# Edmond P. Moniz

**Corporal, US Army Air Corps**
**67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group**
**8th Air Force in England; 9th Air Force in Europe**
**Served in England, France, Belgium and Germany**
**World War II, 1942-1945**

Interviewed on April 8, 2001 by Kathy Roberts, Edmond Moniz' daughter.
The interview took place in Mr. Moniz' home in Fresno, California.

*Edmond Moniz in 1943*

Transcribed by Violet Hutka
Edited by Rick Appleton
VMMC volunteers

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## About the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center, San Diego

The Veterans Memorial Center, Inc. was formed in March 1989 to create, maintain and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

The site chosen for the location of the Veterans Museum & Memorial Center was the former San Diego Naval Hospital Chapel at Inspiration Point in Balboa Park, part of a complex of architecturally significant buildings with rich historical connections to the San Diego region's naval heritage.

The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

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Note: Mrs. Moniz sat in on the interview and speaks up from time to time, and then she is the interviewee in the last part of the conversation.

*Corporal Edmond Moniz in 1943*

Moniz: Okay. My name is Corporal Edmond Moniz, and right now I'm from Fresno, California. I was inducted in the Service in Boston, Massachusetts for a physical and Fort Devens, Massachusetts for our basic training. Now you want me to say before, right?

Roberts: Uh-huh. What happened before you even thought about what you were gonna do with the Service, or not go into the Service?

Moniz: We didn't even know anything about it and then all of a sudden, in about a month, I was in the Service.

Roberts: What were you doing before you were in the Service?

Moniz: I was in Central Parking Lot. We parked cars and there was a restaurant . . . you got these little coupons that they turned in to the owner, and then a lot of the

different patrons would give me a nickel tip and all that kind of stuff. I enjoyed my life.

*Ed Moniz during his interview on April 8, 2001*

Roberts: Were you living at home with your family?

Moniz: Yes. And when I came back I come home, too . . .

Roberts: So what made you enlist?

Moniz: We were walking down the street, believe it or not, and a poster says, "I Want You!" And we went. My mother was so upset.

Roberts: Who went with you?

Moniz: Ed Perry and I, a very close friend. He was the best man at our weddin'. And we got to Boston, and they were doing, like I said, the physicals. They found . . . see . . . in our gang; everybody had false teeth except me. In them days they had no fluoride, nothing to, you know . . . like that. So he went into Service and I did. When he got there and they were doing physicals, they said his teeth were loose. So he had to go into town and have 'em realigned. The Army wouldn't mess with it, you know. So when he came back it was alright, and he passed his physical and everything. But by that time we went to different outfits. I wound up in Europe. He wound up in [the] South Pacific.

Roberts: Did anybody else in your family enlist at the same time?

Moniz: My brother went in but he didn't enlist. He was drafted. And my mother fought like hell to try to keep him, but he wanted to go in. He wound up as an ambulance driver.

Roberts: And he was younger than you?

Moniz: Yeah. Two years, two years and a few months.
Roberts: So you were in the street when you found out about Pearl Harbor?

*Pearl Harbor attack, December 7, 1941*
From Wikimedia, photograph in the public domain

Moniz: We were walking towards town, and Central Street was actually the name of the parking. But it wasn't [when] I was there. But it was a Sunday and I wasn't working anyway. So when we were going up the street, I had this girlfriend I was going with; and a guy come up to me. He says, "Did you hear they bombed Pearl Harbor?"

And I said, "Where in the heck is Pearl Harbor?" I didn't even know. You know a lot of the . . . like everything you read in the paper, somethin' from Vietnam and all of that. You never heard of their names until somethin' happened. I said, "What is at Pearl Harbor?" I didn't know.

Then he said, "Yeah, they bombed our boys there, and a bunch of 'em got killed in that *[USS] Arizona* thing. So then little by little we started to find out. And then as we were still staying without going in the Service, we used to go to the movies; and they had what they called the Pathe News. They would keep you up to date on different things. And they said, "London Blitz" and "London's on fire," and they had bombs and everything, you know, goin' like that.

So when we went to England, we'd got in a cab, and we says to the driver, "Take us where the bombing is."

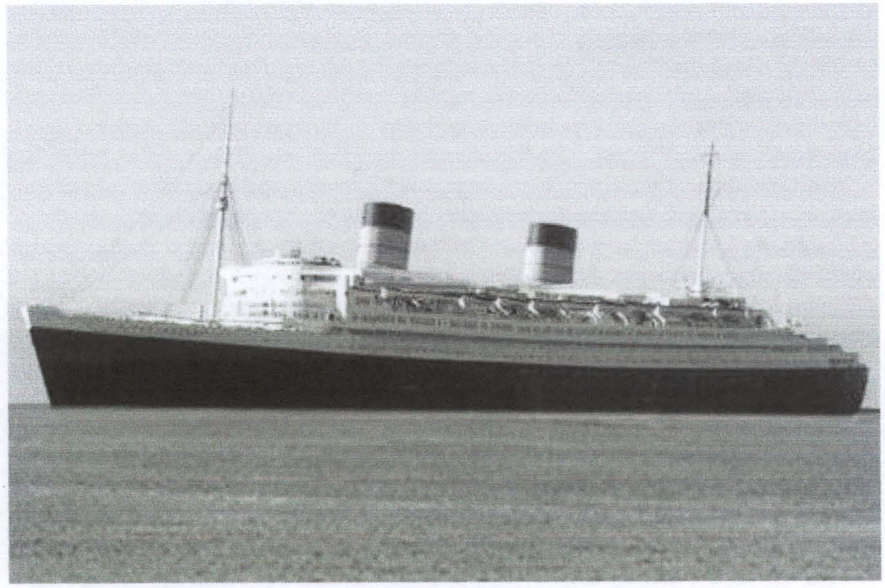
Roberts: In England?

Moniz: Yeah, because the city itself had these barrage balloons. They were up on a cable with the big balloon on the end where a plane could not dive-bomb, and that was the security around London. So when we went we went to the outskirts to see where the damage was. Part of London was in real good shape.

*Barrage balloons over Buckingham Palace in London in World War II*

Roberts: That was your first . . .

Moniz: First experience, yeah. And I was telling Sandi we crossed the Atlantic on the *[RMS] Queen Elizabeth,* and then we went around Scotland. We'd come in the back



*RMS Queen Elizabeth on which Ed sailed to Europe along with several thousand other G.I.s*

From Wikimedia, photograph in the public domain

Roberts: You had these arms on the *Queen Elizabeth*?
door to Glasgow, and then from Glasgow we went to Edinburgh. Then from Edinburgh . . . well, we were on the train from Glasgow and then Edinburgh; and then when we got to Newcastle, which is [at] the English border, as when we got our first air raid. They had an air raid there, and I said that's a helluva greeting, you know. I saw the day before when we were on board ship . . . now we all had rifles, but they gave us live ammunition. I'm sayin', "What are they givin' us live ammunition for? I thought when we got off the ship that we were going to have to fight our way into England, but it didn't turn out that way.

Roberts: You had the arms on the *Queen Elizabeth?*

Moniz: We had the rifle in the States, and then when we got on board ship you don't go anywhere! You go to the bathroom . . . you don't do anything! You brought your rifle with you. But then just before the day that we left the ship, they gave us live ammunition; and I couldn't figure it out, you know . . . what's their thinking? Why are they doin' this? So I figured that we would probably see combat, which we never did.

Roberts: Why did you go on the *Queen Elizabeth* as opposed to a Navy ship?

Moniz: You see, a lot of things happened to me. I got in, [and] I didn't ask where I was going. I didn't ask nothing. I didn't ask to be in the Infantry or the Air Force . . . nothing! Whatever they handed to me is what I got.

Roberts: What did they hand to you?

Moniz: I wound up in the Air Force. And there were some guys who's IQ was a lot less than mine, they bounced them out.

Roberts: Wasn't the Air Force a whole new . . . ?

Moniz: The Air Force used to be Army Air Force before they become their own unit. At one time it was like that. We went to England. We were in the 8th Air Force. When we crossed the channel to go to France we were in the 9th Air Force. You know, different commands like that.

Roberts: So how long were you in England?

Moniz: About twenty-seven months.

*Ed with his 2½ ton 'Jimmy' in England*

Roberts: What did you do while you were there?

Moniz: I was a dispatcher mostly, and I would send different troops . . . you know, a guy here . . . I got a run for you . . . a guy here . . . take this jeep . . . a guy here . . . take this truck, and a guy here . . . take the mail run, and you know, like that. I would assign the different guys to do different things. And then when I hit Europe, I decided I'd rather drive as be a dispatcher. So I went and I had this one truck, and I did a route with that 2 ½ ton 'Jimmy.' And then, of course, if an aide come along and said, "Well, we need a staff car," so I had to drive a staff car. "We need a jeep," [and] I had to take a jeep, you know . . . like that. It was a good outfit I was in. I was very pleased with them and the group I was with and everything, and I had a lot of fun. You know, I shouldn't say this, but a lot of kids died, and I was one of the lucky ones because I survived, and my brother survived, and I was like a tourist . . . I enjoyed myself!

*Ed in Scotland*

Roberts: What'd you see?

Moniz: All over. I drove all over England. I drove all over France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany . . . like that. At one time I was sixty miles from Berlin. Another time I was about forty miles from the Czechoslovakian border.

Roberts: What were you doing? Were you taking heads of state around?

Moniz: Oh, no. No. Well, there was one incident where I had a general, and you have to put a plate with the stars on it, you know, like that, and I had Senator Knowland, who was from California and Claire Booth Luce, Congresswoman. Another time I had a movie star Bebe Daniels . . .

Roberts: What was she doing there?

*Bob Hope was one of many entertainers who visited camps in Europe in World War II*

From Wikimedia, photograph in the public domain

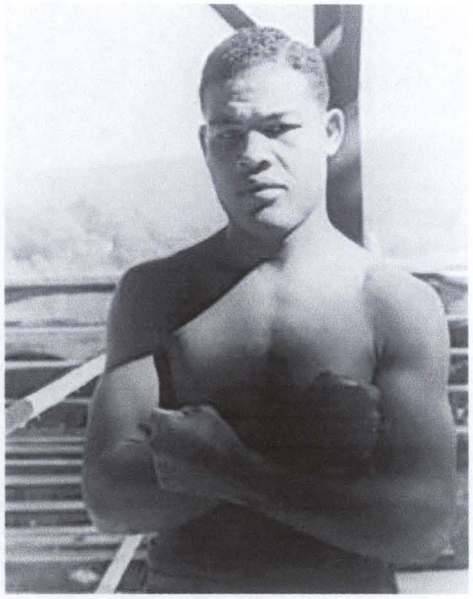
Moniz: She was entertainin' the troops. This one guy had the run, and he says to me, "You want to go along for company?" I said, "Yeah," so I went. I'm sittin' in the back seat, and there's two guys in the back and the woman in the front. And it didn't dawn on me until the guys come up, and they started getting autographs. One was Bebe Daniels. The guy I'm rubbin' elbows with is Ben Lyan. . . is her husband. But I don't even know today . . . I don't know who the other guy was, but we had a good time.

Joe Louis come. We had Bob Hope a couple of times, and we had five girls one time come. It was Martha Raye, Kay Francis, Mitzi Gaynor and Frances Langford, and I forget who the other one was. But they all just came like that. They entertained and they'd go from camp to camp to camp, you know . . . like that.

Roberts: And you were in charge of getting them to these different locations?

Moniz: Certain times . . . if I wasn't on a trip, I would send a guy out to meet them. Like I said, a guy from deep, Deep South . . . one of these rebels, you know, and I says, "I want you to go meet this boxing champ and his troop," and I said, "When you get

there, you go up to 'em, you tell 'em 'Hello. I'm from the camp and shake hands with 'em."



*Joe Louis was another celebrity who entertained the troops, and Ed helped drive them around.*

From Wikimedia, photograph by Van Vecten and the Library of Congress, in the public domain

(Changing his voice to loud now) . . . "I ain't gonna shake hands with no nigger! Boy, he was fuming, but in them days . . . well, in them days that was, not, not very not kosher, you know, but he went along with it. Yeah.

Roberts: Did you ever have to transport any dignitaries of state?

Moniz: The first camp I was in . . . see . . . we were Air Force, so every time we moved there was an air base. The first time we moved from England to France was in Caen, and it was just a little tiny bit of land, seven miles by eight miles. Every day Eisenhower would come, Churchill would come, Montgomery and two or three others, [and] they each had their own plane which the United States . . .

Roberts: Air Force One . . . like the Presidential plane?

Moniz: No. It was just like an air attack type, but they just used it . . . they kinda dolled it up for 'em, you know. One day I'm drivin' . . . I had one of these Fords with the wheel on the other side, a Ford Truck with a big canvas top on it, driving along . . . WHEEEEEEEE! Sirens comin' at me. It was Montgomery and his troop . . . you know . . . "Get outta the way!"

Roberts: Oh, his entourage?

Moniz: Yeah, with two or three jeeps.

*Eisenhower meeting the troops out in the field*

Roberts: Did you ever meet De Gaulle?

Moniz: I don't know if I was tellin' Sandi, but during the Battle of the Bulge they were havin' a lot of trouble. So we got a jeep with a small trailer, and we were loadin' it up with photographs . . . see, our planes were photographin' everything, invasions and all this kind of stuff. They wanted to go through the files and see what, you know, if there's any little sequence that they missed or anything. So they had me and this lieutenant was goin' along with me as a driver, and I was loadin' up this jeep, and every time I'd come with an armful there's this big, tall, giant of a man in my way and have him goin' around and goin' around. Then when they left, I heard that they were pagin' me all over the base. They couldn't locate me because I had taken de Gaulle to see Eisenhower at **his** base. I knew where that was. They called it SHAEF Headquarters.

Roberts: SHAEF?

Moniz: Yeah. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force . . . somethin' like that, and he was in the way every time I tried to move. But I didn't know he was lookin' for me, and he didn't know that I was the guy that they're lookin' for, you know.

Roberts: So what happened?

Moniz: Well, finally then we left. The thing was real bad, and I'm drivin' along with this lieutenant. There's a tree down layin' across the road, so the inclination is, "Hey! Let's get the hell outta here!" you know. So I'm turnin' around and the lieutenant said, "Let me try it." So I said, "Go Ahead.". So I had the rifle you know, if anything

come along. And he's, "Heva . . . heva . . . heva. . . heva," and he was having all kinds of trouble. I said, "Let me try anyway . . . Sssss, psssst . . . and off we took. And then we went another way.

When I got back to camp, I heard that they had me missin' for one day! Missin' in action or missin', you know . . . like that. But nothing ever come of it, you know. It was just somethin' that happened.

Roberts: Was it just a miscommunication?

Moniz: No, because I was gone long. You know, we went to deliver these maps and everything; and then when I got there, I made arrangements to get a room, you know. They'd put us up, and they would feed us, you know . . . like that, 'cause the lieutenant he did his own and I did my own. And then every bridge we'd come to we had to be challenged. You couldn't even see a guy. You know, you're drivin' along and all of a sudden, "HALT!!" You freeze right there and then he'd say, "Advance and be recognized!" And you would be comin' and the guy would say, "HALT!" because he's getting a good view of you. But you still can't see him! And then he said, "Where are you from?"

I said, "Well, we've just come from Belgium" and he said, "Where's your home town?" And I said, "Fall River, Massachusetts."

"What's the name of the biggest hotel in Fall River?"

Roberts: He would know the answer to that?

Moniz: No, he was just pullin' stuff outta the dark. And you were challenged. You know, a challenge means that you give 'em an answer, they give you an answer and then they try to decipher it. Well, you know, then if he felt comfortable, then he'd let you go because . . . it was really hairy at that time because a lot of the Germans were infiltrating our Army, and they had uniforms, they spoke good English, you know . . . all this kind of stuff, so it was kind of hairy there, too.

Roberts: So they posed as Americans?

Moniz: They posed, yeah, as fakes so the guy . . . that's why the guys that protected these bridges were tryin' to single these guys out.

Roberts: Oh, so they wouldn't know the name of the hotel and they were trying to trip 'em out with these questions?

Moniz: Yeah. Like a guy would say, "Who's sleepin' with . . . or who's shacking up with Blondie?" Now, a German wouldn't know that, you know. They'd say, "Dagwood".

Roberts: Ahhhhh! That Blondie! And you did that for twenty months. This was the way you spent your time.

Moniz: No. No, no. That was in England, the twenty months, but the rest of it was in France and Belgium, you know. See, when I was in Malmedy (Belgium), that's where that Battle of the Bulge took place. My brother was one of the first outfits right there, and they had a complete outfit. And my brother and his friend were walkin' down the street, and down at the end they could see the first sergeants and their lieutenant commander, which was their officer, were just blown up with a shell, you know, like that, and then they knew. They'd get the heck outta there. They left everything behind, presents, you know, from Christmas and all that.

So when I heard about that, you try to figure out how you're gonna get to see him and see how he's doin' or even hear from him, you know . . . like that. So it was kind of hairy there. A couple of months there that . . . you heard that one about General [Anthony] McAuliffe? I was in Belgium at the time, and they asked him . . . the Germans asked him if he was ready to surrender, and he said, "NUTS!" Just, you know . . . the word 'nuts'. And this girl in Belgium . . . "Ques que se nuts!" They could not figure it out because to us it was just a slang term. You know? Yeah. Ques que se 'nuts'.

*Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe was the commander of the 101st Airborne Division troops defending Bastogne, Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. He is famous for his single-word reply to a German surrender ultimatum, "Nuts!"*

From Wikimedia, photograph in the public domain

Roberts: How did you keep in touch with your brother and your mother?

Moniz: Well, see, we could get mail and then I drove; and if I knew where he was, I used to go there. I'd take a trip that would be close by, you know. He'd come once when I was in England, and he come and visit us. Then I went to his place a couple of times, but he'd get a kick out of it when Fred come to visit me. Every run we'd get these like kind of coveralls, nothing on it, and I'd introduce him and I said, "This is a Master

*Ed's brother, Alfred ('Freddie') Pavao, different last name, same parents (unusual but part of the family history)*

Sergeant" . . . (laughing). To them it appeared he was like a general, you know. I said, "This here is a sergeant. This is here . . ." like that, you know, I'm givin' them the name. (Laughing) It just boggled their mind because they're very strict, you know. There are soldiers, and then there's PFCs. And if PFC sees a general, yeah, I got a kick out of that.

Roberts: So you mostly enjoyed your . . .

Moniz: I truly did, and it's sad to say that some kids hadda die, and that's the sad part. And, of course, my Mother and friends we knew were all shook up. My mother would go to a movie there, you know a nickel or a dime what they were at that time, and she'd see a **whole** battalion of troops and she'd say, "Oh! There's my Eddie! There's my Eddie!" She'd run home . . . "Hey! I just saw my son!" I was nowhere near there.

Roberts: Did you make any lifelong friends?

Moniz: During the Service?

Roberts: Uh-huh. People you're still in contact with?

Moniz: No. I don't have any. No.

Roberts: Have they all passed away?

Moniz: I imagine pretty much because we lived out here. We moved out here. We

didn't stay back there.

Roberts: But you were there for a couple of years before you moved to California, right?

Moniz: We come back and there was a little girl named Kathy [who] was born out there. She was three years old when we come out here.

Roberts: So during that time did you keep in contact with your military friends?

Moniz: Well, no. No, but we had friends that some of were in the Service and some were not. But no, life went on almost like there was no war. We didn't sit around all day and just talk war, war, war, you know, like that.

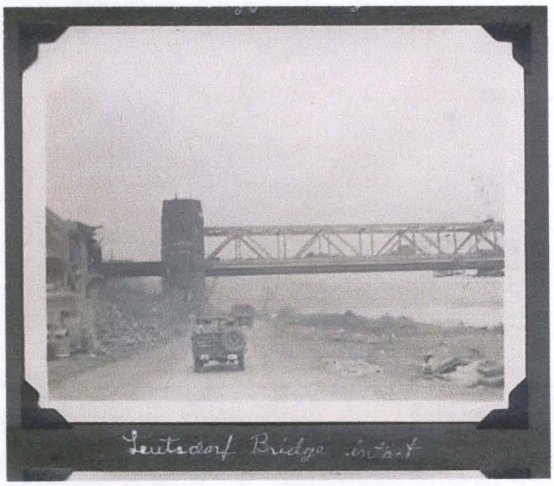
Another incident was Mom's cousin . . . see, her sister got married first, and then mom was alone. Then their cousin moved in with Mom, and then she got married. So Mom was alone again until we got married. I was havin' a hard time at home, and I wanted to leave. I said, "I'm working. I can," and Mom said, "No way. You just stay. Put up with it and do all this kind of stuff." So she kept me from leavin'. But she was good. She's a good woman.

Roberts: Did you have any battle time experience at all?

Moniz: No. No.

Roberts: You just saw the aftermaths.

Moniz: I was in skirmishes where there were a few little problems, but nothin' life threatening. Like there's one near this bridge . . . Remagen and Ludendorff where they had these V1s and V2s, and they just kept shootin' at different targets. And what they did with these rockets . . . they would gas 'em up, and they'd put so much gas in 'em that they'd come AHHHHHHHHHH. Then they'd run out of gas and boom! They were not manned. They didn't have any people in it, but that's the way they worked it. It was a bomb with gas, and they knew how to line up the target.




*Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen before it was destroyed*

*(German) V-2 rockets helped weaken the Ludendorff Bridge and finally made it fall but not until many American soldiers and a great deal of equipment had successfully crossed the Rhine River to establish a beachhead on the eastern side of the river.*

Roberts: So depending on how far they wanted this thing to go, they would put that much fuel in it.

Moniz: Right. They would keep it up. Any serious point, like we had when we crossed this bridge at Remagen. It was a pontoon bridge which the engineers made; and when you crossed that, it had a big sign that says, "Maintain a 75 yard interval" so that too many cars together get blown up. So you went like that, and one would get blown up. And this other one would be all right. And it says, "You are under enemy fire. Maintain this interval to be safe."

*The pontoon bridge built alongside the destroyed Remagen (Ludendorff) Bridge with the sign indicating distance requirements between vehicles. Note some soldiers are walking across the bridge.*

Roberts: What were your accommodations like, your living quarters?

Moniz: When we first got in I was in Louisiana. We lived in tents. Then we went to France and we were in tents again. No . . . we lived in tents in Louisiana, and when we went to England we had barracks. We lived in barracks. And then maybe about six months before we left there, we moved to another spot in England again. So we had barracks in two places. Then when we went to France, there was tents. Tents, tents, tents, you know, we'd move, we'd break up camp and set up camp back and forth like that.

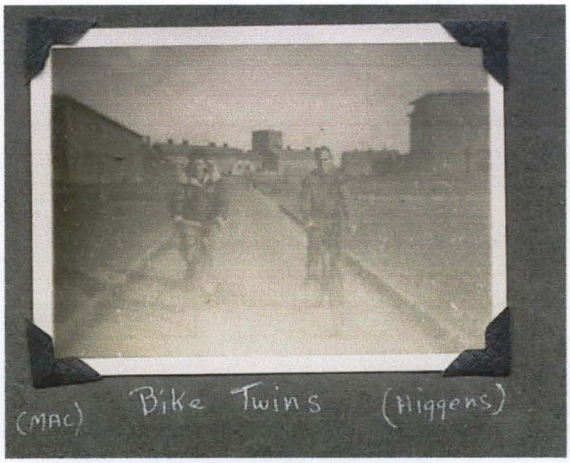
Roberts: Was it homey? Did you have little cots to sleep on?

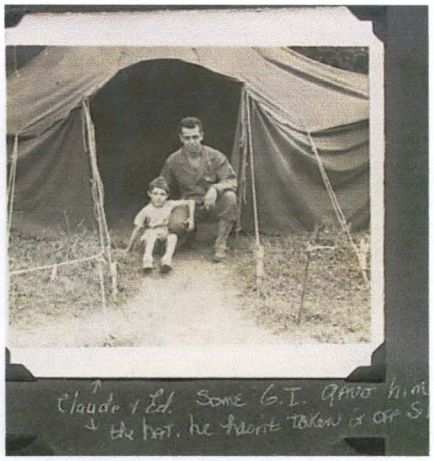
Moniz: Oh, yeah. We had these canvas cots . . . you could break 'em down and they'd make a bundle like this; and then when you open them up and put the rods through it . . . to me they were very comfortable. I didn't complain about 'em or anything.

Roberts: Were you warm enough? Did you have pillows?

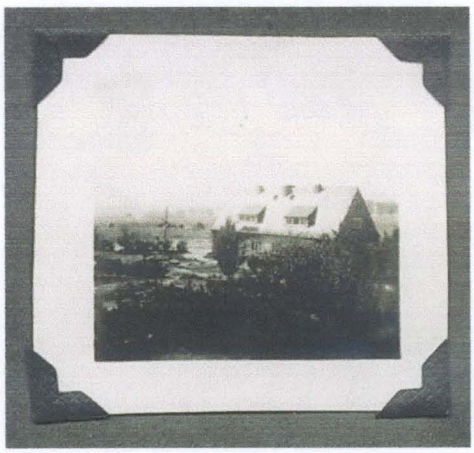
Moniz: Oh, yeah. Yeah. We had wool. We had a lot of wool shirt and pants and coat. I was comfortable.

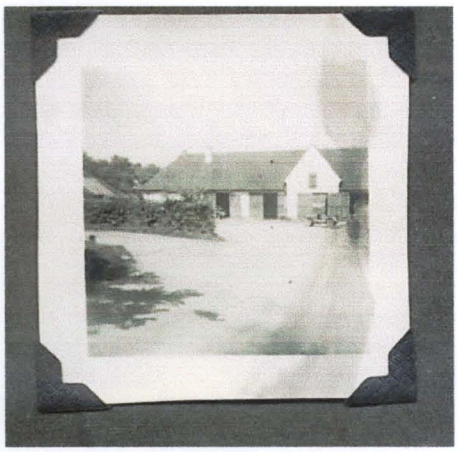
Roberts: Did you have a cook that cooked for you?



*Accommodations were sometimes in barracks (England), and sometimes in tents (Normandy).*





*Later in the war in Belgium and France, Ed and some of his buddies were able to stay in farmhouses as guests of civilians.*

Moniz: We had an excellent cook! The guy was a chef before he went in the Service. He was excellent. He used to prepare the meals, and he would be at the line when they were serving. He would chew out a cook if he didn't present the meal proper . . . if he slopped it, he said, "You worked all mornin' to prepare this meal and you just ruined it!" And he'd get after 'em.

Mrs. Moniz: What kind of stuff did he make?

Moniz: Well, whatever they could get ahold of, you know, like that. I know one time we were up in Versailles, and this little French kid comes by. I was talkin' to him, and I was talkin' to him. Then I says we needed some fresh vegetables. We hadn't seen a tomato, an onion, or salad, or anything like that. So I told him, I says, "You get it and we'll trade." I forget what I gave him, but anyway this major was a doctor. He says, "You know, they use human waste and all that in their vegetables," and he just

"WAAAAWAAA." So I happened to be at the line when I was gettin' food, and he come along. I said, "Major, this is your seconds! I thought you'd given a speech about this no good . . . that no good." He said, "It is good, though." (Laughing) It was.

Roberts: Did they have livestock that they brought with them, or how did you get [meat]?

Moniz: No. No, no livestock. Nowhere near it.

Mrs. Moniz: Did you just have to buy it from the people in the country?

Moniz: No, like I said, we traded. No . . . this was the only incident. Otherwise our logistics went with us, you know, whatever . . . like . . . we had a cook. We used to call him 'Tiny'. He was like this and they would go into a town and there might be a quartermaster there. They had the supplies, and then they'd bring it back to cook. Because we were not like Infantry . . . like they had to use the K-rations or C-rations, you know, like that. They would bring it, and then they would put together the meals for us you know.

Roberts: What do you have here? I see you have a couple of notes that you want to share.

Moniz: Well, this is about being inducted into the Service.

Mrs. Moniz: Did he answer the questions already about where he was when he heard [about Pearl Harbor]?

Moniz: No. No, we didn't do that yet.

Roberts: Yes, you told me about walking down the street . . .

Mrs. Moniz: You've got that on tape?

Roberts: Uh-huh.

Moniz: It's on tape.

Mrs. Moniz: Uh-huh.

Moniz: It's not on tape. Where?

Roberts: At the very beginning. But tell me again if you don't think we got it all 'cause I can edit it.

Moniz: Well, like she raised a good point because I didn't know that you had to let 'em know what you did, you know . . . like our life was funny at that time. As a matter of

fact about six months before I went in is when my Dad passed away. And a couple of guys we were friendly with . . . my Dad got up that mornin'. My grandmother died the night before, and he got up . . . no, he didn't get up and he says . . . have Eddie get up so he can go to work.

I was workin' at this Central Parking lot, and I get down there . . . my Dad at that time was, you know, like he said, "Get up. You're gonna go to work." And we knew he was serious, but to pacify him I went to work. And this kid . . . his name was Danny Sullivan come drivin' by and he says, "Hey, your Dad is very, very bad. You'd better get home." So he drove me back, and when I got there a priest come. They were givin' him the Last Rights, and a doctor come and says "Your Dad is gone. He passed away." But he was still there, you know. The guy gave him a shot and he said, "This or this ought to do it." And little by little he faded away and my sister was goin' bonkers! "He's alright! He's not dead!" All this kind of stuff. They were tryin' all kinds of tricks in them days. They'd use the needle and the mirror and all of that. And he said, "Hey, we'd better get an undertaker here," because the doctor had been there. The priest had been there, so, just had to wait for some authority to declare him dead. So he passed away.

Roberts: And you were at work?

Moniz: I went to work and as soon as I got there the guy come and said, "Your Dad is very bad," so he drove me home. Oh no, my bosses were very good to me.

Roberts: This was at the parking garage in Central?

Moniz: Yeah, Central Parking lot, yeah. All open air. You had a little shed.

Roberts: Was that your first job?

Moniz: No. No. I worked for years in a gas station.

Roberts: The one you and your brother owned?

Moniz: No. That was after we'd come home from the Service. This one here was a Texaco Station that the man I worked for, he owned it. There was two brothers and a father. The name was Weigh Oil Company, and between the three of 'em they kinda kept it goin'. And I worked there for seven days a week, all kinda hours, and they just kept me on. So one day my Dad was kinda ticked off 'cause I was tellin' the boss that I was quittin'. Yeah. I had too many hours, seven days a week and all that. So this friend of mine, Ed Perry, was the best man, he says, "Jimmy Ainsworth is lookin' for somebody." I said, "Hey! Give me a couple of days of rest!"

He says, "Go down to see him. He's got a job for you." So I went and worked for him, and the part I was doin' was like I was like on a shift. They had two shifts and you alternate. Today is afternoons, tomorrow is mornings, you know, going back and forth like that. The guy that was workin' there when I worked in the Durphy Theater, so

they needed somebody to fill in. And then in the transition I was workin' with the boss, the owner, and the guy still managed to run it until the other guy left. Then I'd get the job. And then from there is when we went in the Service. We found out that Pearl Harbor was Pearl Harbor.

Roberts: How old were you? Eighteen?

Moniz: Twenty-one.

Roberts: Twenty-one. So your brother was nineteen?

Moniz: Yeah.

Roberts: Did he want to enlist because he . . . ?

Moniz: Did he want me to enlist?

Roberts: Did he want to go in the military because you were in the military?

Moniz: I don't know. At that time all the people wanted to help out.

Roberts: The young people . . . your mother was opposed to it, though.

Moniz: Oh, yeah! Most mothers are. They want their young folks at home to help out and all that.

Roberts: So what did you do after Berlin? How long were you in?

Moniz: I didn't go to Berlin.

Roberts: Oh.

Moniz: I said I was sixty miles s from Berlin. What did I do after the war?

Mrs. Moniz: The twenty months in England.

Moniz: Where'd you go then?

Moniz: Well, then we went to France. See, I went in . . . that was in Louisiana . . . nine months. Then I went on board ship, the *Queen Elizabeth,* and we were five days crossing the Atlantic. And then from there I went to England, and I was in England for twenty months. Anything else?

Roberts: What's after that?

Moniz: After that, we crossed the channel and then we went to France. That's

when D-day started. But I was what they call . . . in them days they called it D-1, you know, D-1. My brother, I think, was D-6 and I was D-16.

*(left to right) Bob, Ed, Fred, Tolson and Ted while in Normandy after D-6*

Roberts: What does that mean?

Moniz: That means the day you left from D-day. This was how they just broke it up like that.

Roberts: How long were you in France?

Moniz: Well, there was a deal there where Patton caught up a lot of steam, and he was really racin' through France. Then we wound up in Belgium and I stayed in Belgium quite a while. You know, you go from France . . . we had an airfield in Caen and then another airfield in Versailles and then an airfield in Belgium. We had to wait for an airfield to move. We broke our camp up in two phases. They call it echelon. I would move the forward echelon to a certain area, and then I'd come back and get the rear echelon and bring them. And at one point we were movin' so fast that we moved the forward echelon, come back for the rear echelon, and we by-pass the forward to go and we wound up in Belgium.

Roberts: Set up camp there for how long?

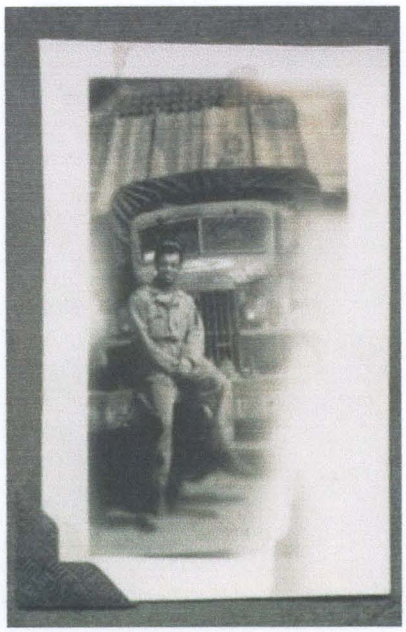
Moniz: Oh, we were in Belgium a long time. I even got to know this family in Belgium that we used to go there. There was two girls and this guy and I . . . he had one of them little motorcycle with tracks, you know, and the head lamp was a picture of Hitler. (Laughing) It was cute.

*My Belgian family*

*Ed drove a captured German motorcycle with Hitler's face on headlight.*

Roberts: What did you do while you were there?

Moniz: I was a driver. See, the twenty months I was in England I was more of a dispatcher, but then when we went to Europe I would rather drive. I didn't care about dispatchin'. I had this 2½ ton 'Jimmy,' and they used to send me on different trips and I'd go in that.



*Two view with Ed and his truck, "Pistol, Packin' Mama," and he didn't even have a pistol*

Roberts: Is that the duce-and-a-half that we hear about all the time?

Moniz: Two-and-a-half . . . yeah. Even though the one with the big body and big canvas top . . .

Roberts: What'd you carry in there?

Moniz: Whatever they needed. We used to use it for recreation runs, too, 'cause the guys wanted to go on . . . like when we were in Versailles, we made a couple of trips to Paris.

Roberts: Oh, like Liberty?

Moniz: Yeah, rest and recreation, liberty.

Roberts: Did you ever transport any generals?

Moniz: In the staff car? When you did somethin' like that, you had a staff car. It's like a civilian car only it was painted with the Army numbers on it.

Roberts: Do you remember any of the generals' names?

Moniz: No.

Roberts: No. So Patton wouldn't be one of 'em.

*Patton with his troops*

From with Air Force Academy Libraries, photograph used with permission

Moniz: No. No. He had his own crew. He had a silver shining, shining helmet, and he'd ride up front, like he's gonna get shot up any minute.

Roberts: So you've seen him before in person?

Moniz: No.

Roberts: Oh. Just pictures?

Moniz: Yeah. When I get that book I'll show you. We could break it down, then I can show you the pictures.

Roberts: Was this your own camera that you used or was it another photographer?

Moniz: I never owned a camera. Never owned a camera. Just friends, you know . . . somebody had this, somebody had that.

Roberts: So you became friendly with a family?

Moniz: Yeah.

Roberts: Would you go over for dinner in the evening?

Moniz: Oh, yeah. See, what happened was . . . once we got established, and there was a certain time that the Army told us that we didn't wanna eat their food so we could bring stuff to them. So I was makin' a trip from Belgium all the way down to Cherbourg where the invasion was. I had a long trip down there, and I asked the woman . . . I said, "I'm gonna go to Normandy. Is there anything you want me to bring you back?"

She said, "I love their butter." The butter in Normandy was very famous, so I said, "Okay." I brought her back four or five pounds. She almost kissed me like it was the Pope's ring, ya know. Boy, she was real happy about that. We used to call them

'Mom' and 'Papa' you know . . . like that. They had two girls, and the funny thing is I started out with one of 'em and my friend had the other one, and then they made a switch. They wanted me to go out with this one and him to go out with the other one. I was very happy with that. It was fine with me.

Roberts: When you went out what did you do?

*Civilian friends in Belgium*

Moniz: Well, we very seldom went out. But we had gone to town one time, and us Service people could ride the trolleys for free and we'd use that. Yes, trolleys on tracks. Then one time we went to a movie with the family... the family and the mother and the two girls . . . and we went to see "*Robin du Bois*"

Roberts: Umm. Ooo-la-la.

Moniz: You know what that is?

Roberts: No, what is that?

Moniz: Robin Hood.

Roberts: (Laughing) With sub-titles?

Moniz: "*Robin du Bois*"

Roberts: Did they have sub-titles?

Moniz: Yeah. Very bad, but it was a lot of fun.

Roberts: Was it in color?

*Some of Ed's friends whom he met in Belgium*

Moniz: Yeah. In them days it was.

Roberts: So what did you do for entertainment? Did you go to a dance?

Moniz: That was entertainment! Oh, no. Yeah, as a matter of fact we did go to one dance. We stayed with our little group.

Roberts: Was it for the military? Put on for the military?

Moniz: No. This was private, a little tiny group.

Roberts: About how long do you think you were there? Was it longer than you were in . .

Moniz: Quite a while.

Roberts: . . . England?

*(At left) A dance in Belgium – no Eddie*

*(At right) A Christmas party for orphans*

Moniz: No. No. England was the longest. England was almost two years. No. This was in Belgium. Like I said, Patton was goin' real strong and then we kind of bogged down. And we were in Gosselies, Belgium, and things kinda got stabilized. Then they had the Battle of the Bulge.

*A commandeered chateau served as headquarters in Gosslies*

Roberts: I don't know what that is. What is the Battle of the Bulge?

Moniz: Did you ever hear of Bastogne?

Roberts: No.

Moniz: Okay. The Battle of the Bulge was when they had this 102nd Airborne . . . they were surrounded by Germans. They had 'em completely surrounded, and that's the one where I told you General McAuliffe . . . the Germans got word to him and asked him if he was gonna surrender. And he said, "Nuts!" . . . like that, and the French said, "Ques que sai 'nuts'?" They couldn't figure it out.

Roberts: So what happened? What was the outcome of that whole thing?

Moniz: Well, finally the G. I.'s broke through, and they got out of it. Then the thinkin' I heard was Eisenhower sayin', "It's like a jar. The Germans come in, and then they put the lid on it." They stopped 'em cold, and that reversed the whole process.

Roberts: So they wiped us out?

Moniz: No. No. They finally broke through, and then they started goin' from there. Then the war went back to the Americans, and they took off again, like into Germany and all in through there.

Roberts: Did you meet any British . . .

*Eating crumpets English style in England*

Moniz: Oh, yeah.

Roberts: . . . soldiers?

Moniz: The camp we were in in England they had an occupation force which these British were like the landlords to this camp, and there was a contingent of 'em where they had benches, you know, like we did. They would sit there and get all their material. They were just there all the time we were there. I don't know . . . occupational forces or what, but they sure loved our food compared to when they had to go back to their camp.

Roberts: Was the camaraderie between both . . . ?

Moniz: Very good. Very good. Very good. As a matter of fact one time the British says, "You know mate, we sure loved that peanut butter. But how do you get it from stickin' to your teeth? Or the roof of your mouth?" A guy says, "Turn your bread upside down!" (Laughing)

Roberts: What do you got here that we want to cover?

Moniz: Well, this was the earlier part.

Roberts: Did we cover it all?

Moniz: Yeah. Went from eight days in Fort Devens on the marches, and then they give us our uniforms and shoes and all that.

Roberts: That was your boot camp? With eight days? You had to be prepared in eight days?

Moniz: No, we weren't prepared. We were waitin' for transportation. They indoctrinate you. They give you these tests. They teach you different things. You go to these movies about "Articles of War" and things like that. And then whenever there was transportation . . . like they got a troop train . . . then we'd get on it and another group would come in, so you just kept the process going

Roberts: Did you have to learn how to shoot your rifle?

Moniz: No. When we went to England, we used to go to a rifle range and practice.

Roberts: How good were you?

Moniz: I was pretty . . . pretty rotten. The rifle we had was an .03 rifle. I was pretty good at it because it was pretty accurate. But they took that away from us, and they gave us a carbine. See, the .03 had five to six shells . . . big, long bullets like that.

Then when they took that from us, they gave us carbines, well, they were small, like this, but there was about fifteen shots. So that part of it was good because you had more ammunition.

Speakin' of ranges . . . when we were in Belgium, the people in the town got permission from our commandin' officer to exhume the graves because the Germans would take 'em as hostages. They would come in to a family and they'd take the man out and shoot 'em and kill 'em. Or they'd make 'em digs a grave and then they'd shoot 'em. So they had about 250 graves at this airbase where we were at, and they asked permission if they could exhume the bodies and bury 'em properly. And so we used to go by there to go to the range, and we'd see 'em diggin' up these bodies. And, you know, like I talked to Mom about chicken . . . it bugs me to eat chicken, especially that gristle, you know, like that. I saw this one Spanish kid that they had hung. You could see the marks around his neck and he was layin' down there. Right on his heel was a big fat thing of gristle and that stayed with me all the time.

Roberts: From a chicken?

Moniz: No! From the person. But the chicken, you know, when you think about it, this was what bothers me, you see. Life-long . . . all my life. The other day Mom picks up some chicken, and they got a little this and that . . . it wasn't gristle as much as cartilage or something like that. I tried to cut it out and [I thought], "I'll clean it," and then you won't have any of that stuff to bug me. But there was a piece and I get a heart attack . . . what else?

Roberts: What else didn't you get while you were over there that you missed from home that you couldn't get while you were in Europe?

Moniz: We didn't get anything. We didn't get white bread. We didn't get . . . oh, when we left Fort Dix and we were going towards England, we had an escort of two days was a dirigible that just escorted us. After two days it took off.

Roberts: What was it [escorting]?

Moniz: Submarines. When you have a troop like that, you have some people who man the guns so they try to make it a little safe. So this dirigible could see if a submarine was comin' at us. So they protected us, but then we were on our own after that. We were stationed in a town in Newbury, England and then Andover, England. Then we were in a staging area.

See anytime I mention somethin' like this is your staging area or getting' on a ship, you have to wait for your transportation; and then when you're all assembled, then you go. Like when I first went in the Service we were called Observation. Later on it was tactical reconnaissance, but in the beginning it was 67th Observation Group. And we heard there was another outfit similar to ours that they were equippin' them like us. You know, getting equipment to them, getting equipment for us and whichever one was done

first would land in Africa. And they beat us . . . they landed in Africa, and we landed in England.

Roberts: Dad, breakfast is ready if you wanna take a break.

Moniz: Shut it down.

Roberts: I don't see how I have to zoom in on these guys.

Moniz: These are not very good. You're gonna have trouble with them. See the uniform we had like that. That's our dress uniform.

*Portrait of Ed in dress blues*

Roberts: Oh, it's recording.

Moniz: You wanna keep goin'?

Roberts: Well, I'm trying to see if I can get a decent . . . oops, what was that? I just hit something I shouldn't have had.

Moniz: So I know I couldn't identify it, you know.

Roberts: What do you mean it's secret stuff?

Moniz: Yeah, at that time, you know . . . for the war. These are RAF guys.

*Three RAF 'Englishers' in England*

Roberts: Where?

Moniz: Right here. We had 'em at our camp.

Roberts: Say that again.

Moniz: We were at a convoy and we were movin' the equipment. And Notre Dame in Paris. See, I was a Corporal. See it? This is me and Art in Scotland. Fraulein.

*The Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris (In 'Gay Paree' as Ed noted in his photo album)*

*Art Joy (from New Hampshire) and Ed in Edinburgh, Scotland*

*Fräulein of Normandy*

Roberts: What's that picture right there.

Moniz: This one?

Roberts: Uh-huh.

Moniz: That's just a German girl.

Roberts: This one.

Moniz: Oh, that's our motor pool. Guys that ran the motor pool.

*(left to right) the motor pool guys: Bob, Ed, Fred, Tolson and Ted while in Normandy*

Roberts: This is that little boy that used to visit you every day?

Moniz: Yeah. Claude. Yeah.

*Claude (left) and Ed in Normandy. "Some G.I. gave Claude the hat and he hasn't taken it off since," wrote Ed in his photo album.*

Roberts: That's your tent?

Moniz: Yeah.

Moniz; Here's Eisenhower.

*General Eisenhower and Tolson*

Roberts: What's he doing?

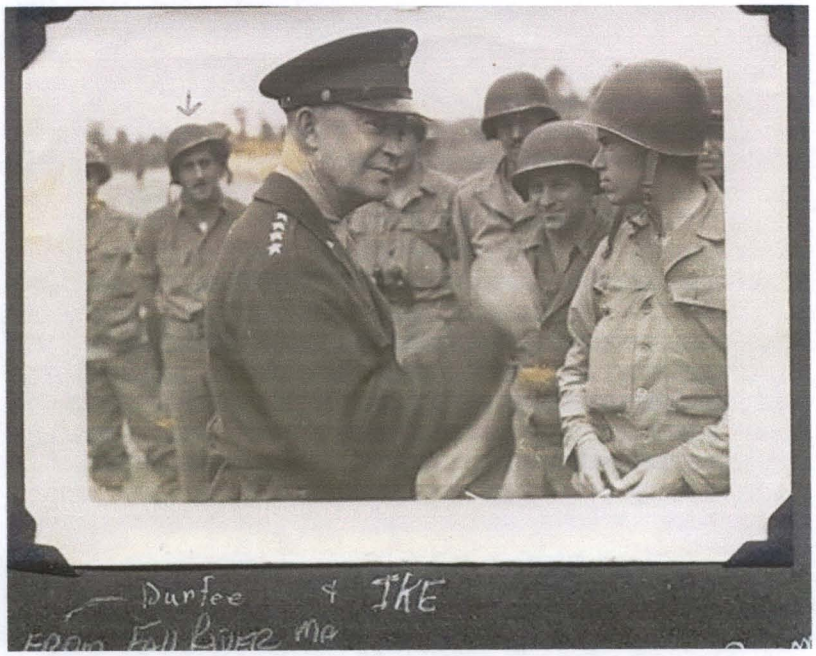
Moniz: Oh, probably this guys givin' a whole bunch of BS.

Roberts: Patting him on the back?

Moniz: Yeah.

Roberts: Telling him "good job".

Moniz: How many stars has he got?




*Durfee (marked by arrow) is standing in a group of Ed's unit with General Eisenhower who appears to be giving encouragement [B.S. in Ed's words] to the troops in Normandy several weeks after the June 5th D-Day in 1944.*

Roberts: Four.

Moniz: One, two, three, four. And then he upped them all to . . . this was our dentist . . . this guy . . . okay?

Roberts: And that was in France?

Moniz: This was all in Normandy, yeah. Nothin' here. This is the Alps . . . the French Alps.

Roberts: I can come out . . . it is the whole company, right?

*Eldridge, Paulette and Lecheussi and the dentist (on right) while in Normandy in August 1944*

Moniz: Yeah.

Roberts: I tried to zoom in on you but . . .

Moniz: Right here. But it wouldn't show up.

Roberts: It looks pretty good here.

Moniz: On the movie?

Roberts: Uh-hmm.

Moniz: Here's the Belgium family there

Roberts: There's that motorcycle.

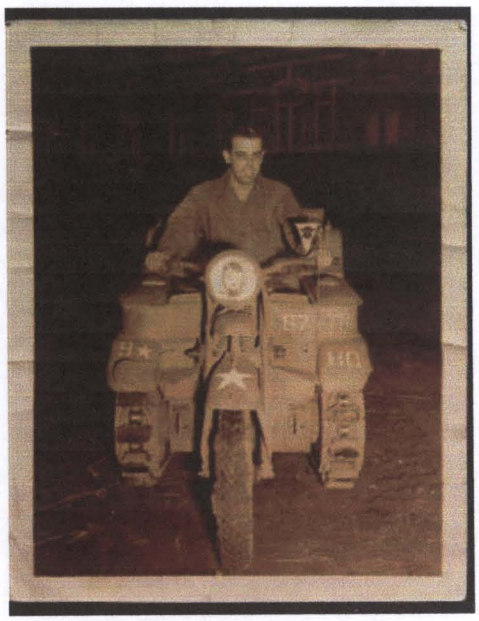
Moniz: Yeah. Half-track. All done over here?

Roberts: Yeah.

Moniz: Okay. I can move it.

Roberts: Got Hitler's . . .

Moniz: Face.



*The Hitler half track*

Roberts: Face on the headlight.

Moniz: There's Fred.

Roberts: That's your brother.

Moniz: Here's our volley ball. After dinner we'd all play volley ball. Okay?

Roberts: Uh-hmm.

*Ed's brother, Fred*

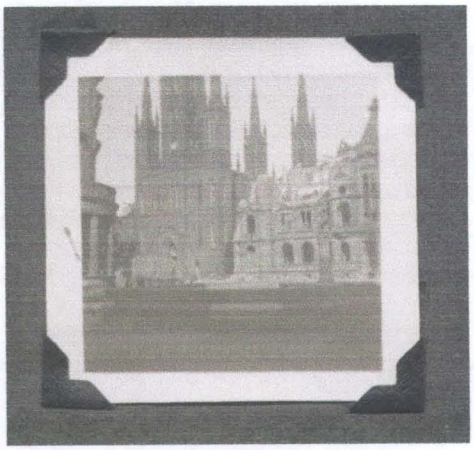
*Volleyball in camp – "? We Won"*

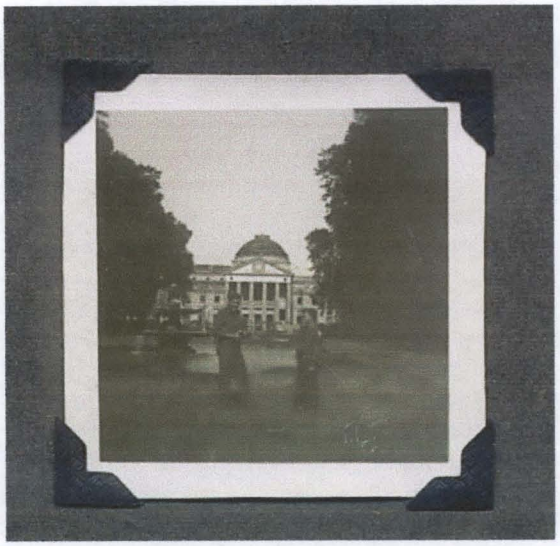
Moniz: There's not much here.

Roberts: What's this Dad?

Moniz: I don't know. This is Wiesbaden, in Germany.

*Destroyed buildings in Wiesbaden, Germany, July 15, 1945*





*American Red Cross Eagle Club in Wiesbaden, Germany, July 15, 1945*

Roberts: Is that the bridge?

Moniz: Yeah. You can see the troops down there. Eisenhower is there again too.

Roberts: And that's a trailer.

Moniz: Yeah, it's an engineering department. They're workin' on something there. This is all. And here's our camp.

*Engineers' Section at work near Limburg, Germany*

Roberts: And there it was real fast. I want a picture . . . I want a shot of it. Who's that in front of it?

Moniz: Just one of the officers.

Roberts: Bridge?

Moniz: Yeah, that's the one where you go at a certain speed . . . you gotta maintain the interval.

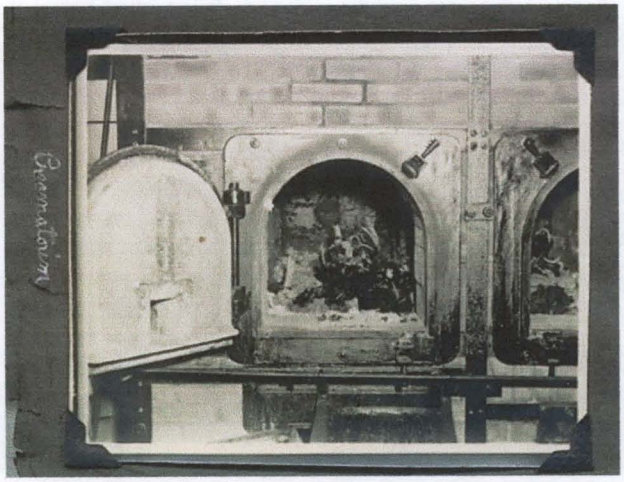
*Signs never lied here. The sign reads, "III Corps Balk Line, No passing by anyone, Maintain 75 yard interval."*

Roberts: And what's this bridge?

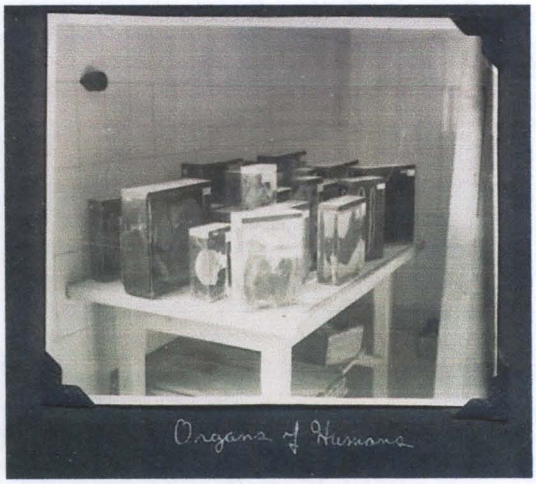
Moniz: This one is the Ludendorff. That's the same bridge before it collapsed. See it?

Roberts: And what's that?

Moniz: Where the oven is. That was just after D-Day. They were showin' this. That's their barracks. This is when they were experimentin' and those are body parts. They would shave 'em in half so you can see. They were experimentin' .




*The Crematorium*




*A display of human organs collected during Nazi experimentation on concentration camp prisoners*

Roberts: Who was?

Moniz: The Germans. The war is hell you know.

Moniz: And that should do it.

Roberts: Can you kind of tell me what you got them for

*Ed's medals and awards*

Moniz: Alright. This is a good conduct, you get it?

Roberts: Uh-hmm.

Moniz: Okay. And this is the European . . . thing. I should have read up on it. This is the American . . . 'cause we were in World War II, and I don't know what that one

is. This here, this purple one is a Presidential Unit Citation, and we get it from the President. And we're supposed to have a Bronze Star there, but we don't have any. And over here it says, "Corporal Edmond P. Moniz, United States Army"

Roberts: What was your rank when you first went in?

Moniz: Private. Everybody's a private when they first go in.

Roberts: I still have glare.

Mrs. Moniz: Shall I pull down the blinds?

Roberts: No. I wanted some natural light 'cause it was dark in that other room. Dad, of your whole company how many do you think are still around?

*Ed (lower middle) and some of his buddies. Ed's brother is in the lower left corner; Ed in Scottish Highlander uniform in the upper left.*

Moniz: Oh, I doubt it. A lot of 'em are gone.

Roberts: New Orleans

Mrs. Moniz: You don't have any more of those meatballs.

Moniz: I think we might have one. If you wanna get in there let me . . .

Roberts: Where'd you get those photos like that with his nose in all of those . . .

and the little boy?

Roberts: That visited him every day?

Roberts: I love the way he just wrote 'Ike.'

*"Ike" with Tolson*

Roberts: Yeah, it's a great shot of the bridge collapse. I noticed that before.

*Various view of the Ludendorff Bridge after it collapsed from German bombing but not before a large number of American troops had crossed the Rhine River.*

Moniz: I think you were interviewing me very, very good and I was happy with that.

Roberts: Good! Did you think of something's that we haven't gone over?

Moniz: Well, we will come to it.

Roberts: Okay. You need to look at your notes?

Moniz: I think I know 'em in my memory . . . go back a little bit.

Roberts: Mom what was it we were gonna ask him about?

Mrs. Moniz: I think it was Buchenwald.

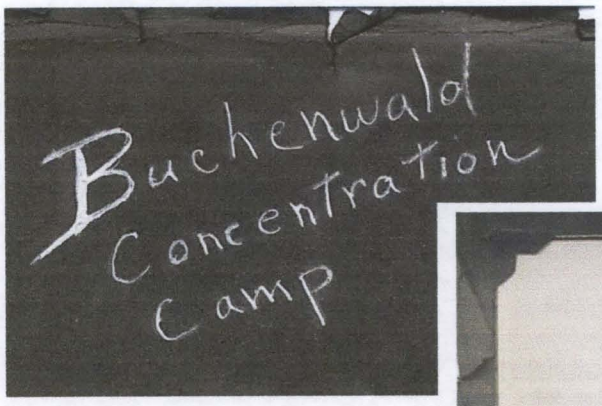
Moniz: Buchenwald. About what?

Roberts: What you did there. What took place there?

Moniz: The reason we went was to take pictures. I was with one of the groups. In our squadron were photographers, so we went to take pictures. And while we were there we took pictures of the Big Bertha. Did you hear about that? It's a German gun that was on railroad tracks, and they couldn't locate it. They kept movin' around so they finally captured it. So we went to take pictures of that.

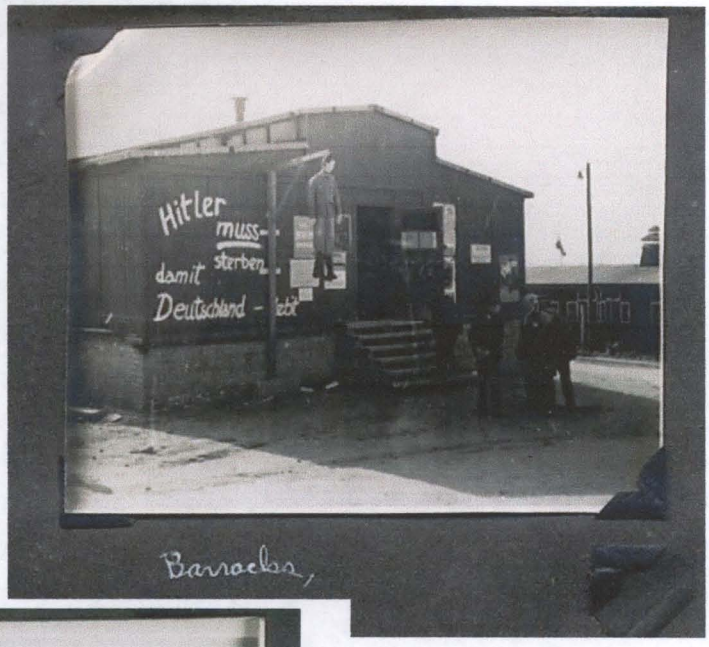
*'Big Bertha' gun on railroad tracks and a Big Bertha shell*

But I don't remember if we had pictures of it or not. But then we spent most of the day in Buchenwald, and we were conversin' with the prisoners. And we had two guys that were like tour guides. They showed us around the camp, and they were from Czechoslovakia. And they had the tattoo from that bad camp. Maybe it was Auschwitz, I don't know. But they said that in some instances if one of the inmates were takin' too long to die, that's when they would help 'em along, you know, kind of bat 'em over the head and stuff like that. And the odor there was terrible. It just clung all over you like your clothes. And a lot of 'em that you talked to, it would be like you're goin' into the town which was three miles from Buchenwald. The town was Weimar, and the guy said they felt like goin' down there with their machine gun and just gunnin' the people down.



*Ed's unit visited and helped liberate the Buchenwald Concentration Camp near Weimar, Germany*

*Prisoners in the Buchenwald camp were in the midst of painting this and other signs, "The Fight Against Fascism Must Not Stop at t . . . ."*




*The end of one of the Buchenwald barracks displayed the sign, "Hitler **must** die so that Germany lives" and an effigy hanging from make-shift gallows in front of the sign.*

*This sign on the end of the barracks (left) was painted just before American soldiers arrived to liberate the camp, "The German political prisoners greet their American friends."*

And we had a colonel that was with us, and he was askin' the different civilians there of some of the stuff that was goin' on. He says to a woman, "Did you know that this camp was . . . you know, you were three miles away . . . did you know that this camp was in existence when you lived there?" And she would say, "*Nein, nein, nein, nein.*" He said, "Are you sure?" She said, "Well, if we didn't do it, we'd get the same fate they did so . . ." so that's how they got out of it. But, he was saying that you know, you saw what was happenin' to the people here. They were starvin' 'em. They were makin' 'em work. They were doin' all kinds of inhuman things to 'em. And she said, "Well, if we didn't obey, we would be as bad as [those] people were."

*German civilians were forced to visit the camp to see what had occurred there.*

*"Victims" stacked outside barracks awaiting cremation or burial. Ed mentioned how gristle from chicken, even just the sight of it, would make him sick all over again, and he would see these images in his mind.*

*The 'Horror Room'. Ed didn't indicate whether this was an effigy or a real person hanging in the 'horror room' when they visited the camp, but the message is quite clear indicating how camp prisoners were treated.*

And you'd see some of the places where they still had like soup that was left over, potato soup. They fed 'em so meager, just barely enough to get by that they couldn't be any trouble because they were, weak. Then they made them so bad that they were no trouble. They were too weak to do anything. So we spent a good part of the day there.

*Ed wrote that the camp prisoners were weak and hungry when the Americans arrived.*

*The camp gallows*

And then when we left there, that's when I was tellin' you about that pontoon bridge we had to pass and the sign that said, "You're under enemy fire. Maintain a 75 yard interval." And then when we got to the other side, one of them rockets exploded not too far from us; and it come down almost like, you know, in an airport they got that wind sock that shows the directions. It had something like that on it, and it would be maybe like from across the street you could see it where, you know, it happened. And it kind of scared the bejeebees out us because you know you weren't expectin' somethin' like that. Especially after the trouble they were havin' at that bridge. But they were pickin' up survivors and everything where the bridge collapsed, and they were tryin' to save as

many of the kids as they could. I don't know how many they lost that day, but there was quite a few of 'em were hurt.

*The pontoon bridge built alongside the destroyed Remagen (Ludendorff) Bridge. Note the distance interval requirements for vehicles crossing the bridge.*

*View of the destroyed Ludendorff Bridge with the pontoon bridge floating alongside.*
Photo at right from the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center Archive

Then we went to another little town . . . remember I was showin' you where they were doin' that . . . we were gonna go into that town because they were going to assault it, you know. What they do in them days . . . they would have like the Air Force would come in and kinda rain down bombs on 'em, and then shoot 'em, and all that kind of stuff to kinda soften 'em up so that they could come in. And they wouldn't have that much trouble tryin' to take 'em out. Yeah, I had a bunch of officers and pilots and everything with me to go along with this Buchenwald thing. And you never knew from day to day when they'd send you on a trip what you was gonna be doin' and the kinda of stuff you're gonna haul. It could be people. It could be material, you know . . . like that. Like you said, you wanted to do Mom, too.

Mrs. Moniz: What other stories had you thought of?

Roberts: What were you writing down when I interrupted you?

Moniz: I was fillin' this out.

Roberts: Ohhh. I asked you if you ever met Churchill or Montgomery or . . .

Moniz: No. No. Like I said, there was [General Charles] de Gaulle, and I knew they were there 'cause even some guys would say, "Hey, you know who flew in today?" And they'd tell you the different ones. And Eisenhower come in quite a bit. After that, 'course like I said, we were movin', so I lost track of him.

Roberts: Did he stay with you in the camps? Or did they put him up in a . . . ?

Moniz: He would stay all day and then go home and get a good meal. We'd stay with the rations.

Roberts: So they probably wined him and dined him, too, right?

Moniz: When he got back.

Roberts: Did he have a special accommodation, a special tent, or a motor home?

Moniz: When he'd come they had a plane, like I said, you know . . . they'd fix 'em all up with good accommodations. They had their own plane, and then when they started movin', then he got that headquarters department I was tellin' you about.

Roberts: So do you think he'd stay on the plane at night?

Moniz: No. He would go. They would spend the night back in England. Did you hear about him shackin' up with his driver . . . ?

Roberts: No. Got some dirt on Eisenhower?

Moniz: Oh, definitely! Definitely!

Roberts: Let's hear it!

Moniz: You know his wife, Mamie, was an alcoholic, and she was really out of it, you know. Then he was sayin' about, you know . . . they were takin' about all this Clinton stuff . . . these guys were all just as bad. They would shack up with them.

Roberts: So she would travel with him and he'd send . . . ?

Moniz: The driver, oh, yeah.

Roberts: Was she on the plane too?

Moniz: I have no idea. I never saw her. Anything that I've said is because I heard

about it, but it can't be gospel.

Roberts: Was he a nice man? Did you find him . . . ?

Moniz: Oh, we loved him! He was good. Very good.

Roberts: . . . personable and seemed sincere and caring and . . . ?

Moniz: Yeah. Yeah. We thought he was excellent. Except I wish he hadn't have run for politics 'cause he was better at bein' a soldier than bein' a politician.

Roberts: How about your superiors? Did you get along real well with them?

Moniz: Very, very much. Very, very much. Yeah, and if they needed something like when I was doin' the motor pool, we had a Major McAllister who was the transportation officer. If some young officer would come in and wanted to make a trip to town . . . see now, if he was hoity-toity and kinda bossy, all I had to do was say, "Did you check with Major McAllister first?"

Roberts: And he would put the kabosh on it?

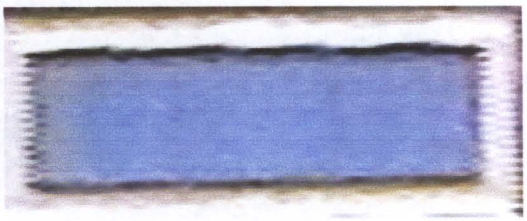
Moniz: That would be the end of it. And if there was a real problem, I'd call the major and have them call. I said, "You'd better check with Major McAllister and see what he says about this," you know.

Roberts: Who was this General (Tony) McAlliffe you talked about?

Moniz: He's the general for the Bastogne, the Battle of the Bulge. He's the one that was in charge of the 101st Airborne that was bogged down because they were surrounded by the Germans.

Roberts: That Purple Medal that you got?

*Ed's Presidential Unit Citation*



Moniz: Presidential Unit Citation.

Roberts: Uh-huh. I'm not real clear on what that is.

Moniz: It's see . . . like the outfit we had was a technical reconnaissance [outfit], and they would photograph before, during and after the war things. You know, like they'd go in, and they were equipped with cameras. And they were not allowed to fight.

In other words, if they went in, they did their job and they'd got out. They ran their tail between their legs. They said, "Don't combat! Don't fight! Get in there! Do your job! We want them pictures more than anything else!" So they would go in and do it, and they checker-boarded the whole coast for the Normandy Invasion. And that was worth it to the system that they had. That's how we got this Presidential Unit Citation because they did such a good job of it. And that kept it up at that.

Roberts: Kind of like the medics, right? How they can't . . . they don't fight. They take care of . . . ?

Moniz: Well, the medics are not supposed to bear arms because they get the patch; and if they pick up an arm, they might as well throw the patch away because they're not doin' their job the way they are supposed to.

Roberts: Didn't you help out? Didn't you tell me you used to help out in the hospitals, too?

Moniz: Fred. Fred did. (Alfred Pavao, Dad's brother)

Roberts: Ohhh. Oh, he was an ambulance driver, right?

Moniz: Yeah.

Roberts: Do you remember any stories that he had that you'd like to share?

Moniz: No. No. The only one thing is he said one time he had a German soldier that passed out on him and died. And he had him around for a day or two until they could to dispose of his remains. And what they have is what they call a Graves Registration. When somebody dies, they plant them temporarily until they can find a good permanent place for 'em; and so he had this one body because he hadn't taken it to be disposed of. So he had it for a day or two until he could find a spot for it. That's about it pretty much.

Roberts: Think we've covered it all?

Moniz: Well, all that I can think of.

Mrs. Moniz: You talked about leaving?

Roberts: Not yet.

Mrs. Moniz: Discharging and all of that stuff?

Roberts: No. We're gonna do that now.

Moniz: Oh, you want to go into that?

Roberts: Where were you . . . when was your tour up and it was time for you to come home?

Moniz: When I left the Service, or when the war ended, we were in Germany. In Kassel, and that was the deepest penetration we made into Germany. And then we were getting' ready to come home. The war ended for us in Germany, and we were waitin' for a ship to bring us home. And, like I said, all the time I was in the Service I was in the United States Air Force; but three weeks before we come home, I belonged to an Ordnance Company. I didn't know anything about it. But yet on my discharge papers it says: Army, you know, the Ordnance Company. I would have liked to have kept [in] the Air Force because I was in the Air Force so long.

Roberts: So they just arbitrarily switched . . . ?

Moniz: You don't arbitrarily. They just tell you. That's it.

Roberts: So then what happened? How'd you get home?

Moniz: Oh... well, when the war ended, we were in Kassel, and then we got transportation to take us to Wiesbaden, Germany. And then we were waitin' there for the plans to ship us home.

*A stop for lunch on the road from Wiesbaden to Kassel*

Roberts: What do you do when you're waiting? Do you play volley ball and . . . ?

Moniz: Do whatever you want.

Roberts: Relax and swim?

Moniz: One of the trips. . . see, I was still a driver so we went to this . . . I told you about the French Alps, Chamonix. So I drove and every time we had a rest stop, I'd go and check the tires because you could get a flat. I found the tire was flat. We had to take it off the rim otherwise it would ruin the tire. So I jacked it up and I'm loosnin' the lug bolts. And there's this hot-shot lieutenant, and he's sayin', "I wanna get a picture of this. Smile!" I said, "Who smiles when you're changin' a flat tire?" (Laughing) Got a big kick out of it. And then we spent . . . remember I was showin' you them pictures of the family in that?

Roberts: Uh-hmm.

Moniz: So we were there about a week and then we come home.

*Ed with buddies and friends for a week in the French Alps while awaiting transport home*

Roberts: To where?

Moniz: Come back to Wiesbaden. I'm sayin' home . . . I mean home camp. And then when our time to leave was up, then we got on a boxcar and it was a whole bunch of guys in a boxcar. Then along the way we'd have stops where they would feed us, and they would have these brand new galvanized trash buckets full of food. And they'd come and serve it out like that.

*40 & 8 (40 men and 8 mules) boxcars transported troops to various staging camps.*
File photo from the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center Archives

Roberts: Was it hot? Was the stuff hot?

Moniz: It was cooked. Everything was cooked because their job was to supply the troops, so we had good food and it was hot. Hash . . . it was very, very good. And then they had coffee and bread and butter and stuff like that.

Roberts: Steaks?

Moniz: Huh?

Roberts: Did they have steaks?

Moniz: Oh, steaks!

Roberts: Uh-hmm.

Moniz: Never.

Roberts: No?

Moniz: We were lucky after the war to see white bread. We never saw white bread all the time we were in the Service.

Roberts: Why? There was no flour?

Moniz: Well, they had it like it the Europeans did. We saw eggs for the first time.

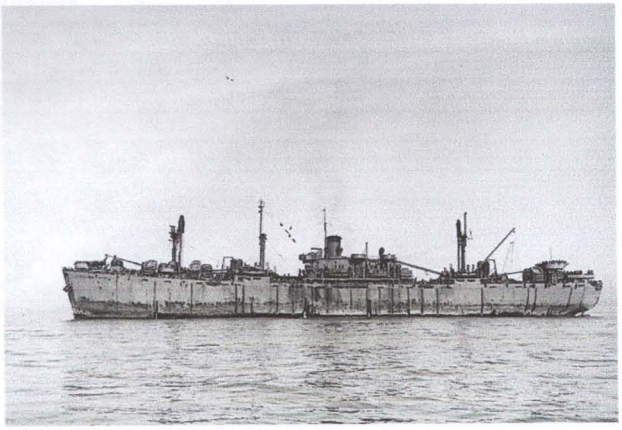
We hadn't seen eggs. They were the kind that were dehydrated, you know, and then we'd process them. And I'll tell you, I enjoyed the meals. The meals were good.

Roberts: So then where did you go?

Moniz: Well, then we went on this troop train, and we went from Wiesbaden, Germany all the way down to the Riviera where Nice and down Southern France is. And we had what they called a staging area. When they're gonna get you together, they have it in this area. Then we would board . . . if it happened to be a ship, you know, we would get on board a ship. And the camp we were in, they named it after cigarettes. It was Camp Chesterfield. You know, one was Lucky Strike. One was Philip Morris. Ours was Camp Chesterfield. And then we were on this Liberty ship and it took eleven days. We had to go out through the Mediterranean, and then we'd pass by the Rock of Gibraltar. You know, the way the Mediterranean gets, way small, [the waterway next to . . .] and it was Spain and Portugal and the Rock of Gibraltar.

So on board the ship you had your meals, which probably wouldn't be the best, but they were good and they were nourishing. And two days out of Boston we got the terriblest storm you ever seen. That ship would go up like this and then (SLAPPP) hit the waves. It'd come back up and (SLAPP) hit the waves, like that. And boy the guys got sick on that. And you'd be walkin' and then you'd be runnin' and then you'd be walkin', and then you'd be . . . and they had these. . . see, on board ship they had these pylons where they would tie up the bar, and then they'd put a rope through it. Otherwise you'd get washed overboard.

*Not the 'Queen Elizabeth' on the way home!*



*Typical liberty ships used both to carry cargo to and bring troops home from Europe*

From Wikimedia and the Library of Congress, photographs in the public domain

Roberts: Now this is just for the troops . . . it wasn't for civilians?

Moniz: No, this was a Liberty ship. This wasn't a civilian. No. This was . . .

Roberts: Navy?

Moniz: It was whatever they were transporting. Like they used to call it LS which is landing ship and it could be tanks. It could be troops, you know . . . like that.

Roberts: So did they bring you back to Boston?

Moniz: You'd be surprised! We landed fifteen miles from home! In [Camp] Miles Standish, Totten, Rhode Island.

Roberts: Totten?

Moniz: At Totten, Massachusetts, I mean. Yeah, fifteen miles.

Roberts: Did you run all the way home?

Moniz: No. We couldn't leave the camp so we called home. You know I still got the phone number I had when I was a teenager.

Roberts: Really?

Moniz: My brother still had it and Evelyn's got it now. 31676 yeah, it's the same number.

Roberts: So was Uncle Freddy on the ship with you?

Moniz: No.

Roberts: Was he already home?

Moniz: I don't remember. Was Fred home yet? I don't think so.

Roberts: So how long did it take them to process you out? Discharge you?

Moniz: Well, we landed in Miles Standish, and then we had to go back to Fort Devens, Mass[achusetts] where we were inducted. And we were there . . . they gave us a ten day furlough, and then we had to come back to be signed off. That should do it I think for now.

Roberts: Yeah. Do you want to do some kind of special, 'The End?' Or . . .

Moniz: Well, you could stop it.

Roberts: . . . a statement?

Moniz: . . . and then we could think of different things.

Roberts: Something you'd like to end it with?

Moniz: Well, just like I said, I . . .

Roberts: I thought you were gonna go on.

Moniz: No. I . . .

Roberts: I can cut this part out, I'm gonna edit it anyway

Moniz: No, just stop it. You know you're not lined up right.

Roberts: Uh-oh. There you are way over there. Okay.

Moniz: I'm sorry for the boys we lost. That to me has been on my mind all the time. But I enjoyed what I was doing. I really did. I was a tourist on Uncle Sam's payroll. I really, really . . . I was a driver, and I went to a lot of places, and some guys would be stuck in camp. And I was goin' all over. Every time we went into a camp, they would restrict everybody to the base. And I'd be one of the ones that could go out. So I enjoyed it.

Roberts: Did you feel a sense of patriotism . . . that you were fighting for your country, or did you really feel more like a tourist than you did?

Moniz: Well, now you got two questions with the same answer. Of course, we love our country. Of course, we're patriotic and, of course, I had a good time. What can I tell you.

Roberts: Good. Well, thank you for doing this for us, and I'm gonna ask . . .

Moniz: Oh, did you want me to . . . you said something about the name and all that.

Roberts: Uh-huh. Well, we did it with your medals, but go ahead and then wrap it up.

Moniz: Okay. My name is Corporal Edmond Moniz, and right now I'm from Fresno, California. I was inducted in the Service in Boston, Massachusetts for a physical and Fort Devens, Massachusetts for a physical and Fort Devens, Massachusetts for our basic training. Then we traveled quite a bit and that's it for now. Thank you very much.

Roberts: Thank you.

**NOTE: The conversation continues with Mrs. Moniz and her daughter, Kathy Roberts. Mr. Moniz speaks up from time to time.**

Roberts: This is my mom and she's gonna tell us a little bit about what it was like when the boys were overseas and the . . .

*Mrs. Moniz during the interview*

Mr. Moniz: (Singing) When Johnny comes marching home, da, da, ta, da.

Roberts: And how she tried to enlist and what happened to you. What did they say when you tried to enlist in the military?

Mr. Moniz: Said she couldn't peel potatoes fast enough.

Mrs. Moniz: I tried for the Navy.

Roberts: You did?

Mrs. Moniz: And they found I didn't pass the physical.

Roberts: Why?

Mrs. Moniz: I don't know. They found a cyst of some kind on my spine.

Roberts: Really?

Mrs. Moniz: Yeah.

Roberts: What made you . . . ?

Mrs. Moniz: And that was the end of that.

Roberts: What attracted you to the Navy?

Mr. Moniz: On a kind of friends, maybe.

Mrs. Moniz: I don't know.

Roberts: You should have asked Dad these questions.

Roberts: I should say: This is mom's portion.

Roberts: So what did you do while the boys were gone?

Mrs. Moniz: There wasn't an awful lot to do. I just worked.

Roberts: You were a seamstress?

Mrs. Moniz: Well, I worked in a sewing factory. And there was a time that we worked for the government on the Navy Midi Blouses . . . the tops of their uniforms. But that didn't last very long. We just had a small contract with them.

Roberts: So this was just one little thing that your company did for the government?

Mrs. Moniz: There was a time when we worked on ladies dresses that were gonna be shipped to Russia. I don't know how that came about. I guess they just got one of those Lend-Lease [contracts] at the time. They would help the different countries out, and we would work on dresses. They were always those real old lady-looking cotton dresses, uh, at the time. That was just for a little while, too.

Roberts: So, how'd you meet Dad?

Mrs. Moniz: I met Dad when he came home from the Service.

Roberts: But you were writing to him while he was gone. How did that come about?

Mrs. Moniz: Well, his mother had asked if I would write to both of her sons, so I said, "Yeah, I would," so I did and, oh, it must have been a year or so before he was to come home that I started writing him. We kinda became friends that way.

Roberts: So was he telling you about all his experiences that you just heard about in

letter-form?

Mrs. Moniz: Oh, yeah. He'd have little things to write about. As the time went on he would tell me how he was getting along, but it wasn't until he got home that I really met him.

Roberts: What was life like during the war? In Massachusetts? You were living in Massachusetts, or Maine, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Moniz: Well, you know, except for the black-outs. I remember having black-outs where you couldn't let the light shine through your window. You'd have to have your shades down.

Roberts: In Massachusetts?

Mrs. Moniz: Uh-hmm.

Roberts: Why?

Mr. Moniz: Coast line.

Mrs. Moniz: Yeah.

Mr. Moniz: Ships could come in . . .

Mrs. Moniz: Well, in case . . . I guess they were just training us for if anything like that would happen...

Roberts: Oh, I see.

Mrs. Moniz: Uh-huh . . . we would know what to do. And then also people who had cars would cover their headlights to just show a little bit of the light . . .

Roberts: When they were driving at night?

Mrs. Moniz: Uh-hmm.

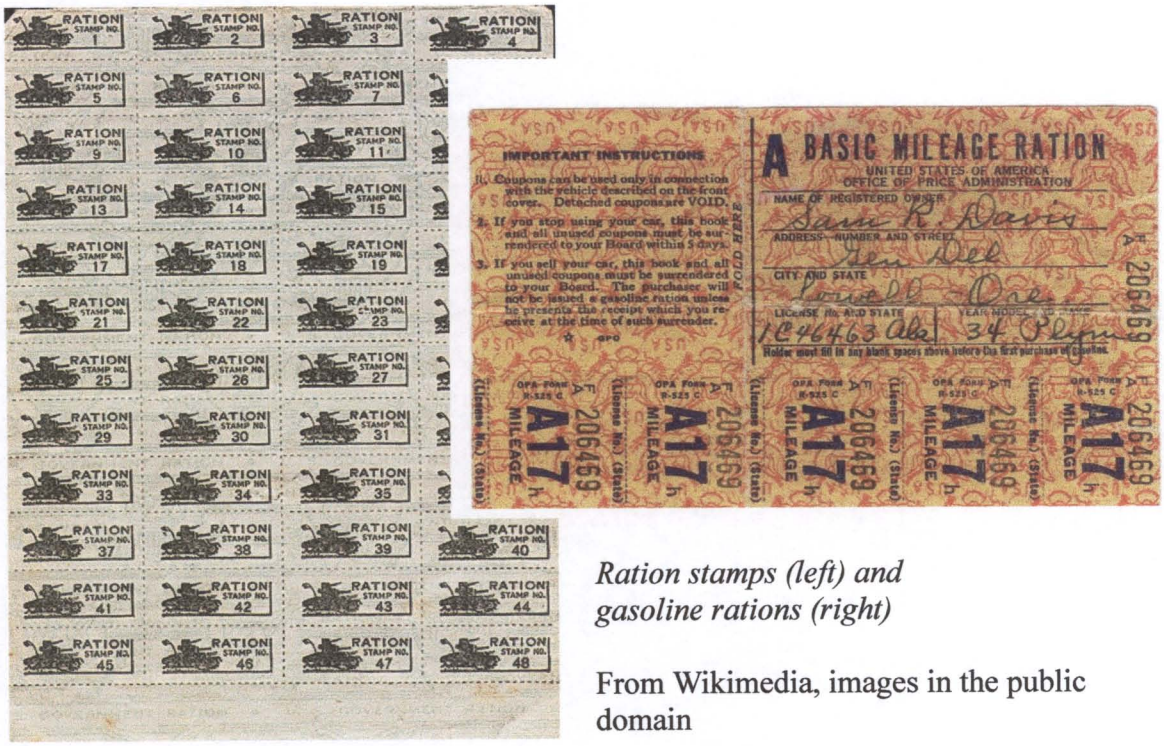
Roberts: Was there some kind of military force on the coast line?

Mrs. Moniz: No. It was just . . . I don't know if you could even call 'em 'laws' that we had to abide by and do things that way. We never had a car, so we never were involved in anything like that. And then another thing we had during the war was rationing.

Roberts: Of things like what?

Mrs. Moniz: They would give us coupons to spend on buying whatever was short at the

time. A lot of times it was sugar and gasoline for the people who had cars . . . would have to use their coupons for that. And there was something else, and right now I can't remember.




*Ration stamps (left) and gasoline rations (right)*

From Wikimedia, images in the public domain

Roberts: Why were there no pantyhose or nylons?

Mrs. Moniz: I guess nylon was just coming into being at that time, and I think they found that it worked so well making parachutes out of nylon, that that's where it . . .

Roberts: So they didn't make nylons for women to wear because they needed the nylon for other things for the war.

Mrs. Moniz: I think they were still staying with the rayon. We had rayon stockings before we had nylon stockings. And they just stayed with the rayon and used the nylon for more important things.

Roberts: But you never had to tailor any parachutes or . . .

Mrs. Moniz: No. When I was gonna sign up for the Navy, that's what I would have tried for since I was already sewing at work. I was gonna try for parachute . . . I think they called it rigging . . . where you'd fix any that needed to be repaired or make 'em up to begin with. But I never got to do it. So that was about it for me. We didn't go anywhere. Once in a while we'd go to a movie but not too much.

Roberts: These were your teenage years, too, when you should be out having fun.

Mrs. Moniz: Yeah. And the funny part of it was once in a while we'd go to a Saturday evening . . . well, we called them dances, but there was a little club close to the house where an orchestra would come in and play and we would dance. And now as I think about it, it was just girls dancing together.

Roberts: 'Cause there were no men.

Mrs. Moniz: Right! And while it was happening we never questioned it, you know. How come I have to dance with another girl? And now I realize it was because all the boys were gone.

Roberts: Where were you when you heard the war was over?

Mrs. Moniz: Oh, when the war was over? I don't remember. I must have heard it on the radio at home. Yeah, because we didn't have television in those days, or anything like that; so it was either you got your news on the radio or when you went to a movie, they would always have a section with news on it. Or in the newspaper. But we never got the newspaper.

Roberts: Was it rationed?

Mrs. Moniz: What?

Roberts: The newspaper?

Mrs. Moniz: No, not that I know of. I don't think it was. But in those days people just didn't have money enough to afford all these little extras.

Roberts: So the money that the government generated by all these new planes, tanks . . . that didn't come back to circulation in the . . .

Mrs. Moniz: No, not that it affected us. Maybe people who had government jobs, like close to Fall River was Newport, Rhode Island where there was a naval station there. Plus they built ships there, and I'm not sure if they built planes there. But that gave a lot of the men jobs that way. But, like I said, well, we didn't have boys in our family anyway, so . . .

Roberts: How'd you get those coupons? Did you go stand in line for them? Did they give them to anybody? Did you have to qualify?

Mrs. Moniz: Uhhhh, we must have had to qualify, but it would be like the head of the household would apply for them. So that would have had to be my father.

Roberts: So that you were glad when it was all over with.

Mrs. Moniz: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Roberts: And it must have been . . .

Mrs. Moniz: And life went back to normal,
pretty much. The only other thing was when your Dad got home . . . one thing about Fall River . . . there was very few jobs there for men. Most men that lived in Fall River worked out of town someplace. And it was hard for Dad to find a job, so he signed up for a class at one of the community colleges and did that after he was discharged. But even from that either nothing came of it. This was refrigeration school, and he never went into work for that. So little jobs here, and there was all that he could find. And not only him . . . all the men in Fall River! So the women worked.

Roberts: Didn't he and his brother buy a gas station shortly after that?

Mrs. Moniz: His mother did and the boys worked the gas station. That was already in like into the following year. They had already been home quite a while when this happened.

Roberts: How soon after that did you two get married?

Mrs. Moniz: Two years.

Roberts: After he got home?

Mrs. Moniz: Uh-hmm.

Roberts: Is that the smartest move you ever made?

Mrs. Moniz: (Laughing) I wonder. (Laughing) I kinda chose the day. It was two years from the day we met that we were married.

Roberts: So it was the day he got out of the Service.

Mrs. Moniz: Uhhh, no . . . I think he was already home a couple of days before I met him. So this happened on the 18th of October.

Roberts: Well, thank you for sharing some of the stories with us.

Mrs. Moniz: Well, you're welcome.