

Leonard Connoly

WWII



**When did you enter the military?**

“June 3 1943”

**How old were you when you entered?**

“19”

**What boot camp did you go to?**

“Camp Ellis Illinois”

**How long was the boot camp?,**

“5 months “

**Did you join the military voluntarily?**

“I was drafted. I couldn’t go because I was in high school.”

**What branch of military were you in?**

“I was in the army”

**What equipment did you use on a daily basis?**

“Feet, I used my feet”

**That’s very important isn’t it?**

“It sure as hell is, you got to get there, and you got to move when they tell you.”

**What rank did you achieve?**

“I was in the quartermaster”

**Were you wounded while you were in the military? If you were in what way were you wounded?**

“No I was very lucky”

**Were you in any famous campaigns or battles?**

Yes, I was in the battle of the bulge

**Did you receive any awards or medals for your service?**

“Just the campaign medals that’s all”

**What happened when you were in the battle of the bulge?**

“We were chased out of the town of Liège. We had the big supply dump on the river Meuse and the Germans wanted to get it because we had food on that side of the river and on the other side we had gas

and engineering supplies like bull dozers and all the heavy equipment. And it was important they got it there to get us the hell out of there.”

### **What a “normal or average Day” while you were in the military?**

“Well it starts with revelry usually at 5 and then breakfast and then calisthenics and any routine details that you’re on during the day. It gets pretty monotonous sometimes.”

### **When would you go to bed?**

“Well naturally it depends on the situation of where you were. Naturally if I was in the barracks somewhere and they had the routine where retreat is at five o’clock after that is supper and you can do what you want and you could go to bed at anytime you want. A lot of guys are sleepy heads they go right in and other guys stay up all night.”

### **What was your normal or most common routine while you were at war or battle?**

“Well for instance you could be on a line, I’m speaking now of when we were in Belgium. We had these German prisoners that used to.... the supplies trucks would come in from the different outfits and we’d stop them take six prisoners, one man and you go out with a list prepared with things they had to pick up and you know the Henry Hudson river? along the Hudson?, well it was like that. We had supplies stacked, going north bound and south bound, we had supplies stacked in the middle and we had them stacked like little houses, and you had to pick up so many of #19 per say and it might be soups or something and you go to the next one and that one might be spaghetti and meatballs and they had to get so many of them, we had it well regulated and you were just there to make watch the prisoners to make sure they put it in. we

would finish the route and I would drop them off at the prisoners compound. You would hop in a pool and wait for another one. This went on and on. Then you go back and do this for about 12 hours”

**What type of firearm(s) did you use?**

Well I used the carbine.. Well I qualified for the Spring Field the old M1903 and on the carbine and on the 50 caliber machine gun.

**Did you use any heavy weapon Artillery?**

“No”

**Did you have any prisoners in Captivity like did you have any prisoners there?**

“Oh did we, yeah, we had a hell of a lot of them. I’m speaking of the time like in November of 44, we were loaded with them.”

**What would be your estimate of how many prisoners that you had?**

I gosh that’s pretty hard, I don’t know but a big number I’d say we had at least a thousand , they were in a stockade and we pull so many out to work for these work details. A truck would come in and they would want to get their supplies so would take six prisoners and one guard. You would get on the truck and pick up the stuff.”

**While at war, what helped you pass the time?**

“Thinking of home”

**I would imagine so**

**What about the really hard times what did you think about then?**

“I prayed a lot. I just wished that I could come home, and I did.”

**After you came home from war, did your perspective on anything change? Did you carry anything from the military with you after the war?**

“When I first came home I was so god damn, excuse me for swearing, glad to get home that it is was euphoric. I didn’t worry about anything I just wanted to have a good time and see a lot of my friends. There was about twenty of us that grew up together. Except for one, we all went in to either the navy, marines and so on.”

**Did they all come back?**

“All of them came back”

**Wow**

“Yeah thank god”

**That’s fortunate**

“Yeah”

**Did you carry anything with you after you left the military?**

“No I got rid of a weapon I was carrying a Walter 38 but I didn’t want to bring it home.”

**“Did you bring home your uniform?”**

“Yeah of course”

**Did you wear it after the war?**

“I did sure, had a great liner for a field jacket for cold climates. It was great I wore that until it wore out. It was lined like with fleece. I wore that for a couple of years.”

**Do you have anything to add that we might of missed or you wanted to talk about?**

“No not really. It can be a very monotonous life, or it could be ah ..... Its all the way you look at it if you are going to feel sorry for yourself you are going to be in tough shape”.

**I see you brought your hat can you tell us about it?**

“Well this hat is from the post. It’s one I wore. I have a picture of myself and the first sergeant in my outfit if I can find. That’s me on the right. That’s taken right after the European war was ending. We were waiting to go to the Philippines we moved from Belgium to southern France and we were there three months waiting for the war to end over there. It finally did thank god. I didn’t want to go over there.”

**My grandfather was in the Philippines after the war ended.**

“Well I could have been there but through the grace of god , our part ended. We waited around, we had everything shipped, but the timing was all set to go down to the Philippines.”