be seen, especially when we landed plenty of times. I know we went in with a tank outfit, one big prison camp, it was –my, they had these men as prisoners, one guy we gave him all our extra underwear and socks and things, like one man I gave him clothes. He said he was supposed to weigh about 185 and he was down to about 113 or 114 pounds. And they put us that ways in a town, and they give us houses – it was cold, to stay, and they had one room that they could lock their like their grand piano, and silverware and stuff in, but they took houses where no Nazi people to supervise us. That prisoner told me, she had a family there was a lady and a man, and a little boy and girl about 12 to 14, she looked very pregnant ; He said she may look that way, but see, she spit on me yesterday on the streets before you guys came in. She wasn't – but when we left, one guy in the outfit, he was – he found a bunch of ----- upstairs, where they weren't supposed to have them. He got those, and took a candle and waste; we weren't supposed to destroy the house – but he light the candle when we left, and he had a lot of waste, and I knew when it got down to the waste, the house was gone. Of course, it was an accident. But we weren't supposed to do that, really, but . . . When we were stationed in Munich, there for a while, and we'd go into town, but we stayed together. At that time, those young boys, oh, 15, 16, 17, they were the ones that shared the watch. But we all – weren't supposed to carry guns in town, but we all had revolvers, we all carried – I was never bothered, because we stayed more than one – kind of stayed together. In cold weather, it kind of came to a stop; it got pretty cold.

Amthor: Did you form friendships and camaraderie while in service? If so, tell us about them.

Deshler: Not too much, because see, there was – see, there was three others from King City that went to Ascension Island, so there were three others, four of us from King City, we were all kind funny. I did with a couple of guys; after the war I'd go down to see him; he lived down close to St. Louis. Once a year I'd go to see him, he'd come to see me, I did him. No, the others something funny; for a while I sent Christmas cards, then one day I thought, I'll never see them again, so I just quit doing it.

Amthor: How did you stay in touch with your family and friends back home?

Deshler: We wrote. I tried to write every chance I got. Bonnie wrote me every day, she said. Of course you'd get a bunch of letters at one time. Mostly used V-mail, you know the little – that's what we used mostly.

Amthor: Tell us about the v-mail.

Deshler: Well, it was just a little, small, about the size of a – oh, wouldn't be as big as a standard envelope, but you could fold it over, and then they'd stamp it. It didn't have an envelope with it, it was self contained. That was – that seemed like that went through the quickest of anything. I would get letters, too, because my oldest boy, why I didn't – he was born while I was overseas. He was 14 months old before I saw him. He was born while I was over there. I had two boys – he was a writer; my oldest boy, he travels; he was in the Peace Corps, People to People, he went – traveled Europe and all around. He's in California and he played tennis, and jogged and everything, but; and then the week before my youngest boy was getting ready to go to college, he went out and stayed a week with him, they played tennis. He came home that week, he had a test for insurance and the next week he died, he was 32 years old, and he died of heart trouble. He didn't even know he had heart trouble. He had bad eyes, he tried to enlist, but they wouldn't take him. He wore real thick glasses, but my youngest boy, he's the only one now, he's a lieutenant in the highway patrol, he's stationed down at Liberty, my youngest boy is. In fact, he's the one that's going to come and get me and take me to the doctor. He's also head of security of the Kansas City Chief, too, on weekends. They have their own security, but they have about 40, and they add to them when they need to. They can arrest, they carry guns, of course they all carry guns anyway, and he has patrol, and he's in charge of them. I asked him, why do you do that for, you could have your weekends off, now you don't work the load now. He said, Dad, you couldn't believe how well they pay, they pay good. He goes to all the games, anyway.

Amthor: What entertainment did you have in the service? Red Cross, USO?

Deshler: Yes, they would have different people out, some of I know, Diana Shore, I saw here, and oh, gosh, I can't think. They had lots of USO shows, I mean; it seems like we saw quite a few. I can't remember who some of them are, I forget. Then we had movies, old ones too, we had one man, he was in charge of the movies, and if we surely could, we'd have a movie of a night. I remember there was one show, *Saratoga Trunk*, we tried to see it overseas, and they

came over with planes and bombed where we were at, and we didn't get to finish that up. The next time I went to see it, the film broke. I finally saw it when I came home, I saw it someplace, I never got to see it. We did have films, and they tried to give us like that. Outside of the films, we had the USO shows. Now when we were in Munich, in Germany, why, through the wintertime there, we were kind of in a standstill, we went into town, we had permission, we went to the shows, they had shows, of course, they were all in German. We had some of the German prisoners working for us, and most of us got so we could kind of understand German a little bit. They also had the USO; the rear guard was over there. The Germans were great hands to drink beer, and they had the American beer garden, and German beer gardens. They did a lot of drinking.

Amthor: What was the beer like compared to American beer?

Deshler: It was better beer, I thought, than our own beer. They came down the family side of the building, and they had a little pan, it look like a lunch bucket, and they'd fill that with beer and they'd leave. But sometimes they'd – they had MP's walking around, they got pretty wild sometimes at these gardens. They were resented us – some did and some didn't. You'd talk to some people and some didn't resent us at all; they were tired of Hitler and they didn't like Hitler but couldn't say anything. Most of the ones that did were the younger boys. They enlisted those younger boys when they were about 14, and by they were 16 they were pretty rough. The Nazi, they were bad, they were good soldiers. I saw things I – I know one time the war was over, and we had this little Polish boy helping in the kitchen had their fingers cut off, and he looked out there and said, see that guy coming down the road? He's head of the kitchen; he's the guy who cut my fingers off. So, one of the boys handed him a gun, and called him over there and called him to attention, and this boy put the gun up to his head and pulled the trigger, and it misfired. That guy didn't bat an eye; it fired the next time, the first one in a railroad car. They were pretty rough, those Nazi's were. Most of them were just a family of soldiers, just like we were. They were just there because we had to, just like we were.

Amthor: Did you ever listen to Axis Sally or Tokyo Rose?

Not Tokyo Rose, I did – I guess it was Axis Sally, some gal would talk. They had two or three that claimed to be Axis Sally, but we heard them not too much. Only thing is they played good music so – they wasn't bothering us. There wasn't many – they didn't believe anything that they said. They'd come on while you are over here fighting, some of those guys at home are out with your wife and all that stuff, most of the guys didn't pay any attention to that, it was all put on stuff, it was just propaganda stuff, most of them didn't anyway.

Amthor: What did you do for recreation or leisure?

Deshler: Well, they made sure we didn't have too much. We would once in a while get a volleyball game up or something, but we were moving most of the time. Patton's third army, he didn't allow you to do much. Our immediate commander was General Hodges, he was Patton's son-in-law, and we moved. We would just barely get in, and set up, and we'd move again. When we went in, when we landed, they said that up ahead Patton had the whole army, and he saw the infantry, they were crawling over the hill, they were just about a block or two away, so

we were all there. The report came back that we were spearheading in, they said if it closes, we'd be prisoners the rest of the war. Patton, he drove ahead, but it didn't close, so we were alright that way. That was when we first landed, over there.

Amthor: Did you ever meet Patton?

Deshler: No, but I saw him. One day another fellow and I, he'd never been out; we went back to the supply depot, to get supplies, and our trucks had a turret around the top, with a canvas over it, and a machine gun that went around there. The next crossroad, the MP stopped and said General Patton just went around you trots, so he stopped more than us and he said get that canvas off so you can use the gun. Well, this other boy had never been out, he said, what do we do? I said, "Well, you see a plane coming, get under the truck with me, because we're not going to hit that plane; there's no way we can hit that plane. I'll be under the truck. You just come under with me." I saw General Eisenhower at Shafe headquarters, but he was probably, oh, half a block away, maybe. General Eisenhower didn't ever bother anybody. General Patton didn't either, if you were doing your job. But you never knew he might stop anybody along the road; you never knew what he'd do. He cared about all the soldiers; they were afraid of him;

Amthor: So how did the soldiers feel about Patton?

Deshler: Well, most of them thought – that episode- like I said, if you were doing your job, then he didn't bother you. In that one episode, he framed the boy was kind of – he was scared, and Patton was supposed to have slapped him. All he was doing was trying to – he was screaming, raising Cain get him to settle down. They didn't tell those stories right. They told lot of things on Patton – was supposed to have swum the English Channel, and all that stuff, and they weren't right. He had a lot of causalities, but he got the job done, he really did. General Eisenhower was glad to have him work with him.

Amthor: You said you spent a lot of time in Germany; did you come across any of the concentration camps?

Deshler: Yes. Well, like I say, this tank – we were with them. That one camp, they –that was the one we gave our clothes to, and that was one, and it was pretty bad. Then we had found another camp we had a bunch of boys. They weren't over 12 to 14 years old. Oh, boy, they were, they was going to be a movie, but you know when we were there a few days, and the kids, we'd give them apples and things, they began to act like boys their age. That was two. Then I saw – then we went to one camp we'd go in, I knew there was a building, it was about half as big as this room, and we'd open the door and dead bodies piled up clear to the ceiling where they'd – I mean they'd killed them. I saw the furnaces, but I didn't see them working, or anything like that. I had one town where they'd burned a lot of the Jews, the Jewish people. Someone told us about them, but I saw the furnaces but I didn't see them – they weren't operating then, because the tank outfit had already cleaned up over there.

Amthor: Next we're going to talk about the end of the war, and you coming home. What were you doing on D-Day, and how did you feel about it?

Deshler: Well, we thought we were going to Japan, and when the war in Germany ended, we were _____ our guns, getting them ready to go, then when they dropped the atomic bomb, of course, that stopped it, so we got to go home, which I was sure glad of that, after a while, we did. They let us go accordingly. Married ones got to go first. I know they sent us back on a Liberty ship. They claimed those Liberty ships - they always said those Liberty ships, they'd just make one trip, and then they'd go to pieces. Well this was its second trip, but it made home alright. Then we kind of scattered, because two of the boys weren't married so they got home later. Lloyd wasn't there, but I was glad to see D-Day. It was kind of funny, when Roosevelt died; President Roosevelt, that morning I got up, and I thought the workers around there – we always had Germans – some prisoners, and some just workers – and they just acted like the world had come to an end; I couldn't figure what was going on. Then they told us that Roosevelt had died. They couldn't understand the war went on - we just went on the same as always. They felt like it was – the war would come to an end when he died, and it didn't. Of course, ____ difference. They knew there's was more accurate one man would be the head of things, with the war, but war went right on when he died, just the same.

Amthor: How did you feel about the dropping of the atomic bomb?

Deshler: Well, I didn't know that much about it. They told it was really bad, and you thought about – really the first thing that I knew was a girl running without any clothes on running that was the picture we saw around the world, and it was bad, but, it saved a lot of live. It took a lot of lives at that time, but it saved a lot. The atomic bomb took a lot of lives at that time, but it saved a lot in the future. There would have been, you know, trying to take it, but it ended the war. We were ready to go home – anyway to get home.

Amthor: Did you think President Truman should have ordered the bomb to be dropped?

Deshler: Yes, I did, I think so. Most everybody did. It took a lot of lives, but it saved a lot, too.

Amthor: Where and what were you doing when you got news that the war was over?

Deshler: We were in camp we were – they were hinting that it was going to be over the day before that. The Stars and Stripes came out that saying that, but we still went right on ahead getting our guns ready to go to Japan. We were slated. We took guns – we had to fill the barrels with a grease and stuff like that to get ready. We were just kind of waiting for orders, about what we were doing and see what happened.

Amthor: How did you get home?

Deshler: I came home on a Liberty ship. We went overseas on a big ship, it was luxury liner. It was fast enough that we weren't even escorted. I know once we saw – they saw a submarine, it was up around Iceland. Being ordinance, they had us on gun crew. There'd be two of us on a gun with one English soldier and a sailor, and we'd – they told us if the ship goes down, you stay with the guns until everybody is off the ship. This old sailor, he told me "I've been shot off of two ships. Just follow me; I'll be one of the first to jump off." We were fast enough they didn't

bother us. The Liberty ships, they were bad, but they served their purpose. They could make them fast, but they didn't last long, but they weren't supposed to, I guess.

Amthor: Were you given a reception from your family and friends when you returned?

Deshler: Oh, I wouldn't call it a reception. They were all there: there were several of them there. My folks were there, my wife was there. At that time, that's when I saw my boy for the first time. That was at Kansas City. When we came back, we were in Virginia, and Virginia was a staging point. The eastern boys were sent east, the western boys were sent west, and us Midwest boys, we were sent to St. Louis, and from there, back home. There were Brooklyn boys in there, you'd thought you were in a different country, listening to them talk!

Amthor: How did the people treat you when you returned home?

Deshler: Fine. They treated us good; everybody did. Of course, a small town, everybody knows everybody. The first day we come in late that night, and then the next day I didn't have any clothes out, and I had to wear my uniform to town. By noon I was out of it, and had regular clothes.

Amthor: How did you adjust back to civilian life?

Deshler: Well, I just assumed – I went back to work at the café. At first I was going to stay in. I wanted at Fort Bliss – I always liked horses, in fact I showed – used to train show horses, went to horse shows, and Fort Bliss was a really nice camp. It was right on the border down there. I wanted to stay in. They said they'd give me – they had little brick homes, one and two bedroom brick homes. They said you'd have your own home. Bonnie didn't want to do it. But after I got back from overseas, I decided I didn't want to either. At first I wanted to stay in, but I didn't. I went right back to work and stayed there.

Amthor: Have you ever contacted or stayed in touch with the people you served with?

Deshler: Well, two or three of them I have, but they've all died now. See, I'll be 90 on my next birthday, in July, so most of the ones I did are dead or in a nursing home someplace.

Amthor: Did you join the American Legion or the VFW?

Deshler: Yes, I did the American Legion. I didn't the VFW. I joined, but it didn't go very long, it was here for just a short time. I joined the first year, but it mostly the American Legion. I still belong to the American Legion. I've belonged to it a long time.

Amthor: Are you proud to be a veteran of World War II?

Deshler: Well, yes, I wouldn't have joined otherwise.

Amthor: After the war, were you concerned about the Soviet Union's spread of Communism?

Deshler: Not too much. I left that up to the government. I wasn't too sure – so much propaganda. I found by being in the Army – you can't believe everything you see and read. I think we were lucky to get out of that the way we did, without having trouble.

Amthor: Did you take advantage of the GI Bill for education and. . . .

Deshler: No, none of that.

Amthor: What do you think is the differences among the war today and of World War II?

Deshler: Well, lot more technical these days. My lands, you've got three different more kinds of weapons that we didn't have. It's just a different war. I don't know. World War II is fought mostly with tanks and infantry, and like that. Of course the generals say today that the war is still being won by the infantry, but even so, they've got so much more technology today, much better weapons and everything like that, in fact, and it would be bad if they had a war – I think the war would be gone if they do. If we had another world war.

Amthor: Is there any special story or something we didn't cover that you would like to talk about?

Deshler: Oh, I don't know.

Amthor: Do you have a funny story you'd like to share with us?

Deshler: I shouldn't say this, with Ma, but when we first got into Germany __[German]. We were on guard duty, and of course like I said, this girl she looked like she was probably 18 or 20, and she said _____ I didn't know what she was talking about. I said, "What did you say?" _____ I asked the boy that was standing duty, What's she saying to me?" You come home and sleep with me tonight. I said, "No lady, I'm married." I know one thing was we hadn't been there very long, and there was a telephone pole, more or less, had been put up, and there was a blonde headed girl she could have been 18, 19, 20, hanging. She had been shot. This general had his name on there; this is what we do with spies. I felt that was a good warning. I couldn't hardly fathom that, a real pretty girl shot and hanging there, but you kind of got use to it. Some of them had their own ways of doing things, but that stopped a lot of that. Oh, I know stories, but you can't tell. Better not tell, I mean. But that is the trouble – boys come back, and they tell the funny stories and the good part, but they don't tell the bad ones, I mean, they have their good stories, but the bad ones off set it. It's not funny.

Amthor: Is there anything that the school books didn't share with the general public that you covered while you were in the army that people should know?

Deshler: Oh, I think they pretty well got – these reporters that went with the army they were really good. They sent stories back, and they covered things pretty well.

Amthor: So you think they covered our history pretty accurately?

Deshler: Pretty much so, I really think they did. Now, of course there's always rumors and propaganda, and stuff like that, but I think they did a pretty fine job, according to what I saw, anyway.

Amthor: Now, how about – did you hear about the camps here in the United States, when they were rounding up the Japanese and those people?

Deshler: Yes, we talked about that. I never thought that was right. I mean, a lot of those Japanese people, they were more American than they were Japanese. They were raised here, and they were born here, and I never thought that was quite right. I guess to get them all to get the ones they wanted to get. But most of them were just - I don't think they were treated right, let's put it that way, I don't think they were at all. I guess they thought they had to do it, and I suppose they thought they had to do it, and I suppose there were some spies in there.

Amthor: Well, if there's nothing more you'd like to talk about – we have fifteen more minutes we can put it on there.

Deshler: No, I always think back in the Civil War when they said "War is Hell," it is! It's bad. Not only on the soldiers, but it's bad on the folks that are left at home. When I came home, my wife sang, her and another lady. They kept bringing boys back and she was out with so many funerals, I finally had to make her quit, it was getting on her nerves. They were bringing them back pretty fast, she was singing at them. It was getting too much for her to do that. Oh, there's lots of parts of the war, and being in Suez, there were parts that were alright. I mean, you were glad to see things and did things that you wouldn't otherwise, but the other parts I didn't think much of.

Amthor: What about travel and all of the things they had to do on the home front? Did you wife ever talk about how she had to

Deshler: Yes, she – when I left, I showed her how to fix the stove; how to bank it up so she would have a fire, and she said yes, she could do it. It went out the first night. She couldn't keep a fire going. She had to get a coupon to get an oil stove, I didn't realize that. Lot of things like that I didn't know. I spoke then, I told Dad send me some cigars. I got a box of cigars, and they were all mixed up; I told him the brand I wanted. I didn't realize that I was lucky to get any kind. Then I came back and I didn't have grocery money. My wife said, "When are you going to town?" I got some sugar and some jello from him yesterday; you'd better stop and pay him. I went in and he didn't know me. He said who are you? I said I want to pay you. He said, what are you doing, quitting me? I said no, I never started you yet, but with your attitude, I don't think I'm going to; but he was alright. I couldn't realize how short they were of things over here. Of course, we didn't lots of times . . . I know one time in the First Army, they got the gasoline, and side tracked it, and Patton ran out of gasoline, and they took all of our trucks, even our mess truck had stoves bolted down, and they took all of that off to haul gasoline. We found a bunch of German camp and we found a bunch of supplies – they had cheese, kind of like toothpaste, you squeezed out. They told us not eat any of them until they were all tested. But by the time they got around to testing any of it, it was all gone. We'd eaten them. Mostly we always had food; sometimes C rations and K rations weren't always that good. When we crossed the English

Channel, we'd been eating these C rations; they weren't all that good. The cook would throw something out and I said, "That's bread – don't throw that bread out!" He said, wait a minute, he went in and fixed us some schooners and sauerkraut and some bread – that white bread tasted like Angel food cake. That was when we were crossing the English Channel.

We went into Luxemburg; I saw a sign Coca Cola – in English. Possibly, but they had a lot of – Luxemburg was mostly one big city; it wasn't a very big country; had the signs all in American. We did a lot of traveling; that's right, we sure did a lot of traveling. I was stationed in California, Texas, Michigan, Mississippi, and New York, besides all those – we traveled while we were England. Then from England we crossed the Channel, then we followed Patton's army. We got to see all ---- yes, we got to see a lot of country. Are we through now?

Amthor: Yes. Thank you. It's really nice meeting you. I really enjoyed your story.

Deshler: Thank you.