

**Video Recording Log  
Veteran Charles Bruns**

**1. Name and address of collector of interviewer.**

Name of Donor/Interviewer: Harriet Williamson  
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City: Urbana  
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Partner organization affiliation (if any): WILL AM-FM-TV

**2. Name and birth date of the veteran or civilian being interviewed at is appears on the Biographical Data Form:**

Name of Veteran/Civilian: Charles Bruns  
Birth Date: 04/27/1919

**3. Recording format**

VIDEO type: Mini DVD

**4. Estimated length of recording (in minutes):** 114 minutes    **Date of recording:** 09/24/2007, 10/05/2007

**5. Location of recording:** WILL AM-FM-TV, 300 N. Goodwin Ave, Urbana, IL 61801

**6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence.**

00:00:00	Introduction
00:00:18	Description of Service
00:00:35	Introduction
00:00:46	Growing up, family
00:01:37	Sons
00:01:50	Siblings
00:02:15	School
00:02:37	Working, drafted, volunteered
00:03:00	Entered Army 1941, Fort Leonard Wood, MO; Fort Sheridan, IL
00:03:20	Celie Johnson, Chanute Field, knew General
00:03:30	Recruited for baseball team at Mather Field, CA, missed train
00:03:40	Fort Leonard Wood, MO: movie house, barracks
00:04:49	Training: working on roads
00:05:10	Platoon for Basic Training
00:05:30	Engineer Training
00:05:55	Teaching WWI tactics: trenches, barbed wire
00:06:10	Training not relevant

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00:06:25 Guns, explosives, mines  
00:06:41 Dynamite, training, TNT  
00:07:45 Road digging, pontoon training, bridges, Fort Lewis, WA  
00:10:27 Combat training, Springfield rifles, engineer training  
00:11:24 Combat engineer outfit, Fort Lewis, WA, attached to 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
00:12:30 Entered military May, 1941, Fort Leonard Wood, MO  
00:13:00 Fort Lewis, WA in August  
00:13:26 Fort Lewis, WA: intensive training, drilling, amphibious landings, Higgins boats on Puget Sound, building pontoon bridges, clearing and building mines  
00:14:40 Everything different in combat  
00:15:10 Turnover in Sergeants  
00:15:43 Training a benefit  
00:15:55 Officers  
00:16:15 Fort Lewis, WA: training with the Navy for 4 months; with Navy from Tacoma, WA to Alaska, then to San Diego, CA, training with Marines  
00:18:05 Training with Navy: operate boons to put ships in water, cable nets, Higgins boats  
00:18:30 Boats getting into formation, practice  
00:19:11 Camp Pendleton, CA: 1/3 of division got yellow jaundice, sent to Fort Ord, CA; more training, clearing mine fields  
00:20:19 Water tanks: how to filter water, practice missions  
00:21:27 No one knew where they were going  
00:21:40 Camp Picket, VA: amphibious training  
00:22:00 Bangalore torpedoes, barbed wire, stevedores wouldn't load  
00:22:59 Fort Ward, VA to Camp Picket, VA to New Port News, VA  
00:23:27 Fedella, North Africa  
00:23:47 Other troops landed in North part, they landed in South part of Africa  
00:24:00 Convoy to Africa  
00:24:44 From Casablanca to Biserta, upper part of coast  
00:25:05 British fighting in Africa  
00:25:15 Kasserine Pass: lost a lot of men and tanks  
00:25:45 Patton came in, started pushing Germans out  
00:26:10 Sergeant 10<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, attached to 7<sup>th</sup> Division Regiment, Company A  
00:26:50 Headquarters company, supplies  
00:27:04 Famous men in Division: Audie Murphy, most decorated serviceman in U.S. Army, in 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry; James Arness in 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
00:28:00 Photography taken during war, PD-16 Camera, little box camera  
00:29:07 Told not to bring camera overseas, did anyway; only lost pictures in Africa because of heat and no place to develop film, rest of photos came out and survived  
00:29:55 Taking photos during combat: had 2 ½ ton truck to store it in safely  
00:30:49 Division photographer developed the photos for him, without him would not have been possible  
00:31:06 Post cards  
00:31:37 Journal: sometimes wrote on onion skins, scraps, kept it with him at all times  
00:33:50 Worrying about day-to-day, casualties, lost best friend on Anzio  
00:34:35 Operation Torch, North Africa, November 8, 1942: supposed to be peaceful landing, became conflict when Germans opened fire on Higgins boats coming into shore, lasted 3 days, lost men to boats turning over in high waves, French Senegalese soldiers

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00:38:03 German wolf pack submarines sank 5 American ships including his, Tanker H. Bliss  
00:38:44 Traveling further up Africa  
00:39:26 After Operation Torch, marched into Casablanca, saw President Roosevelt reviewing troops  
00:39:53 Observing combat at Kasserine Pass  
00:40:55 North Africa  
00:41:05 Biserta, Germans bombing it often, bivouac area 25 miles away  
00:41:40 Travel to Sicily  
00:41:51 Amphibious training for landing, North Africa  
00:42:07 Company used amphibious landing on Sicily to try to cut off Germans  
00:42:24 Anzio, landing, South France, landing, but different  
00:42:35 Higgins boats  
00:42:43 LCIs in Sicily  
00:42:50 Transports  
00:43:10 Higgins boats  
00:43:34 North Africa to Sicily, transport, Operation Husky  
00:43:45 LCIs  
00:44:25 Journal: never read it  
00:45:30 Invasion of Sicily: got the word Germans were parachuting, it was actually Americans, killed own men, 101<sup>st</sup> lost a lot of men and planes, hit beaches at dark  
00:47:00 Confusion in invasion  
00:47:42 Agrigento, Sicily: all mountains, very difficult terrain  
00:48:13 Agrigento to Palermo, walking the streets patrolling before Patton arrived  
00:48:46 Role in Sicily, went with 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry, go out in front of infantry to clear path through mine fields  
00:49:40 Always out in front  
00:50:15 With infantry on front line, would get thrown in to fill up holes, but not on combat pay  
00:51:15 Land mines, diffusing different kinds: Bouncing Betty, Teller Mine; feeling for wires at night, booby traps, casualties, laid by Germans and Italians  
00:53:38 Mines changing and progressing throughout war  
00:54:08 Box mines  
00:55:05 Men conscious of hazards  
00:55:25 Removed nervous men from duty, fear a detriment  
00:56:23 Being scared, crying  
00:56:37 Anzio, invasion, bombs, scared: ran down to beach and got in pill box with another man, cried  
00:58:28 Filming photo album  
01:00:59 Tape 2  
01:01:02 Introduction for Tape 2, short description of service and awards  
01:02:20 Explanation of photo in Sicily: Germans blew up back of a mountain pass leading to Mediterranean Sea, had to build around  
01:03:25 Writer Ernie Pyles spent 3 days with unit, wrote "Island in the Sky," published in Life Magazine; Battle of Sicily  
01:04:10 Sicily: campaign over  
01:04:23 Water detail to Messina, Italy, getting shelled by Italians, pinned behind blown-out building, found a brewery, filled canteens with beer  
01:05:15 North Africa, German guns better than American guns  
01:05:50 American armament improving after invasion of Sicily, each year better

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01:06:30 Company of engineers had truck for all supplies: mine detectors, mines, construction, TNT, went everywhere with unit, not that dangerous

01:07:29 Anzio: bridge with TNT on pillars all around

01:08:27 Experiences with another man from Urbana, realized later after service

01:09:38 Brother-in-law in 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service: Canadian-American outfit, lost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of outfit

01:10:10 International soldiers

01:10:35 Anzio: quiet for a few days then Germans counter-attacked intensely for 2 weeks, Navy brought in smoke pots

01:12:50 After Anzio went to Rome, wounded, hospital stay; ran away from hospital and hitchhiked to find outfit because didn't want to miss out

01:13:50 Correspondence

01:14:37 El Toro River, Monte Cassino: pontoon bridge, getting shelled by Germans

01:15:37 Photograph of best friend killed at Anzio, would play chess

01:17:20 Mark Clark came to visit at Anzio

01:18:10 The Stars and Stripes Magazine

01:18:30 Bill Mauldin cartoons

01:19:09 Officers would come to tell you plans

01:19:45 Cleaning mine fields

01:20:10 Building temporary bridges

01:20:27 Wound: no big complications

01:20:40 From Italy, invasion of Salerno already on, came in a few days later and helped push forward

01:21:15 Monte Cassino pulled off line, practice on boats, to Anzio and to Rome

01:21:35 Planned to garrison Rome, there 3 weeks, division pulled out and went to Naples, then Southern France

01:21:50 Practice on boats, landing crafts, not Higgins boats, invasions fully equipped

01:23:00 Lessons learned in Africa, tactics learned in States no good

01:24:00 Infantry, fox holes

01:24:40 To France, landing craft

01:25:05 Combat in France, infantry landed earlier and pushed ahead

01:26:39 Travel: Switzerland, France, small towns, Nance

01:26:59 Crossed Siegfried Line: had to blow up "dragon's teeth" to get tanks through: 6-7 rows, concrete bunkers, bulldozers, TNT

01:28:14 Equipment carried with unit at all times: compressors, dozers

01:29:05 Weather, mud at Monte Cassino, trench foot, raining constantly

01:30:00 Aunt sent him fruit cake, took too long to get there, covered in mold, devoured it with friends anyway

01:30:31 Uniforms, weather, equipment

01:31:36 Approaching end of war, in Germany after Siegfried Line

01:32:40 Contact with civilians in Italy, France, Germany

01:33:30 Told there would not be churches overseas but there were

01:33:52 Misled: when first arrived, under impression that opposition would be very ruthless, but only SS was

01:34:30 SS would shoot retreating German troops to get them to stay in place

01:34:50 SS soldiers that were caught did not last long in American camps

01:35:00 Photos taken at Dachau when it was being liberated and cleaned up: officer went with him and took pictures because he was not allowed to have the camera; only a few got to see Dachau from his unit

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01:35:45 Describing Dachau: smells, piles of clothes and bodies  
01:37:05 Seeing death all the time: don't think too much about it  
01:37:15 Hitler's Eagle's Nest: photos; in town night before British bombed it, went in next morning, pictures of smoke coming out of Hitler's home; taking tablecloth as souvenir  
01:38:44 Describing compound: tunnels underground, rooms full of art, statues, artifacts, hospitals, rooms full of alcohol  
01:39:59 Infantry had already cleaned it out, so no purpose to be there, just went to check it out to see if there was any demolition  
01:40:19 French brought in trucks to haul away art  
01:41:07 Travel to Salzburg, Austria, war practically over, garrisoned for 2-3 weeks, moved to Germany for occupation duties  
01:41:48 Had enough points to be flown home: truck to Marseille, put in B-17's cleaned out with seats installed, landed in Casablanca and refueled, then flew to Newfoundland, then to Boston; took a train home from Boston  
01:42:55 Out of military once in U.S., in processing center 2 days, brother-in-law brought him home  
01:43:17 Waking up at night when planes flew over in Illinois  
01:44:20 No visions, dreams after back to civilian life  
01:44:30 Talking about experiences after war, sometimes got upset and cried  
01:44:58 Life members of Disabled Veterans, VAW 5520, battalion reunions every year, reunions on farms  
01:47:30 How WWII affected his life: hard to think of men in service now because it's not the same type of war  
01:49:40 Wrap-up  
01:50:27 Hard to talk about war but important because if you don't say anything no one knows what really happened  
01:50:49 Fan of Ken Burns' documentary, learned a lot from it  
01:51:20 Glad didn't go to South Pacific, fighting a different kind of person there that didn't give up, and Germans did  
01:52:08 Colmar Pocket, during Battle of the Bulge, in same situation  
01:53:30 Wrap-up