



Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Charles Francis Bruns, Sr.

Part of the Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))
Central Illinois World War II Stories project

Interview # VR2-V-D-2007-043

Charles Francis Bruns, Sr., an engineer in the 3rd Infantry Division during World War II, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois World War II Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: 24 September 2007

Location: Illinois Public Media, Urbana, IL

Date: 5 October 2007

Location: Illinois Public Media, Urbana, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Harriet Williamson, Illinois Public Media affiliate

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Henry Radcliffe, Videographer, Illinois Public Media (WILL radio.tv.online)

Transcription by: _____

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Transcript
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The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Abstract

Charles Francis Bruns, Sr., *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-D-2007-043

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Charles F. Bruns, Sr. was born on April 27, 1919 in Villa Grove, Illinois. At the age of two, his family moved to Champaign. He left his sales clerk job for the service when drafted in 1941. Bruns was a sergeant for the 10th Combat Engineer Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Division. He traveled to various areas for basic training, including Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and Fort Lewis, Washington.

From Fort Lewis, Bruns trained with the Navy in Tacoma, Washington and Alaska. He also trained with the Marines in Camp Pendleton, California; Fort Ord, California; and Camp Picket, Virginia. From Virginia, Bruns was sent to Northern Africa for Operation Torch, where he instantly encountered a battle with Vichy French soldiers. From Africa, Bruns battled in Operation Husky, helping liberate the Sicilian republic.

During the war, Bruns was on the front lines, responsible for clearing paths through minefields for infantrymen. He would often defuse mines at night; locating wires by only feeling for them. Bruns lost his best friend during combat at the Anzio beachhead. After Anzio, Bruns was briefly wounded and hospitalized, but soon returned to combat in time to enter Rome. His unit helped penetrate the Siegfried Line, entered Germany, and witnessed Hitler's Eagle Nest. He returned home on a B-17 airplane in August 1945. He kept a journal, and would write on onion skins if need be. He now frequently attends battalion reunions.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Villa Grove, Illinois; 10th Combat Engineers; 3rd Infantry Division; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Sheridan, Illinois; Fort Lewis, Washington; Tacoma, Washington; Camp Pendleton, San Diego, California; Fort Ord, California; Camp Picket, Virginia; Bangalore torpedoes; Fedala, Africa; Kasserine Pass; Operation Torch; Sicily, Italy; Operation Husky; Bouncing Betty; Teller Mines; Anzio, Italy; Rome, Italy; Salerno, Italy; Siegfried Line; SS German soldiers.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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