

# Arthur Sheridan

April 2, 2013

Interviewed by Aaron Pylinski

Transcribed by Sonix with corrections by Leah Cohen

Edited by Leah Cohen

**Pylinski:** [00:00:00] Well, we're here, it's April 2nd, 2013. I'm Aaron Pylinski, I'm here with Arthur Sheridan and we're going to talk about your stories of service. Sir, thank you so much for coming in. We just like to start off the questioning with one. And where were you born?

**Sheridan:** [00:00:15] Thank you for inviting me. I was born in Chicago on July 16th, 1925.

**Pylinski:** [00:00:25] What was it like growing up in Chicago? What neighborhood were you in?

**Sheridan:** [00:00:28] I grew up on the north side of the street called Castlewood Terrace, which in those years ran from Sheridan Road to the beach. There was no Marine Drive and it was a very nice place. I think, at that time as I remember the postmaster who lived down the street and the most interesting resident. Well, there were two, but one was Fannie Mae.

**Pylinski:** [00:00:53] Fannie Mae lived on your street?

**Sheridan:** [00:00:55] Yeah. And she was an excellent neighbor in that she had a long foyer that ran from her front door right down the sidewalk. And every Halloween, her chauffeur would come out and give us a half pound box candy if we didn't soap her windows. So, you know, that was kind of a big bonus to have. And then there was a movie star that lived there occasionally. His name was Francis X. Bushman, which I don't know if you would recall, but he was a big name. I never got to see him, but I know he lived down the block. So it was pretty nice area to live in all single family homes at that time.

**Pylinski:** [00:01:40] No condominiums or nothing?

**Sheridan:** [00:01:42] No. Long before even the word was coined,

**Pyllinski:** [00:01:45] The shoebox houses as you will. Did you have any siblings, brothers and sisters?

**Sheridan:** [00:01:50] One sister who was about eleven years older than I was, Shirley, and she lived with us and she grew up rather quickly. And she was more athletic. than I was. And went off, got married and moved away,

**Pyllinski:** [00:02:10] So was she. She wasn't at home most of the time then, I guess when you were growing up? I don't remember that she was almost a child being eleven years old when I could remember much of anything that was important. She was already a teenager, is off and running...She was a great swimmer. She used to be in contests in Lake Michigan in those years to a great job. So she always made me feel a little silly.

**Pyllinski:** [00:02:39] Did you did you play sports or anything?

**Sheridan:** [00:02:42] No, no. I was not involved in sports that weren't in sports and in school. When I was in high school, I was in the ROTC, which was my way of getting away from sports. I was always a little guy, you know, and probably the last fellow that they picked in the neighborhood when they were playing and so on.

**Pyllinski:** [00:03:03] What about your parents? What kind of work was your parents?

**Sheridan:** [00:03:10] [Laughs] Well, when my father came to this country, my father and mother both emigrated from Poland to Canada and to the United States. And he was, I think, basically a barber. But he found out he could make more money if he bought a half pint of whiskey from the bootlegger across the street over to the barber shop for his clients, for a quarter in those years that they might get for a haircut. And then he went on to be quite a well reputed bootlegger.

**Pyllinski:** [00:03:48] So your dad was a bootlegger in Chicago? How about that? Yeah. What was that like? I mean, did you remember much of that being as a kid growing up?

**Sheridan:** [00:03:55] No, I just knew that they were involved in. They did rather well at that time, in the early stages. And you know they lived well, we lived well. And that's what I remember about that.

**Pylinski:** [00:04:12] No police, no Pinkerton's snooping around, nothing like that?

**Sheridan:** [00:04:14] You know, the Prohibition was a very unpopular law. And so that wasn't much of a problem. And my father, who had his office down here on South Michigan six, something South Michigan used to say he could walk down Michigan Avenue with a bottle of whiskey in each hand and nobody would bother him. And probably my guess is that policemen were his customers.

**Pylinski:** [00:04:46] Probably customer, I was thinking maybe...

**Sheridan:** [00:04:47] My sister got out and that she sometimes would have to deliver some whiskey to various people's homes later on.

**Pylinski:** [00:04:56] Hmm. Interesting. So it was your mother stay at home mom or.

**Sheridan:** [00:05:01] Well, I'm sorry, I think my mother, as I remember for a time, got my dad in the office more than stay at home. I don't remember them both being home very much. We had help at the house. So, you know, man and a woman. And I think she spent more time down in the office, as I recall. During those times than later went on and because the Depression ultimately went broke, because of the investments my dad had made with the money and Prohibition got over. [Pylinski affirms: Right.] So that was a more difficult time. What was the Depression like for you growing up? It didn't bother me too much. I was too young. We lost our house. My father then had a little factory on the South Side in one of the buildings he owned. I don't know how he ever got to it, but he was making things like we used to call it Matchless Lucifers. There were a lighter. There are ceramic topper if you turned it over it lit, so people could light their cigars or cigarettes, okay? And he made embossing pens here, put a piece of foil on something and he could write names or a wood burning pencil. And then he went on to make other small appliances and moved into different factories.

**Pylinski:** [00:06:30] What about what about the rest of your family? You know, even before you joined the military, was there ever like a strict military background or any kind of military background, in your family, at all?

**Sheridan:** [00:06:41] Not at all.

**Pylinski:** [00:06:42] You kind of like broke the mold, I guess, when you joined the military is concerned. Yes, I think there are a couple of cousins who ultimately were in the service, but our immediate family, it was me.

**Pylinski:** [00:06:58] Interesting. What about what about what was going on in the world up to leading up to World War II, starting, how aware of you of what was going on in Europe and and so forth?

**Sheridan:** [00:07:11] I wasn't too aware of what was going on in Europe at the beginning. I was busy going to school. I went to two different elementary schools. Early on. I went to a school. I think they're going to be closing now, Graeme Stewart is near Wilson Avenue, near Broadway. And in those years I kind of had a bodyguard. I would have the Charlie the male server sort of walk me to and from school, which made me feel ridiculous. [Pylinski adds: Interesting.] But I went to Goudy [Public School] on Foster St. After we lost our money and lost our house, we moved into an apartment on Sheridan Road. And then once in high school, it was in high school that I began to learn a bit more about the world. And my mother and father kind of separated a little bit. And in high school, average student. I enjoyed the ROTC and maybe that's what interested me in the military.

**Pylinski:** [00:08:18] Was that an Army [US Army] ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps]?

**Sheridan:** [00:08:19] Yes.

**Pylinski:** [00:08:20] Yeah, there is. What do you remember about your time in ROTC in high school?

**Sheridan:** [00:08:29] I think I enjoyed it. I moved along in the ranks and being maybe a little bit of authority and helped build my confidence and drill teams and things like that. That's about the most I remember. It kept me out of athletics, which I was really not very good at.

**Pylinski:** [00:08:50] Did you guys still be like PT in ROTC?

**Sheridan:** [00:08:52] I think I could avoid regular PT, but in ROTC, we didn't really have much.

**Pylinski:** [00:09:00] Okay, so then you were in high school and started to learn more about the world. What were you seeing so far as how things were developing in Europe and in Asia and stuff?

**Sheridan:** [00:09:11] Well, I heard basically he thought it was the United States was in a war about to be in a war. Certainly we didn't want to be that way. And we were uncomfortable with the idea in our household and that it would begin to create, you know, problems in the world. I'm Jewish and I did not know at that time about what was going on in Europe with the Jewish population. I did know that one of my aunts who lived in Poland had come to visit us about 1939 or something like that, and then she couldn't get back home. So she stayed here. She helped work at my dad's factory.

**Sheridan:** [00:10:00] And, you know, the Army was a very, it was kind of an escape for me. My father's factory was basically manufacturing electrical appliances, small appliances. And his thought was I would be an electrical engineer. Well, I was very bad at math and I certainly didn't want that. But his factory was at 33rd and State Street, which is right across at that time from what was then the Armour Institute of Technology, which is now Illinois Institute of Technology. And his thought was that that's where I was going to enroll when I graduated high school. And I did. I didn't like it.

**Sheridan:** [00:10:50] And I may be jumping ahead of your question, but I ultimately went to my dad's, and some of my friends were already in the Army by that time. And I didn't want to stay in school and I wanted to enlist in the Army. And I kind of figured in the back of my head, having been in ROTC and having this prevet [?] commission would mean something. So he finally agreed and let me enlist. And so I got in the Army.

**Pylinski:** [00:11:20] Were you eighteen? I guess you were eighteen. Were right out of high school and college?

**Sheridan:** [00:11:20] I was seventeen. Seventeen.

**Pylinski:** [00:11:29] Seventeen, yeah, okay. Yeah. You enlisted in 1943, correct?

**Sheridan:** [00:11:31] Yeah.

**Pylinski:** [00:11:31] Okay, so prior to that, obviously Pearl Harbor had happened. And how well aware of you were that? When did you find out about Pearl Harbor?

**Sheridan:** [00:11:38] By the news, you just heard that we were attacked and all of us sat around very upset, somewhat frightened because something had come to our door in effect. [Pylinski affirms: Right.] You know, and that was my recollection of our concern at that time.

**Pylinski:** [00:11:58] Trying to take you back for a minute. Just yeah. You almost feel, I would say even with 9/11 haven't happened and everything kind of as an American, you almost feel almost invincible or impervious to those kind of attacks. And then when they do happen, it just seems pretty intense.

**Sheridan:** [00:12:13] I remember hearing on the radio and reading in the paper, you know, the Japanese were doing some rumbling things and that their ambassadors had come to the United States to visit, but never thought that anybody would attack us, of course. I don't think any of us thought that [Pylinski affirms: Right.] Certainly our government and our military weren't ready, although when I think back now as an adult, when you see all this crap they buying from us, you would think they're going to do something with it.

**Pylinski:** [00:12:41] Yeah, we're all set up a red flag. Maybe so. Yeah, well, I'd say pull this off. That's okay. Hindsight is always 20/20, as they say, right?

**Sheridan:** [00:12:50] Yes, it is...

**Pylinski:** [00:12:53] So...There you go. So I know you mentioned the aunt from Poland to come over and it was hard for her to get back and this was in '39.

**Sheridan:** [00:13:06] Yeah, my recollection is about 1939.

**Pylinski:** [00:13:08] Right now. How long did she stay with you?

**Sheridan:** [00:13:16] I don't know...

**Pylinski:** [00:13:16] How long did she stay with you in Chicago?

**Sheridan:** [00:13:18] She stayed here all of her life.

**Pylinski:** [00:13:22] Okay. Did you did you hear anything from her from her family over there? I mean, there's obviously there was all this going on with with the Nazis and everything else and the Russians?

**Sheridan:** [00:13:30] Yeah. I only heard occasional things at that particular time about how our family was in trouble and she couldn't reach them. She and one of my uncles, my father had five, more than five brothers and the one uncle that was the last one to come from Europe, Uncle Irving, was the closest to her. And we would just hear things whenever we would be talking... Both of them, worked for my dad. A lot of my family, when they first came here, went to work for my father.

**Pylinski:** [00:14:11] Right. He was already established and everything.

**Sheridan:** [00:14:13] Yeah. At that point. He'd gone through the the bootleg stage, lost his money, and was rebuilding himself.

**Pylinski:** [00:14:21] The bootlegging is a gamble, that's for sure. My brother, my older brother lived in Alabama for a while. He was a bootlegger down there. Totally different time, totally different...alcohol.

**Sheridan:** [00:14:30] Yeah, I'll bet.

**Pylinski:** [00:14:30] Yeah exactly.

**Sheridan:** [00:14:32] Yeah. My dad had some unique ways of getting his alcohol here into this country, which, we won't discuss it.

**Pylinski:** [00:14:39] No problem. Yeah. Oh that's totally fine. I understand that. Oh I was going to ask also I guess we're moving on to your enlistment. So your father was opposed to first and then he said it was okay for you to give you the blessing, yes, can say. What was his reaction or advice to you joining the military, knowing what was going on in the world?

**Sheridan:** [00:15:05] I don't remember him giving any particular advice. You know, anybody said, "Okay, if that's what you want to do." He was disappointed, I'm sure, that I didn't go to school and become the engineer that he would like in his business because his business grew. He bought another building at 29th and Michigan, right on the corner, a beautiful building, and had a lot of war contracts. He made some radios and other kinds of equipment and then went back into making his small appliances afterwards.

**Pylinski:** [00:15:44] Did did you have any any goals for joining the military so far as what job you wanted or where you wanted to be or do?

**Sheridan:** [00:15:53] Originally, I wanted to be a pilot. And then I had a color blind problem so I couldn't become a pilot. And so I was just in the in the Army.

**Pylinski:** [00:16:05] Just a grunt?

**Sheridan:** [00:16:07] Yeah. Just a grunt.

**Pylinski:** [00:16:08] Where where did you want to go to basic training?

**Sheridan:** [00:16:14] Fort Benning.



**Pylinski:** [00:16:14] Fort Benning... I guess if you were an infantryman, you went to Fort Benning. Did you have any special training or radio training, demolitions?

**Sheridan:** [00:16:23] Now just general infantrymen. Just your normal basic training as I saw it. And somewhere along the line, I must have taken some kind of an exam and I don't remember that, but I did fairly well. And then I was moved into the thing called the ASTP.

**Pylinski:** [00:16:46] Which was?

**Sheridan:** [00:16:47] I think literally translated as the Army Student Training Program and I was sent to Indiana University.

**Pylinski:** [00:16:59] What did you study there at Indiana University?

**Sheridan:** [00:17:01] Want to guess?

**Pylinski:** [00:17:01] Engineering.

**Sheridan:** [00:17:08] So that was a great heavy duty aside from the classes, because, you know, we lived in a girls' dorm, we ate great food.

**Pylinski:** [00:17:15] Right, it wasn't your typical Army mess.

**Sheridan:** [00:17:17] No. I remember getting off the troop train from Benning to Bloomington, Indiana, and there were a lot of ladies there in white uniforms. And no matter how much guard duty we have, "not much guard duty" how much KP, "[not much] KP", you know--

**Pylinski:** [00:17:37] It was like heaven!

**Sheridan:** [00:17:38] Oh, yes. You had great dorm rooms. They moved all the girls out, unfortunately, and then we went to class. But the class was difficult. If you dropped a pencil,

you were probably two days behind. We never got sick because of you did, you'd probably wash out,

**Pylinski:** [00:17:58] Right.

**Sheridan:** [00:17:59] Very fortunately for me, the program ended before we reached any stage of the matriculation or anything.

**Pylinski:** [00:18:09] Gotcha.

**Sheridan:** [00:18:09] So then I went back into the infantry.

**Pylinski:** [00:18:15] Did you finish basic training and everything before doing the ASTP?

**Sheridan:** [00:18:20] Yes.

**Pylinski:** [00:18:20] Okay and then you went back to Fort Benning?

**Sheridan:** [00:18:22] No, we went to Camp Campbell, Kentucky and that was part of the 20th Armored Division.

**Pylinski:** [00:18:32] And so that would be your permanent duty station, then?

**Sheridan:** [00:18:38] Yes.

**Pylinski:** [00:18:38] In 20th Armour. And what did you do there once you got to Fort Campbell, Camp Campbell?

**Sheridan:** [00:18:42] Similar to basic training.

**Pylinski:** [00:18:44] A lot of drilling, a lot shooting?

**Sheridan:** [00:18:46] Drilling, bivouacking, shooting, scouting, things like that.

**Pylinkski:** [00:18:52] Did you have any any good memories so far as your time with ASTP outside of class work? Did you guys do anything? I mean, did you have free time?

**Sheridan:** [00:19:01] Oh yeah! We had quite a bit of free time, particularly on the weekends. We could go anywhere we wanted. We would go into town. We'd try to buy booze and the guy who'd sell us liquor, he was interesting. He'd sell us all the crap, but not the good stuff because he knew we weren't old enough or shouldn't be drinking anyhow

**Pylinkski:** [00:19:25] And any beggars can't be choosers, right?

**Sheridan:** [00:19:28] You know, it was pleasant to be there as opposed to into basic infantry camp.

**Pylinkski:** [00:19:37] Oh, absolutely.

**Sheridan:** [00:19:38] [Coughs] Excuse me. I've got a hoarse voice, today. But, you know, I remember it because often after the war. Well, let's not get ahead of where you want to be.

**Pylinkski:** [00:19:53] No problem. No, continue.

**Sheridan:** [00:19:54] After the war, I would go back to Indiana for football games and that felt like my university, though I wasn't there all that long. And actually, when I was discharged in my unit in the 20th Armored Division, there were two fellows from Chicago that I was very close to Charlie Bean and Tom Donnelly.

**Sheridan:** [00:20:21] And we went back to Indiana because they offered us the opportunity of going back to school there basically free of charge. And because it was a vet program with a very liberal attitude. You know, I remember the guy saying, "You know, you guys have can though something most our kids haven't. And you want to take off and go somewhere for a week or something, you come back. So we're not looking for that kind of a problem with you." [Pylinkski affirms: All right.] "We'd just like to invite you back." [Pylinkski affirms: Right.] But we're too stupid to do that. I had enough of school and enough of Army regulations, but we would

you know, as an adult, go back there fairly often to see football games and then there was an area south of Bloomington, can't remember the name, but it was a nice vacation area. Rolling hills, Browns County. It was fun to go through that.

**Pylinski:** [00:21:17] Yeah. Did you camp out or just go for the weekend?

**Sheridan:** [00:21:17] I was all done camping!

**Pylinski:** [00:21:25] All camped out?

**Sheridan:** [00:21:26] Yeah.

**Pylinski:** [00:21:26] So, um, just looking through my questions here, I watched your video and during a keynote speech, you made several references to acquiring beer and a minimal misdemeanor. Would you say you had something of a wild streak when you joined the military or were you just--?

**Sheridan:** [00:21:44] No, I was...

**Pylinski:** [00:21:44] Just going with the flow and doing what everybody was doing?

**Sheridan:** [00:21:49] Yup, yup.

**Pylinski:** [00:21:51] Did you have a lot of good friends coming out of Fort Benning and going to Fort Campbell?

**Sheridan:** [00:21:55] Not any good friends until we got to Indiana University. Then the same two fellows that basically came from Chicago where we kind of hooked up and we actually wound up in the same platoon in the 70th Infantry Battalion and just hung together during the war and even after the war for a while.

**Pylinski:** [00:22:23] That's good!

**Sheridan:** [00:22:24] Yeah, we we...There's some interesting. But if you go further, I can tell you funny things, they're funny now.

**Pylinski:** [00:22:31] We think that the most definitely. Oh. How were--Were there any experiences in boot camp that kind of stuck out to you?

**Sheridan:** [00:22:41] Only the drill sergeants. They scared me, but as I look back, kind of cracked me up, you know. Most of them were Southerners and they would, you know, verbally browbeat you. Of course, at that point, they scared the hell out of me. But, you know, you look back and say, "Oh, shit, I would have done the same thing."

**Pylinski:** [00:23:03] But I mean, you know, you're a seventeen year old kid. I mean, you've got this grown adult yelling at you, right?

**Sheridan:** [00:23:07] I still remember, "I'm going to march you guys until you drop out and when you drop, I'm going to have yourself pick yourself up and run more." [Sheridan imitates drill sergeant and Pylinski laughs]

**Sheridan:** [00:23:18] So I was disappointed that I I think I was disappointed that I was not recognized more because I had already learned all the manual of arms and things in the ROTC. I knew how to stamp a rifle and things like that, but I didn't seem to get any credit in that prevet commission that I didn't mean diddly-squat.

**Pylinski:** [00:23:41] Right. Well, it was high school, you know what I mean?

**Sheridan:** [00:23:42] Yeah, well, yeah, but that's not what they tell you in high school.

**Sheridan:** [00:23:46] Well, no, but in any event, I just went through it. Fortunately, my friend Charlie Bean, I was probably the first guy in my squad and Charlie always marched behind me and Charlie had unusual ears, looked like more like an elf, so we call him "The Elf". But he was a big guy. And every time we'd go out on a long march or something like that, he'd be behind me and he'd say, "Sheridan, if you can't carry that garbage stuff on, I'll carry him for you know. You

know, move your butt, get along." But it was good. And then when we camped in the pup tents, I always made sure that if it was on a slope that I was on the high side.

**Pylinski:** [00:24:36] Yeah.

**Sheridan:** [00:24:36] If Charlie ever rolled over, I'd be crushed. He wasn't fat, he was just a big young man, you know. Tom Donnely was a skinny by comparison, taller than I, you know, Irish kid. He was in the machine gun squad. But another Chicagoan you know, we got on well.

**Pylinski:** [00:24:59] Well, yeah, that's good. So after leaving Indiana and moving to Camp Campbell, they put you in an Army unit?

**Sheridan:** [00:25:06] Yeah.

**Pylinski:** [00:25:06] What kind of training did you do to prepare for being just a foot soldier and then going into an armored unit?

**Sheridan:** [00:25:13] There wasn't much difference. Occasionally, we'd ride in the half-tracks, things like that. I was always happy that I didn't wind up in a tank battalion because I never want to be inside one. In battle. I became a sniper and a scout, and I kind of liked that because I had more freedom and more range than everybody else. I also did not have mundane duties like KP or something. A little more in camp than in Europe...Chuck was my backup. We kind of ranged pretty freely.

**Pylinski:** [00:25:52] So did you receive any kind of formal sniper training?

**Sheridan:** [00:25:54] Only that I was set on the range a little more than anybody else and taught how to use my scope. Remember in those years and what they have today.

**Pylinski:** [00:26:04] Oh, yeah.

**Sheridan:** [00:26:05] Nineteen O-3 Springfield Rifle with a telescopic sight on it. I don't think I was that good, but I think I did well.

**Pyliniski:** [00:26:14] Good enough to be a sniper.

**Sheridan:** [00:26:16] I guess.

**Pyliniski:** [00:26:18] So what year what you're were you did you actually end up at Camp Campbell?

**Sheridan:** [00:26:26] I don't recall.

**Pyliniski:** [00:26:27] Okay, so, um, did you-- When did you hear about the details of what was going on? Where were you at when D-Day happened?

**Sheridan:** [00:26:39] You know, I don't remember where I was when that happened, truly don't.

**Pyliniski:** [00:26:43] Were you stateside still training?

**Sheridan:** [00:26:44] Oh, yes, we didn't go over till late in the war.

**Pyliniski:** [00:26:47] Okay. That was going to be my next set of questions. When and where were you sent to Europe? When did that whole thing started happening when it was that ramping up?

**Sheridan:** [00:26:59] The troops in Europe had gone well beyond France or probably in the Netherlands, I think at that time. We had a kind of an interesting experience because prior to our going, we knew that we were getting ready to go. Prior to that, I tried to join the paratroopers because I got kind of bored and being in in that camp and doing the same things. And so I volunteered but I was rejected because I guess a big old colonel said, "Son, you're a little light. I think if you could try and jump out of an airplane, you'd go up."

**Pyliniski:** [00:27:41] Well, you'd have a soft landing.

**Sheridan:** [00:27:43] Well, the guy saved my life, but I was crushed at that moment.

**Pylinski:** [00:27:46] Right. Right.

**Sheridan:** [00:27:46] That was a good thing as I look back on it. But just before we were going to go overseas, we had to begin packing up things, about five of us. We used to go to Evansville, Indiana, to the McCurdy Hotel, and we had to leave and we'd rent the bridal suite. Four, five of us because that's the only place big enough. And then we'd hang out during the day in the hotel but we'd have Class A pass so we could go out in the evening. I mean.

**Pylinski:** [00:28:19] This is when we were still at Campbell?

**Sheridan:** [00:28:20] Yeah.

**Pylinski:** [00:28:21] Okay.

**Sheridan:** [00:28:21] And so we actually went AWOL. We didn't go back to camp at the end of that weekend pass but we called up every day to find out where they were,

**Pylinski:** [00:28:38] Just to check in?

**Sheridan:** [00:28:39] We'd check in with the company clerk, you know, and finally, it was getting close to the time to go. We all went back, of course. The company commander was very disgusted with us.

**Pylinski:** [00:28:50] You would think he would be. At least you kept calling.

**Sheridan:** [00:28:54] Oh, yeah. But did you have any UCMJ [uniform code of military justice] action before that...or because of that? Were you did you get trouble like?

**Sheridan:** [00:29:05] Oh yeah. But one other thing that was always interesting if we were hitchhiking, which is a way we could get to Evansville. And if we didn't get back in time early



enough, the sheriff and I think in Madisonville would let us sleep in the jail, then wake us up. So we could get a ride back to camp in time. He was a nice guy.

**Pylinski:** [00:29:26] That's really cool.

**Sheridan:** [00:29:27] Yeah, there. Nice guy. But anyway we waled back and we got duty. We were going to leave the next day or two. And Commander, I remember I said company commander said, "I never expected you guys to ever go away. Well, I'm very disappointed and you're going to have duty all the time from the minute you get on a troop train, I want you to report to the mess, Sergeant." You know, there was a price to pay, but we had a good time.

**Pylinski:** [00:29:54] Yeah. I mean, you know, going to war, you want to get your kicks in while can.

**Sheridan:** [00:29:59] Yeah, I wasn't a very good director. My friends were better at it than I was. I remember in Evansville, the last couple of days. You know, we'd go down the street, take over a tavern and hang me on lampposts, "You guy stay here till we come out", you know, because I knew I couldn't drink very well. But in any event, on a train, we reported it to the mess, sergeant. We got a little bit of duty and that it just all seemed to disappear. [Pylinski affirms: Right.] We went to some camp in, near Boston or one of the towns,

**Pylinski:** [00:30:33] I think it was [Camp] Myles Standish was the name of the one where they ship off the East Coast up there.

**Sheridan:** [00:30:38] Yeah, we didn't we didn't leave from Boston. We left from another town, Brockton comes to mind. So by the time we got there, there was really not much in the way of punishment...[Pylinski affirms: Right]. In fact, I remember I think Tom and I became MPs and going into town because the year provided its own breaks. It was interesting because we were there to take care of the troops, but, you know, have a little beer here and there.

**Pylinski:** [00:31:12] Right. For the troublemakers in charge of keeping the law of war...

**Sheridan:** [00:31:15] So we boarded a ship. It was one of those old Liberty ships went to Europe. It was kind of an interesting trip. You know, the mess you were standing up and had the long tables and Liberty ships, rock the roll. And so you kind of eat out of the guy's mess it next to you and yours and the guy who's actually...

**Pylinski:** [00:31:39] Did did you talk to your folks much before you left for Europe?

**Sheridan:** [00:31:42] I told them I was going.

**Pylinski:** [00:31:45] How did they react?

**Sheridan:** [00:31:47] I have no idea. They didn't seem to expect anything else.

**Pylinski:** [00:31:51] I guess it was understood that--.

**Sheridan:** [00:31:52] Yeah, my mother and father had separated by that time. Yeah, I know they because in high school, they were in different place. And so, you know, I have been living with my mother up until the time I enlisted.

**Pylinski:** [00:32:07] What about your sister, did you talk to her at all?

**Sheridan:** [00:32:09] Yeah, [unclear words] with her. I don't think they you know, they probably didn't like the idea that I joined the Army, but they knew I was there. And that's when I would give.. My sister apparently at that time maybe had moved to California. I'm not sure I think that was then. Yeah, because when I came back from Europe, she was there.

**Pylinski:** [00:32:35] What about, what about your Polish aunt? And I mean, did she come from Germany or from coming from Poland? Did she.

**Sheridan:** [00:32:41] No, we didn't interact to that degree. There were family holiday dinners and things like that.

**Pylinski:** [00:32:48] Right.

**Sheridan:** [00:32:50] My cousin Sidney had joined the Army or had been drafted, I don't remember. My cousin Art, Big Art. He came from Europe, actually, he came from Israel. He had immigrated from Germany. Family, moved from Poland to Germany and then to Israel. And he came here from, he and his sister came here from Israel.

**Pylinski:** [00:33:14] Oh, interesting. Okay, so you're on the Liberty ship, you're going to Europe. Where did you guys land in Europe or where did you--?

**Sheridan:** [00:33:24] Le Havre.

**Pylinski:** [00:33:26] Where?

**Sheridan:** [00:33:26] Le Havre, the harbor of [unclear word] in France.

**Pylinski:** [00:33:28] Ok, what was that like when you got there?

**Sheridan:** [00:33:33] Well I was happy to get off the ship. That's number one.

**Pylinski:** [00:33:37] Did you get seasick a lot on the line?

**Sheridan:** [00:33:40] I didn't get seasick. I was fortunate I didn't get seasick but I didn't like it. Was just cramped and we seemed to be... Yeah the space was cramped, you know, sleeping basically, well there's one person on top of each other...I remember getting off that [unclear word] Gangplank, we just threw our duffel bags off the ship, picked them up, we got on the ground. And then we loaded on to some trucks and went into a camp not too far from Le Havre where we all assembled, waiting for our equipment and our vehicles to get there.

**Pylinski:** [00:34:20] And this is, you were still with the 70th at this time?

**Sheridan:** [00:34:22] Yeah. I was with that all through that period.

**Pylinski:** [00:34:24] Right. Did you ever experience any kind of antisemitism at all in the military?

**Sheridan:** [00:34:31] I don't think I was aware of any at all.

**Pylinski:** [00:34:34] Because I know was, you know, like different levels of racism and stuff going on at that time. And, you know, obviously it was still pre-Civil Rights movement timeframe, but--

**Sheridan:** [00:34:45] I didn't feel anything. I was curious. I've had some uncomfortable religious experiences prior to that. So I really didn't practice Judaism or anything like that. I don't know if it was in some of the noncoms mind of the drill sergeants or whatever, but I didn't feel that I was being picked on. I think there was one other Jewish kid in that platoon.

**Pylinski:** [00:35:10] And everything seemed pretty smooth for the most part?

**Sheridan:** [00:35:12] At least from that point of view.

**Pylinski:** [00:35:14] Yeah, well, that's good. My father used to come visit us quite often and I thought maybe two or three times in our camp, Campbell had in fact. Having a factory, I guess he had gas ration. [Pylinski inserts: Yeah]. Car and everything. So he got down there. He got along well with our company commander because he always came down and brought sweet rolls and things.

**Pylinski:** [00:35:39] Yeah,yeah. What were those visits like when your dad come down? What did you guys have to do?

**Sheridan:** [00:35:43] Oh we just hung out together. We probably did leave. I remember that. That's how I found Evansville because he was there, he stayed there and I was able to go with him. That's why I found McCurdy Hotel, became acquainted with the people there. [Pylinski inserts: Okay, thanks.] So that was that was nice. He embarrassed me on occasion. And get further down the road, I'll tell you another story about him. But he's pretty gregarious, kind of guy, people like him. Very difficult act to follow.

**Pyllinski:** [00:36:15] Super outgoing, yeah. Okay, so you're at Le Havre. You're assembled your unit with your unit. What was the next steps after everybody was assembled? You had your company together, your battalion with marching orders after that?

**Sheridan:** [00:36:28] Probably started rolling in through Europe, through France, Belgium, Holland, and then into Germany. Is an armored division, you know, you keep rolling along pretty good. [Pyllinski affirms: Right.] We didn't have any combat at that point. And then we got to the Rhine River and remember that just before we crossed then, that's when President Roosevelt died. Because we were told that and I remember being at that point, I think we were bivouaced in the schoolhouse right along the river. We had no problems or obstacles or anything as we went from Le Havre or various stages. We did have one experience. We were bivouaced somewhere. Part of the exercises and training they had. My buddy and I were given an exercise and we had to go out, get dropped off in the woods in the area near where we were camped. And our mission was to find the battalion headquarters and capture the battalion commander.

**Pyllinski:** [00:37:49] And you were still you were still working as a scout?

**Sheridan:** [00:37:52] Yeah, this was what I did all the time. So I remember trading my rifle in for carbon [rifel] and a cover for it. Do you know what I'm talking about? [Pyllinski affirms] A [unclear word] canvas covers. You could carry it in-- Both of us did that good because mine would be, too damn big to be right here in the middle of the night.

**Sheridan:** [00:38:15] So somehow, I had an innate sense of direction or whatever. I don't know how at this point. I can remember how I found the battalion's headquarters, but we did. And we decided that they had one guard out front that we would capture the guard and go into the headquarters.

**Sheridan:** [00:38:40] Well, just about that moment, he had to take the leak. So that's when we captured the guy. Yeah, we went in to headquarters and his the officers are all they're playing cards. We say, "You're captured blah,blah,blah."

**Pylinski:** [00:38:53] Yes. What were you doing? Oh, lookout.

**Sheridan:** [00:38:59] But my orders were to get the battalion commander, Colonel Kelly was his name, and he was I think he was asleep, as I remember. And I said, "Well, where's the car?" "Well, no disturbance. I'm sorry, my orders are--" Okay, so I went up to the bedroom, up to the second floor. Said, "Sir, I'm scared to capture something like that."

**Pylinski:** [00:39:21] "Permission to capture you, Sir." [Laughs]

**Sheridan:** [00:39:24] And that went down. So they ultimately called our company commander. Our lieutenant came and picked us up. Yeah. Never heard another word about it type of thing is.

**Pylinski:** [00:39:38] Did you get an award or anything? Handshake, hard handshake?

**Sheridan:** [00:39:43] No...You know, I guess we weren't supposed to capture the captain at headquarters. And actually, it was pretty stupid on two counts, as I look back on it, is that.

**Pylinski:** [00:39:54] There was only two of you, right, you said?

**Sheridan:** [00:39:54] Yeah, but it didn't take many.

**Sheridan:** [00:39:59] That they only had one guard out there. And the other things we didn't know he had live ammunition. We didn't want to get shot and killed, you know. So that was an interesting. [Pylinski inserts: Yeah] but that, you know, you look back as a humorous thing in the end.

**Sheridan:** [00:40:13] Well, anyway, we all the time loaded up and went on and crossed the Rhine River--.

**Pylinski:** [00:40:20] Before you crossed the Rhine, what was what was it like interacting with the local population? You said you didn't see a whole lot of combat. So I'm assuming maybe you were with the local populace.

**Sheridan:** [00:40:29] And so you're pretty well reigned in. The only time we saw, as a rule, the local populace would be as we're going through town and why we were having a mess and then people were starving and they would almost stand right next to our garbage cans, which, you know, took us a while to understand that but then maybe we dealt a little more than--

**Pylinski:** [00:41:02] I was going to ask, did you ever give them anything extra?

**Sheridan:** [00:41:04] Yeah, not specifically, but yes. You know, we understood what that was.

**Pylinski:** [00:41:10] And this was in France?

**Sheridan:** [00:41:12] No, this was about Germany. I don't remember it being a problem before, but we were getting into more populated areas. But I do recall that. But then, you know. See, we began rolling, you know, through Germany, much of the battles were going on, the Battle of the Bulge began just after we crossed the river, but we were south, and I think we were the 7th Army at that time. We moved from Army to Army as you would imagine. The only time we ever really stop is right here when we camp for a short period, or we ran out of gas.

**Pylinski:** [00:41:56] Wait for the supply of train to catch up?

**Sheridan:** [00:41:58] Yeah. Or we captured German spies. That we captured, they ran away. They were there. [Pylinski says: Right.] We didn't have a lot of shooting combat in any of our time, maybe a couple of times and that was pretty much more unusual for us.

**Pylinski:** [00:42:18] But did you ever find yourself in direct combat, like in Germany or anything?

**Sheridan:** [00:42:23] Yeah, we did one or two points and there we were in situation where we had a little firefight. And toward the end we were hitting the people's army, the kids and old men, which was very disgusting to me. As a sniper, you don't really want to have to shoot a child or older folks but we just pretty much rolled on until we ran out of stuff. And I think the

one issue we had I think I sent you that CD that I talked about. We were on our way to Munich and then we ran into Dachau.

**Pylinski:** [00:43:08] Yeah, I was going to ask you.

**Sheridan:** [00:43:09] Before that, we went into the 3rd Army. I remember that was an interesting experience because we were met by a colonel and he made it very clear that we were in Patton's army, now that we should keep our sleeves rolled down, our collars buttoned, and if we didn't see a white flag in every building, we should put the roof in the cellar because we had the firepower to do it. We never did that. [Pylinski affirms: Right.] I remember him letting us know we were now in Patton's army.

**Pylinski:** [00:43:49] Pat was a pretty, pretty overwhelming individual.

**Sheridan:** [00:43:53] Yeah, I guess his officers carried that down.

**Pylinski:** [00:43:56] Oh, I wouldn't doubt it. He probably surrounded himself with like idol- like individuals.

**Sheridan:** [00:44:01] I would think. So. Then I remember one other instance, I think we were going through, I think it was on the outskirts, I believe it was Würzburg. You know, get older, you can't remember these towns. We were pretty well along, and I could speak a little bit of German. My father...Yiddish and German are someone similar, and my father taught us German at the table, which is good. I knew a little bit, so I became kind of an interpreter. [Pylinski inserts: Yeah.] And I remember hollering over the side of a half-truck...We came to an area where there was like a gated prison, not a wall, but probably that was a wall of a city. And a platoon leader said, "Ask him about that wall." So I leaned over the side of the half-track and asked the fellow in German if there was any problem on the other side of the wall. Does the road go straight through or should we go around, something like that? And we probably wouldn't have followed his directions, but we always did that to see what the reaction would be. [Pylinski inserts: Right.] And another man, looked up and in perfect English said, "I say there, Old Chap, you won't have any problem going right through there. We've taken over the town."



That prison camp had been a prison camp for prisoners from the Jersey Islands, off the coast of England?

**Pylinski:** [00:45:36] Yeah, okay.

**Sheridan:** [00:45:36] And they were taken very early in the war. So as we were coming, their guards ran away and they kind of took over the town.

**Pylinski:** [00:45:46] Gotcha, I remember reading about that.

**Sheridan:** [00:45:50] And then we went beyond that ,and we camped I recall that we had in that town another one, I can't remember which one. There was an underground brewery - had all kinds of beer and and soda stuck in caves. We found out that but then we had to leave it. But while we were there, we emptied all of our five-gallon water and filled them with beer and then we camped outside of town.

**Pylinski:** [00:46:22] Yeah.

**Sheridan:** [00:46:23] And we could be there for two or three days. We could send a half track back in every night, to fill up. But the military government, our government had taken over, so we had to pay with occupation money.

**Pylinski:** [00:46:37] Okay, I was going to ask about occupation...

**Sheridan:** [00:46:39] I forgot what we paid him but yeah.

**Pylinski:** [00:46:44] What was this, Munich or what is this--?

**Sheridan:** [00:46:47] No this is Würzburg or somewhere on the way to Munich. [Pylinski affirms: Okay.] We hadn't gotten there yet.

**Pylinski:** [00:46:51] What was occupation money? What exactly was that?

**Sheridan:** [00:46:53] You're never seen that? Just a little square of green greenish money paper and it was U.S. occupation.

**Pylinski:** [00:47:04] Then what did you use that for specifically?

**Sheridan:** [00:47:06] Well, we didn't use it for much of anything except for that guy wanted it for the beer.

**Pylinski:** [00:47:09] Right.

**Sheridan:** [00:47:10] Okay, I didn't have a chance to buy much anywhere else. [Pylinski adds: Gotcha], but that was issued. If you haven't seen it, I can send you one if you like.

**Pylinski:** [00:47:20] So to continue on, we were talking about occupation money, but you were also speaking about being outside of Würzburg. . From there you moved up to near Munich?

**Sheridan:** [00:47:31] We were going to back up 45th and 42nd Infantry Divisions in taking Munich and we went down this road and literally ran into Dachau. We didn't know what it was. Our tank broke through the wall or fence. And then we saw all these men [sighs], primarily men in these striped uniforms. I think you saw pictures of the men, in their pictures, those pictures, here. [Pylinski affirms: Okay.] And realized that it was a concentration camp. And so we went through the camp. Some of our guys got a little, there weren't many guards there. We got really pissed off because of what we saw. We saw stacks of bodies along the railroad tracks. [Pylinski affirms: Right]. Emaciated people coming to us. Being able to speak a little Yiddish or German, I could speak to some of the people, and they couldn't figure out who we were and didn't realize that they were being liberated. Actually, some of them ran out of the camp, we had to go back and get it back in so they could be treated, you know. And then we set up a little guard duty outside of the town, and waited until some other troops came in and were better equipped to take care of these people. But it was very shocking, very.

**Pylinski:** [00:49:09] What do you remember the most about liberating, Dachau?

**Sheridan:** [00:49:12] The people walking, the men walking, they were emaciated, waling toward us up the road and the stacks of the bodies. But when you...The thing that always amazed me my point now and when I gave that talk, you know, I was maybe I had reached eighteen by that time and it never dawned on me what that *really* was.

**Pyliniski:** [00:49:37] Right. Yeah, The breadth of whole--

**Sheridan:** [00:49:38] The whole camp and these people were there, and they were suffering. And the smell was funky, to say the least. You know, it wasn't till later that had actually made me understand what that really was. So we stayed there, I think, most of a day. And our officers, apparently, were really unaware of that, what it was in essence. And then they brought in some other troops that could administer in a better fashion to the prisoners and then we moved out. And the next day or so, we went down into Munich.

**Pyliniski:** [00:50:26] Do you remember any conversations you had with the any of the people in Dachau?

**Sheridan:** [00:50:31] I remember one fellow. We have moved over out of the camp into the streets of the town doing some kind of guard duty. Two of us. There were different stations at [unclear word]. And there is a good-looking girl that went by it. I think I said something and one of the prisoners sort of got up and admonished me. He said, "You can't talk to her. She's a Nazi. Not good." [Pyliniski inserts: Okay.] I really remember him interfering with my admiration for the girl, but it made me remember what I was and where I was, you know.

**Pyliniski:** [00:51:10] Right, exactly.

**Sheridan:** [00:51:11] Yeah. So, but that was it. Now that we're not in Munich it had pretty well then already taken. We had to go from house to house and see if there were any body there. I remember one house I found a young soldier that I had to take out of it. He was back home with his mother. She was berating me for doing that. And I hated to do it, frankly, because I was thinking about where I would be. He was a kid. Bright kid, you know. [Pyliniski affirms: Right.] But I had I and I don't remember which other buddy was with me when we had to take him out. I remember doing that. So, you can see you had some impression on me at the time.

**Pylinski:** [00:51:58] Yeah, I can imagine. What was the unit attitude like prior to Dachau and then after Dachau? I mean...

**Sheridan:** [00:52:05] The unit attitude about what?

**Pylinski:** [00:52:08] Just the war in general. I mean, what was the morale like for the men that, you know, that you were serving with at the time? I mean, you get to war and it's already going full swing. You're coming through Europe and everything...

**Sheridan:** [00:52:19] You know, all we knew is that it was day to day. We had to move every day, almost every day. And we were waiting to really get hit by some remaining German troops, which also the rest time did not really have. We'd have skirmishes. You know, I remember one night we were supposed to go down a road and we were stopped, and I was set out with my buddy, as always, you know, you have a back-up, to see what it was. And we ran into another unit and we were told that it was a Panzerfaust [German anti-tank weapon] camp, that they were Panzerfaust entrenched along the road. You know what a Panzerfaust is? [Pylinski affirms: Mhm]. And that's why that group in front of us, that unit in front of us, I think it was B Company or something, had stopped. It stopped.

**Pylinski:** [00:53:23] Right.

**Sheridan:** [00:53:25] And they were waiting for some artillery to hit it. And the fortunate thing was that where we normally would have been ordered to fight through it, it was Colonel Kevin [autocorrects] Kelly who said, "Let's wait." I understood later that that was kind of what happened. So instead of moving on and probably getting hit pretty hard, he waited for some backup and artillery, and we didn't have that problem, which is very good.

**Pylinski:** [00:53:58] It works out.

**Sheridan:** [00:53:58] But I loved her dearly. [Laughter]

**Pylinski:** [00:54:01] So what was being in Munich like? How long were you there?

**Sheridan:** [00:54:04] We were only there for a day or two. We just went through that particular area. And then we went on into Austria, too. I think it was Salzburg.

**Pylinski:** [00:54:17] There was, yeah, the Berchtesgaden in Salzburg?

**Sheridan:** [00:54:21] I think the Berchtesgaden came after we got to Salzburg, and we were set up to I remember we were just at the edge of that when the war was over. I think we were on the outskirts of Munich, and we saw a lot of fireworks and things like that. But we're also camped out and we didn't know that the war was over. We heard that it might be, but we didn't know that. And apparently, there was a lot of a lot of horses or cattle in the field. And we got very nervous about that because we didn't know if there were any soldiers in the [unclear words] coming up here. Not everybody knew war was over, but that it was close. Excuse me. So I remember that being a very distressful time at that moment. And we all set up positions and we got ready. Just the cattle. [Pylinski inserts: Right.] Yeah, but then we went on into Salzburg.

**Pylinski:** [00:55:30] What was it like in Austria? Was pretty and?

**Sheridan:** [00:55:33] Well, it much the same as where we'd been. Rolling country, you know southern Germany was like that. And then we were taken to Berchtesgaden and we were supposedly guarding the rail station or something, but we didn't look disrespectful or maybe they were wanted this because there were a lot of visitors there.

**Pylinski:** [00:55:56] Right.

**Sheridan:** [00:55:56] I saw, I believe it was Goring's train, it was in the station or something like that that we got a chance to ride up in our tracks to see Hitler's home, Eagle's Nest...It was empty, barren at that point. I remember also we camped in that area. I think it was Chuck and I wanted to get-- You know, when you're in the field, you don't get a chance to bathe, occasionally they would bring up a big tank truck and on the rails of the truck, they would have little holes and those were the nozzles. You'd get in line and take off your clothes. You'd get deloused. You know what that is?

**Pylinski:** [00:56:42] Yeah.

**Sheridan:** [00:56:43] And then, it goes through here, you get so many minutes to get wet and so many minutes to put soap on, and a minute or two to rinse off and then get together in line, get your uniform back.

**Pylinski:** [00:56:54] Efficiency. Right.

**Sheridan:** [00:56:56] Well that didn't happen that often. So, I think we were in the area, yeah it must have been near Berchtesgaden as I remember, and we wanted to wash and there was a lake, you know. Because at that time, when we were in combat, I would be taking messages of verbal orders back and forth. You know, I was pretty, I wasn't athletic, but I'm pretty damn active. And I was skinny and little, and I could run all over [unclear] Of course, I had a good sense of direction. So I found that there was a lake. So I got permission to go up and Chuck and I went to the lake and saw some people living in a house. And chatted with a guy who could speak pretty good English. There are about four or five men and a couple, three or four women. They actually were army people, German army people who were hiding out. We didn't know that. They were very friendly. We were stupid. I remember stacking our rifles there while we took our clothes off and jumped in the lake. The war was over for them. They were happy to be left alone. But it never dawned on me at that moment. It did later but not then. And the water was so damn cold. You know, we're up in the Alps. That water was cold! [Pylinski laughs.]

**Sheridan:** [00:58:27] At least we got clean and dried up and talked to them a little bit and then we went back to our unit after we got dressed. I think, I'm almost remembering that they gave us some towels.

**Pylinski:** [00:58:44] That was nice of them.

**Sheridan:** [00:58:47] Yeah, well they're happy we didn't bug 'em.

**Pylinski:** [00:58:47] Right, exactly. So long as they didn't know, or you didn't know.

**Sheridan:** [00:58:50] Yeah, I think that's what happened. In any event, we then went back and we camped out somewhere. The war was over.

**Pyllinski:** [00:59:00] Do you remember hearing about Hitler killing himself while you were there?

**Sheridan:** [00:59:05] No, I don't remember. I don't remember that. I think so. But I, I can't remember an incident where I knew that at that time.

**Pyllinski:** [00:59:16] Right. What was the feeling of going around with the men knowing that the war was over? How was everybody taking all of that?

**Sheridan:** [00:59:23] Well, we were very pleased and happy that it was over. We were wondering what our future would be, because I think we began hearing about rotation, you know, back to the States and then go to the Pacific, Japan, but I remember we were happy.

**Sheridan:** [00:59:42] and we had to blow up all of our munitions before we loaded on trains to go back to France and board ships. So we would pile that stuff up. And I did a lot of that. I remember I've been someone talking a little bit about it. The big thing was when you set the fuse, don't run, walk very quickly. You don't want to fall. But we blew up almost all of our ammunition and munitions for all the vehicles in the compound.

**Sheridan:** [01:00:19] And then we boarded a train "Forty and eights". You know, what those are?

**Pyllinski:** [01:00:25] Yes. The troop carriers, forty people, eight horses.

**Sheridan:** [01:00:29] And rode back through Europe, I think it is, again, hard to remember that I got sick on that train. We hadn't had some fruit, things like that for a while, and we pulled up at one station next to a train that had supplies in it, and we raided that. But I remember I had too many canned pineapples and tomatoes and had diarrhea. So, I wound up when we got to France with a bad case of diarrhea and put it in hospital.

**Pylinski:** [01:01:07] Wow!

**Sheridan:** [01:01:11] And it took me a long time. It wasn't until a few years ago that I would pineapple, again.

**Pylinski:** [01:01:15] Well, okay, left a bad taste in your mouth, I guess, huh?

**Sheridan:** [01:01:19] I just remember that all the time. So anyway, we got there. I was in the hospital and when we were going to ship home, my buddies, Tommy and Chuck caught a vehicle, came to hospital and got me and helped me get back up the gangplank on the ship.

**Pylinski:** [01:01:39] Another Liberty ship?

**Sheridan:** [01:01:41] No, that was a liner, a liner by the name of it, but it was a much bigger ship. And I remember I had to get certain guard duty in the stairwells or things like that after I got better. Then I would do that. And we came back, landed in New York, and went to a camp in [New] Jersey. And one thing that always struck me, the order we had was, "Don't pick on prisoners." The camp was being served by German prisoners. So we were getting steak and fries and things. But they were serving it.

**Pylinski:** [01:02:20] Yeah. Yeah. This was back in the States?

**Sheridan:** [01:02:25] Yeah, in Jersey.

**Pylinski:** [01:02:27] Wow. And so German prisoners of war were serving you steak and fries when you came back from--

**Sheridan:** [01:02:35] It was good work for a POW.

**Pylinski:** [01:02:36] Well, beats slave labor, I guess. So you guys never got orders for rotation to the Pacific or anything. What did you do when you got back?

**Sheridan:** [01:02:46] Went to work.



**Sheridan:** [01:02:47] Yeah, yeah. We were then sent as a unit to California. I can't remember the name of that camp, [recalls] Camp Cooke. I think that was the name of it, on the coast of California to train for the invasion of Japan. And we've got a forty-five day furlough.

**Pylinski:** [01:03:16] What did you do on your forty-five-day furlough?

**Sheridan:** [01:03:18] Went home, saw the family, ate good food, you know, we went to hockey games, things like that.

**Pylinski:** [01:03:24] Watch the 'Hawks?

**Sheridan:** [01:03:25] Yeah, yeah. My father was a great hockey fan and he had season tickets to it. So we'd go quite often. By that time, my dad had a new factory, he'd been building, making all this stuff during war as a war contractor, and he lived in what was then called the Stevens Hotel. That was the old Hilton Hotel. But Conrad Hilton, that was the Stevens Hotel. And there were no condos or things on South Michigan Avenue. So that's where he lived. And when I came, I had a room there during my furlough, but also lived there for a while after the war. [Pylinski inserts: Okay.] But in any event, went to California. We were exercising and training to go to Japan. I was giving current events lectures, which is kind of an interesting situation. So, well, I was not that outgoing, you know, I'm getting better, but but somehow or other, that got to be my job. Again, I don't know how it happened, but that was fine. And people, some just weren't paying attention. And finally, I started drawing things on a blackboard like a penis, balls, and things, and then they started paying attention.

**Pylinski:** [01:04:54] Got their attention, right?

**Sheridan:** [01:04:55] Yeah, I learned to do that even today, not the same pictures but if you draw something, people pay attention to you. So, we did that. I had another interesting incident due to my father. I got called. Oh, no, before that: At the end of my furlough, I was going back to California. I'd been there, came home, had my furlough, and I was going back. My father lent me his car.

**Pylinski:** [01:05:34] What kind of car was it, do you remember?

**Sheridan:** [01:05:35] A Plymouth, a beaten-up Plymouth. And one of my buddies was riding with me, not Tommy or Chuck but another one who lived in this area. And we got as far as Tuscola, Illinois when a rod went through the [unclear word.]

**Pylinski:** [01:05:51] Aw.

**Sheridan:** [01:05:51] But now we're here and the war is over in Europe. We're still fighting in Japan. And parts and things were very hard to get, but my father being in business was able to get a replacement cylinder and there was a mechanic in town, so we had to stay in town two three days. And I think we wired or called the Company saying, "We're going to be late coming back but we're coming"... that was our response.

**Pylinski:** [01:06:20] Right.

**Sheridan:** [01:06:24] And so ultimately, we stayed at a little hotel there. But the locals never embraced us, if you will. I think they were afraid of soldiers. We weren't even invited to the American Legion Hall or whatever that was in town. [Pylinski comments: Interesting.] So, anyway, we start driving back to California, ran into a very big snowstorm, I think, in Texas or Arizona, and ultimately ran off the road. And I remember a trucker stopped and pulled us out - that he had us facing the wrong way, going back the way we came. But there was no place because of the icy roads--

**Pylinski:** [01:07:06] No place to turn around?

**Sheridan:** [01:07:08] So we had twenty miles back to find a place and then turn around and go back again. Well, we were late, so we wired the camp again. Got no response. I think, 'Oh shit, here I am, in trouble, again.' But when we got back, ultimately, there was no there were no re[percussions].

**Pylinski:** [01:07:25] Was this still the same company commander from the last time that you went AWOL? So, he knew your M.O, more or less? [Laughs]

**Sheridan:** [01:07:32] We've been through war, right? You know, we were a little bit more seasoned, and we understood each other, and we all apparently took care of our responsibilities. Remember, one of the highlights is [that] they even let me drive to half-track in Germany for a while. I always wanted to do that. I was, I never knew how to double clutch. [Pylinski inserts: Oh, okay.] Used to scare the hell out of everybody.

**Pylinski:** [01:07:55] Yeah, I can imagine,

**Sheridan:** [01:07:57] But I wanted to drive. In any event, so we got to California, and we were camp training to go to Japan.

**Pylinski:** [01:08:11] What kind of training are you doing?

**Sheridan:** [01:08:12] Just, you know, like infantry military training.

**Pylinski:** [01:08:15] We didn't do any amphibious work. And the war ended, and we were all thinking about how many points do we have because of the point system was the [basis for] when you got out. You know, one day, I got called to the company commander and he said words like, "Sheridan, you know, the chain of command?" "Yes, Sir, I do. "So when you...have a family problems at home, you're supposed to start here and tell us about it and see what we can do." "Yes, Sir." He said, "Well, you got problems at home. You got to go see the battalion." So I went to the battalion. "Sir, I understand there's a problem and so on." "So, yeah, don't you know the chain of command?" He said, "You got to see Colonel Capanson [unclear name]?" Colonel Capanson [unclear name], the same day, getting the same thing, "Don't you know the chain of command. You got a problem at home, parents or somebody needs you." "I understand, Sir."

**Pylinski:** [01:09:10] Did you, did you know what was going on?

**Sheridan:** [01:09:12] No.

**Pylinski:** [01:09:13] Okay,

**Sheridan:** [01:09:14] He said, "But you've got to go to Division and see the G-2 or G-3 because they got some kind of message about you having a problem and you shouldn't be here." So, I go there and I got the same thing, chain of command, and you got the problem..."I don't know of any problem at home, Sir."

**Pylinski:** [01:09:32] Right. What was the issue?

**Sheridan:** [01:09:36] So they said, "Well, we got a message from some high command, I don't remember where that you're having, your family is having a [unclear words] and you should be released to go home and help work with that or something." I don't know anything about that. So I went back to the Company and apparently, my father had met some politician in his work, and my father being who my father was a gregarious guy said something to somebody and somebody said something to somebody else. And they wanted to know, "Why is this fellow being kept in the service when his family...?" And we didn't have a problem!

**Pylinski:** [01:10:15] Oh Lord! But it was that top-down thing. Instead of going to the bottom up.

**Sheridan:** [01:10:22] I was getting kidded all the time, you know, guys in the company [would say], "Heard from the president today, Sheridan? [Pylinski laughs]

**Pylinski:** [01:10:27] You know, Army guys are pretty unforgiving. Did you end up going home at all or no?

**Sheridan:** [01:10:31] No!

**Pylinski:** [01:10:32] No, just kind of like saw for what it was?

**Sheridan:** [01:10:34] Yeah, I wouldn't want to do that.

**Pylinski:** [01:10:41] Yeah, kind of a cheap way to go out, that's for sure.

**Sheridan:** [01:10:43] Yeah, my dad was doing, what parents sometimes do but--

**Pylinski:** [01:10:47] Right.

**Sheridan:** [01:10:49] --it became embarrassing. And the company commander knew him anyway from the donuts [he used to distribute]

**Pylinski:** [01:10:54] Right, from back at Campbell.

**Sheridan:** [01:10:56] Our first company commander at Campbell, had been a Cavalry officer. He was still wearing jousters. I remember that was unusual. So anyway, he wasn't wearing them after we left. So when we were, then sent back, I was back to Camp McCoy [now Fort McCoy, in Wisconsin] here and was discharged. And that's the story of my life in the service.

**Pylinski:** [01:11:25] It sure is. Did you ever experience going through, sweeping through Munich and stuff before you left Europe?

**Sheridan:** [01:11:34] Did I--?

**Pylinski:** [01:11:34] When you were sweeping through Munich in Europe, and did you did your unit ever experience a lot of, like, surrendering Nazis at all or--?

**Sheridan:** [01:11:44] Well, most of them had run. Well, what we did do shortly after that: When the war was over, we would then get a great number of troops that were coming out of Italy and a great number of German troops had surrendered. So we would set up a kind of a prison encampment and then we'd feed them until they were taken over by the military police. And I remember in our K-rations or C-rations, we'd keep the cans that had the cigarettes and candy and gave them food.

**Pylinski:** [01:12:23] Okay, yeah.

**Sheridan:** [01:12:24] But at that point, they'd surrendered. They were not a problem at all. Then we were at times sent out into the woods to try to capture some troops that were

sneaking back from Italy through Austria. And if we found a way to get them KP in our camp for a day or two until we gave them to the Military Police.

**Pylinski:** [01:12:48] So you would handle the prisoners, give them KP peeling potatoes or whatnot?

**Sheridan:** [01:12:52] Yeah, we'd get the half-track roll through the woods, see what we could find. And usually, we found one or two. It was interesting, you know, we didn't abuse anyone. You just have them to KP, so we didn't have to.

**Pylinski:** [01:13:05] Yeah, well, you said in your questionnaire that your outlook on the enemy during World War II changed for the better over the years. How so?

**Sheridan:** [01:13:12] I think I understood what the average soldier was doing. Not so much the hierarchy and the people who abuse Jews and gypsies and all the strange things they did. And as I read more and understood more about the politics about what went on in Germany at that time and now Hitler ascended to power, there was a little bit more about what that was all about. I understood a little bit about that. And the average German GI wasn't a problem. You know, you talk about the SS, people like that, that's a whole different ballgame.

**Pylinski:** [01:13:54] Absolutely.

**Sheridan:** [01:13:54] Yeah. But, you know, I grew up. I think they grew up. And I was concerned because the aunt I spoke about it, she lost all of the family was left in Europe except one cousin, and he had been hidden by some people. And then after the war, he became a communist. So he was protected by the communist government. And occasionally, apparently, he would come here to visit. I never met him, but he would come to visit his mother. My father tells me he was occasionally visited by the government, our government, to see if this man would defect, but they would never let him come with his family.

**Pylinski:** [01:14:40] Oh interesting.

**Sheridan:** [01:14:40] He was reluctant to do that. And of course, ultimately, my aunt passed on and he came here to get what he could out of her estate. She worked very hard to build a little bit of a nest egg and an estate.

**Pylinski:** [01:15:03] Did you, how did you spend a lot of your daily downtime when you were overseas when you guys had, you know, downtime or any little bit of free time, you can squeeze out, what did you do?

**Sheridan:** [01:15:14] No, we really didn't have free time.

**Pylinski:** [01:15:17] Right.

**Sheridan:** [01:15:17] But most of the time we'd sleep and we learned how to sleep very well in a half track. I mean you learn any time you could, to get rest when you could.

**Pylinski:** [01:15:28] Oh, yeah.

**Sheridan:** [01:15:29] That's pretty much what we did. We didn't roam around and we didn't get loose. We stayed with Germany within the confines of our camp unless we had duties and then when we loaded up and moved out, we were fighting.

**Pylinski:** [01:15:42] Right. Did you have any R & R when you were deployed overseas?

**Sheridan:** [01:15:48] No.

**Pylinski:** [01:15:48] Didn't take any R & R? You had a furlough when he came back. And obviously you had time off before you left, but nothing while you were gone?

**Sheridan:** [01:15:56] Yeah. No, no. We were just moving down the trail.

**Pylinski:** [01:15:59] Just keep on plugging away. Did you, did you write home all that all while you were off in Europe?

**Sheridan:** [01:16:04] Yeah, I think I did.

**Pylinski:** [01:16:05] Do you remember whom you wrote to?

**Sheridan:** [01:16:07] Probably my mother and father, the only two people I could think of. Didn't have a girlfriend.

**Pylinski:** [01:16:12] No. Did you, what were those letters like? Do you remember?

**Sheridan:** [01:16:17] Oh, I would just kind of tell them I was okay and maybe roughly without telling them where, but that we were just moving along and so on. And I remember writing my father one point telling him, "Don't buy any more war bonds. I can't carry all the stuff you've already got me." [Pylinski laughs]

**Pylinski:** [01:16:38] Too much to carry, too much to handle.

**Sheridan:** [01:16:38] Well, those packs when your 117 pounds...that's a lot. That's why Chuck was always kidding me about it. You know, "If you can't carry that goddam pack, I'll carry it for you." [Laughter]

**Pylinski:** [01:16:54] Oh man...did you share any of your war experiences with your family when you got home?

**Sheridan:** [01:17:05] No, I don't think I did at all. I remember one time and I got turned off on... When we were discharging from Camp McCoy, my father, drove up there to pick up Tommy, Chuck and myself. And I remember him asking me, "How many Germans did you kill?"

**Pylinski:** [01:17:28] And at that moment, I just stopped talking about it. Now he didn't mean anything, he didn't think about what he was asking.

**Pylinski:** [01:17:38] Right. Okay, he was just curious.



**Sheridan:** [01:17:40] But it just, I didn't say much. It wasn't until very, by and large very recently when somebody contacted my wife at the temple about doing this Holocaust thing that I did it. When I got out, I wanted nothing to do with the service. I didn't join any military organizations. It wasn't until maybe two years ago, and I joined the American Legion only because in our town, a friend of mine just needed more members. There weren't many left. I think because I've gone on that Honor Flight, I got a better feeling for other people who have been through the war, not just the fellows who were the captains [?] In the US Army or something.

**Pylinski:** [01:18:25] Yeah. Yeah. So, you did an Honor Flight up to Washington, D.C.?

**Sheridan:** [01:18:28] Yes.

**Pylinski:** [01:18:28] How was that experience?

**Sheridan:** [01:18:30] Fantastic. I put it off for a couple of years, but a good friend of mine did a lot in Aurora to get people involved. And I had an interesting experience because I'd ultimately gotten from the Army the awards, you know, the...[Laughs] I don't think I earned a good conduct medal; and overseas [medals] and all that kind of stuff. And my wife had them framed on the wall and her aunt and uncle lived in Lakeside, Michigan, just across the border. And my mother-in-law also was with them, and we would often visited. So I knew Uncle Frank had been a gunner and would be seventeen. He's a very quiet guy. I never really talked about it. And after my wife got my awards framed [unclear word] medals. And so one day I was sitting with Frank, I said, "By the way, did you ever get your awards, Frank?" And he said, "Yeah." I said, "Well, you got 'em?" "Oh yeah." "Can we see them? Do you know where they are?" Now, Frank is ninety-two or three years old at that point. And it's only two or three years ago, I think it is. And so he went somewhere and came out with a beaten up envelope.

**Sheridan:** [01:19:59] And I opened the envelope, and he had a distinguished Flying Cross, he had an Air Medal and a few other things that were very heroic things that he had been in continent. [Pylinski inserts: Right.] Well, that was the fellow, I wanted to go on the honor flight. So I made arrangements to sign up for it and to be able to take him. So he and I both went. He was in a wheelchair and those people took excellent care of both of us, but particularly Frank in the wheelchair. And he was beginning to lose it a little bit, but I think he enjoyed it pretty much.

**Pylinski:** [01:20:36] What was the experience like for you?

**Sheridan:** [01:20:38] I thought it was very great. I was, I had seen it on TV, on public television, and I've been told about it by these fellows that were helping to put people on it. But it's a very interesting experience, just the logistics of it. We got to Midway at about four thirty in the morning and we were immediately met by some sailors who want to put us in a wheelchair, actually insisted that I get in a wheelchair and Frank, of course.

**Pylinski:** [01:21:14] Mmhm.

**Sheridan:** [01:21:14] "I don't need one." "You're getting [unclear word.]" They wheel us in. I get out of it, we keep Frank in it and people register us and take care of us, and then they feed us and escort us out to the plane. And actually, we got on a plane, a plane moved away from the gate, but had to go back because it had engine problems, so we all had to get out. [Pylinski exclaims: Oh, Lord.] Get on another plane.

**Pylinski:** [01:21:41] Was it just veterans on the whole flight, right?

**Sheridan:** [01:21:45] Yeah, the veterans and guardians, who were basically were veterans or civilians that were willing to donate their time. The interesting thing, though, is many people had wheelchairs. Those wheelchairs were loaded on the plane with us. When the plane had to go back, it was unloaded and loaded again. We got to Washington. Those wheelchairs were the ones that were loaded and unloaded. And, logistically, that's a job. [Pylinski inserts: Right.] So anyway, we go to Washington, and we were met there by other volunteers and we were set up. On the flight over, we sat with a fellow I'd met who was the banker's father and his granddaughter. So we kind of hung together.

**Sheridan:** [01:22:35] And she was his guardian ,and I became Frank's guardian. But when we got to Washington, there was a [US] Air Force sergeant, a woman sergeant, sergeant major that was assigned to us. So she took care of Frank. She was the one who insisted on wheeling him everywhere. And she'd done it several times. So she knew what was going on. She really took very good care of us.

**Pylinski:** [01:23:00] What did you guys see while you were there?

**Sheridan:** [01:23:01] Well, we saw all of the monuments and the Air and Space Museum. That interested Frank because he was pretty much mechanical. He liked the engines that were there, in particular. He got a little tired. So he didn't get out at the Lincoln Memorial or the Vietnam War Memorial, which, by the way, we now the *Moving Walls* [movie] is going to be coming to Aurora.

**Pylinski:** [01:23:26] Yeah.

**Sheridan:** [01:23:27] You know that?

**Pylinski:** [01:23:28] I've seen *Moving Wall[s]*, quite a few times. I didn't know it was going to be in a Aurora--

**Sheridan:** [01:23:32] In November. And I think one of our guys was--do you have a woman here [at the Pritzker Military Museum & Library], I think he was talking to a Nancy?

**Pylinski:** [01:23:40] Okay, yeah. Yeah, Nancy is upstairs.

**Sheridan:** [01:23:42] Speaking to her about it, so we're all excited about having that come.

**Pylinski:** [01:23:49] Yeah, I've seen that. I saw the movie, *Moving Wall[s]*, I think it was in Glen Ellyn once....in the suburbs, but it was ait was like a Labor Day weekend or Memorial Day Weekend.

**Sheridan:** [01:23:59] Yeah, we're probably going to have it for five days and it's going to be on a football field or one of the fields adjacent to high school football field. We're all out raising money for it now.

**Pylinski:** [01:24:10] Oh, excellent, very cool. So what did you do after you were discharged?

**Sheridan:** [01:24:18] I learned to fly.

**Pylinski:** [01:24:20] Okay.

**Sheridan:** [01:24:21] Yeah, I flew until two years ago.

**Pylinski:** [01:24:24] You fly in what?

**Sheridan:** [01:24:25] Smaller planes, but that was one of the two things I did immediately after. One was get a blue suit and second was to learn to fly.

**Pylinski:** [01:24:37] What was the whole reason for the blue suit?

**Sheridan:** [01:24:39] Because I was tired of wearing Army uniform [Laughter] and it was very hard to get material in those years. My father, I remember, took me to some tailor in Indiana that happened to have boats of material. My dad was very good at scrounging out things.

**Pylinski:** [01:24:55] Finding stuff, right?

**Sheridan:** [01:24:58] Yeah. And then I went to work for my dad. I lived at what is now the Hilton. For a while I would drink a lot. I'd meet my buddies Charlie and Tom and celebrate various things and I was working with my dad, and I got into the phonograph record business and somebody met my father, who was from Cincinnati, King Records, and somehow or other got my father to where we made the machines that made phonograph records. Remember, there were almost none after the war.

**Pylinski:** [01:25:43] They had to be pressed, right?

**Sheridan:** [01:25:44] They were compression molding machines. And we set them up in a building behind this factory on 29th and Wabash like an old barn. And we put in six presses, and we would take contract pressing from people just to keep it going. But we used it to show people the machinery. And I built probably three or four pressing plants around the country after I learned how to do that. But also, I pressed records for what was originally Aristocrat

Records and then Chess Records. Chess bought Aristocrat and I started a label called Chance and it got involved with a couple of others Vee-Jay and Saber and produced phonograph records for a number of years.

**Pylinski:** [01:26:39] Ok, so we were talking about some post service.

**Sheridan:** [01:26:44] Talking about being in the record business.

**Pylinski:** [01:26:46] That's right. You were somehow pressing records and setting up factories or companies to press records and you said you were producing records, as well.

**Sheridan:** [01:26:54] Yeah.

**Pylinski:** [01:26:54] So you actually were interacting with a lot of musicians at the time?

**Sheridan:** [01:26:57] Yeah, we did a lot of Rhythm and Blues in those years.

**Pylinski:** [01:27:00] And that was still here in Chicago?

**Sheridan:** [01:27:02] Yeah.

**Pylinski:** [01:27:02] Awesome.

**Sheridan:** [01:27:02] The interesting thing about that was the plant that we produced; we were originally pressing what was Aristocrat records which was the label before Chess. The Chess Brothers bought Aristocrat Records and Aristocrat Records was owned by Chuck and Evelyn Aron. Evelyn became my partner and she and Chuck divorced, became my partner and ultimately my wife. And excuse me, we were pressing all of Chess's records. They owned a couple of, they owned a tavern and a junkyard, and they bought Aristocrat and became what they were all these years. Very, very good.

**Sheridan:** [01:27:52] But I also got involved with a couple of guys who were communication sergeants in the Army. And I assume that you know, by now, that the Civic Opera Building was the 5th Army Headquarters.

**Pyllinski:** [01:28:06] Okay yeah, yeah!

**Sheridan:** [01:28:08] So they knew every pair of wires in that building and they set up a recording studio in the penthouse. So, we had a recording studio, commercial recording studio [Pyllinski exclaims: How about that?] in the penthouse. We actually had the first I think echo chamber, which was the women's washroom. [Pyllinski laughs: Nice.] Because the washroom had the like the old industrial thing, all tile walls. So, Bill set up the microphone at one end and a speaker at the other and a guard at the door so nobody would flush the toilet in the middle of a recording!

**Pyllinski:** [01:28:40] Right. Right.

**Sheridan:** [01:28:42] So that's where we started recording things.

**Pyllinski:** [01:28:47] Any big famous acts, do you remember? Any of your favorites?

**Sheridan:** [01:28:50] Oh yeah. We did a lot of Blues like The Flamingos, Temptations, Muddy Waters, Memphis Slim [pause] more people. My problem is I'm getting where I can't remember.

**Pyllinski:** [01:29:08] Right, this kind of slips away.

**Sheridan:** [01:29:09] And we accidentally were involved in bringing the Beatles to this country.

**Pyllinski:** [01:29:13] Oops, how did that happen?

**Sheridan:** [01:29:15] Well, we were in Europe...Back in the days of the pressing plant. There was a gentleman who I hired to be a bookkeeper. He was a Black fella. And in those years, it was very difficult for people to get to work for Black people. So, his name was Ewart Abner. And

he became the moving figure in our record businesses. It was a kind of the general manager boss and so on. [Pylinski inserts: Right.] So we were going to Europe at that time, the time with Vee-Jay Records to get acquainted with some of the record companies there. And we had a meeting with JR Arthur Rang. I think we wanted an Australian hillbilly artist for some reason. I can't remember all that story. But the deal was we have this young group that's beginning to make noise and if you take them, we'll put you contract. Frank Ifield was the guy from Australia,

**Pylinski:** [01:30:21] Frank Ifield?

**Sheridan:** [01:30:22] I think that was the name. So in any event, we made the deal and we got the rights to the Beatles, but we were in Rhythm and Blues label, you know, and we got something we didn't know really what to do with. Their first albums didn't sell very much here, I think at thirty-two hundred or something like that. And we screwed up and didn't care of them. And they got on Ed Sullivan went back into Mercury Records.

**Pylinski:** [01:30:50] Right, and history is from there.

**Sheridan:** [01:30:54] That was it, but it was by accident that we went looking for him as part of a package deal.

**Pylinski:** [01:30:58] Right.

**Sheridan:** [01:30:59] So and wound up--

**Pylinski:** [01:31:02] Did you ever meet, meeting the Beatles?

**Sheridan:** [01:31:04] Oh, yeah, sure.

**Pylinski:** [01:31:05] What was that like?

**Sheridan:** [01:31:08] At the time, I mean, they were just musicians. They were kids. We were just another American that they were meeting in the record business. And I don't think I made any impression. Abner did. Abner was the kind of dynamic fellow. Ultimately, after he left our

musician, he became president of Motown and then became the manager for a number of groups because we moved Vee-Jay and that out to California. And so then we got decided we wanted to own nightclubs. So, we all we wanted was three nightclubs in town.

**Pylinski:** [01:31:40] Which were?

**Sheridan:** [01:31:42] Birdhouse was on Dearborn and Division which is on the second floor. Southern Lounge was on 47th and Drexel, and there was Basin Street which was a Dixieland thing, and what was the old French village just off of Clark Street. [Pylinski inserts: Yeah.] So, we ran those for a while until we got tired.

**Pylinski:** [01:32:04] And after that I went into the business of building gas stations which came because we had a gas station behind one of my father's plants out there and met the people at Shell and wound up in the business of leasing them back to major oil companies. So I built maybe 200 gas stations. [Pylinski inserts: Wow.] I built shopping centers, apartment buildings.

**Pylinski:** [01:32:31] What time frame was this? Was just the '70s, '80s?

**Sheridan:** [01:32:34] No, this was in the '60s, '60s, '70s. Late '70s, I remember I went broke when I had that recession then...I was building shopping centers, and the interest rate went from like eight and a half percent to twenty one percent..

**Pylinski:** [01:32:55] Nobody was buying, then.

**Sheridan:** [01:32:58] And then I, with my partner, new partners there, we bought a steel mill in Lemont, and we ran that for a while. That was interesting. We did a hundred billion dollars a year and hired four hundred 400 employees. Started out with steel workers. Things like that, it was an interesting experience.

**Pylinski:** [01:33:22] It sounds like it. [Sheridan affirms: Yeah.] So, I mean, did you ever settle on one job and retire or anything like that?



**Sheridan:** [01:33:27] No, no, no. I developed some real estate. Currently I do a lot of litigative real estate appraisals, if you will, valuations. I testify in court a great deal on the value of real estate and litigated matters.

**Pylinski:** [01:33:43] Interesting. So and you're married, right? You said you've been married twice?

**Sheridan:** [01:33:47] I've been married several times.

**Pylinski:** [01:33:48] Several times, okay. How many children do you have, if any?

**Sheridan:** [01:33:50] I have one son and I adopted my current wife's son many years ago. So, we have two boys and three, four grandchildren. [Pylinski inserts: Oh, www.] I had to count them out.

**Pylinski:** [01:34:06] Yeah, well, sometimes it's like, Man, there's kids everywhere. Who are these people's kids?

**Sheridan:** [01:34:10] Well, Sean, the one I am meeting today lives in Chicago, works here. He's not married. I semi-adopted Chris. He's the one who begets all the kids.

**Pylinski:** [01:34:21] Gotcha, gotcha. So, having all these different endeavors, being outside of the military, do you feel that having been in the military, being in the Army, you feel like that has prepared you for the rest of your life, more or less? Or had it prepared you for for what you did, getting out and moving on?

**Sheridan:** [01:34:38] I think it gave me some sense of confidence, but much more importantly after that came from being more involved with my father, who was much more gregarious kind of guy and, you know, could overcome anything, it seemed. Right. And then through my marriages.

**Pylinski:** [01:35:06] That's good. Now, do you think that there was ever a moment in the military that maybe exemplifies your time in the service? Like there's one glaring moment that you were most endearing or most thought about?

**Sheridan:** [01:35:25] Probably the most important part was when I was discharged in Camp McCoy, I was very careful to walk down the stairs very carefully so that I didn't slip and get kept again [Laughter].

**Pylinski:** [01:35:42] You didn't want to get stuck on the way out.

**Sheridan:** [01:35:45] Yeah. During the times, there were times, you know, they obviously as I got along and understood what went on in Dachau and that had an effect on me. But the rest of the time, Aaron, you were just doing what you were supposed to do and you wanted to get by that day. You wanted to make it to the next day. That's about pretty far.

**Pylinski:** [01:36:12] War of survival.

**Sheridan:** [01:36:12] Yeah, it wasn't my career choice. I was very fortunate to have a father who had something going to get me started and then whatever he instilled in me was the ability to go through these various phases of my life making money, losing money, going bankrupt, getting back on my feet, and things like that, and ultimately finding a very nice woman whose my wife who understands me, and takes pretty good care of me. She's a very bright woman. I think about the only mistake made, is me. But she's pretty busy. She is an economic development person and had been a village manager and she's still working. She just took on a new project, so we probably both won't retire.

**Pylinski:** [01:37:15] Do you belong to any veterans' organizations?

**Sheridan:** [01:37:17] I recently joined, and I think I told you, two years ago to the American Legion, Roosevelt Post 84 in Aurora, and recently the mayor of Aurora had established the Aurora Veterans Advisory Council. And I am on that council, one of fourteen veterans or family members, a couple of members like one is the wife of a Marine who passed away. And we finally got our mission statement together. We're amazed at the number of veterans that aren't

aware of their benefits and who need help or work and don't know how to get it or aren't willing to. So that's one of our big issues that we're beginning to get all involved in, excuse me for the veterans in Aurora Kane County and [unclear name] DuPage area.

**Pylinski:** [01:38:17] That's good. I mean, this is just I mean, we've seen almost three million soldiers, sailors and Marines coming through in the last ten, almost ten, eleven years alone. And a lot of those are veterans that have the benefits out there and they just don't realize where to get it.

**Sheridan:** [01:38:35] You're talking about this organization has had three million?

**Pylinski:** [01:38:37] It's really just the services in general.

**Sheridan:** [01:38:40] Oh yeah.

**Pylinski:** [01:38:40] And that's like kind of what we're dealing with, is a lot of these veterans, there's just so many of them and a lot of them are very uninformed. Oh, did you ever hear, or have you known about or heard of the 20th Armored Division Association?

**Sheridan:** [01:38:54] Recently, when I was looking up this material for the talk at the temple. I didn't realize we were considered liberators of Dachau or things like that. [Pylinski inserts: Right.] One of my friends told me about that. I was never aware of or contacted about any of the reunions they may have had or may not have had, I don't know.

**Pylinski:** [01:39:24] Yeah, okay. I just, I was, I was like...

**Sheridan:** [01:39:28] Is there such a thing?

**Pylinski:** [01:39:29] There is! That's why I asked. I didn't know if maybe you were a member, or were thinking of becoming a member.

**Sheridan:** [01:39:34] But I'd like to find out how to get it. How did you find it?

**Pylinski:** [01:39:37] I just found on the Internet. You can look it up, the 20th Armored Division Association. I'm sure they would be more than happy to have you counted amongst their members.

**Sheridan:** [01:39:47] [Laughs] Probably need a few folks nowadays.

**Pylinski:** [01:39:49] Yeah, I would bet. I would venture to imagine. So have you been back to Europe at all since World War II?

**Sheridan:** [01:39:59] We traveled quite a bit but two places I haven't gone to: one is Dachau, one is Munich. Germany is not one of my favorite places, although I've been back to parts of Germany, and I've had a couple of young people come live with us who are friends of people I was doing business with. In the steel business, we knew people all over the world. But Barbara and I travel quite a bit. My ex-wives and I did a lot of travel, so we've been. Our problem now, Aaron, is we look at a brochure and it's hard to find someplace we haven't been.

**Pylinski:** [01:40:41] And that's a hard problem to have. [Laughs].

**Sheridan:** [01:40:44] Well, it is when you want to travel.

**Pylinski:** [01:40:45] Yeah. My wife and I have a big map on our wall because we travel a lot, too. And it's like, you know, like on the lottery tickets where you scratch them off, we have a scratch off map. And we've scratched off, you know, everywhere we've been to. And for us, we look at this map and we see all these countries that are scratched off that we've been to. And it's like, "Man, there's just so many other places to go." But then you look and you're like, "Yeah, but who wants to go to Siberia or Mongolia or whatever?"

**Sheridan:** [01:41:08] That's probably one place I would like. I'd like to take, what do they call it, a Russian train that goes from...

**Pylinski:** [01:41:13] Oh, the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

**Sheridan:** [01:41:15] That's something I'd like to do.

**Pylinski:** [01:41:17] That would be pretty interesting. Yeah. Yeah. I've always wondered about going into, like Kosovo and that whole region down near Bosnia-Herzegovina. Yeah, there's a lot of pretty country out there.

**Sheridan:** [01:41:26] We did that a couple of years ago. For some reason, all of a sudden my wife said she wanted to go to Dubrovnik and then we found a cruise and made several of the stops there. And then we spent some time... We like cruising too.

**Pylinski:** [01:41:41] Yeah. Did you guys ever cruise the Rhine or anything, like river cruises in Europe?

**Sheridan:** [01:41:45] The one in Russia.

**Pylinski:** [01:41:47] Oh, okay. Excellent.

**Sheridan:** [01:41:49] And we've been to the Antarctic. I want to go to the Arctic. I'm finding it difficult convincing my wife of that.

**Pylinski:** [01:41:56] Did she go to the Antarctic with you?

**Sheridan:** [01:41:58] Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. We enjoyed that very much.

**Pylinski:** [01:42:01] Did you guys stop off in South America on the way down?

**Sheridan:** [01:42:04] Yeah, I've been to South America a couple of times. When I was in the steel business, I was doing business with some people in Brazil, traveled South America, and then we did a couple of cruises from around the Cape. And then, of course, down to the Antarctic from Ushuaia [city at the southernmost tip of Argentina].

**Pylinski:** [01:42:29] Okay, excellent. Yeah, that's one of my to do list, too, like check off going to Antarctica. They have, they have some interesting--

**Sheridan:** [01:42:36] [Unclear name] is still there.

**Pylinski:** [01:42:37] Yeah, I know it's definitely one of those things where it's you don't know if you got to or, you know what you got to it's gone type of thing. So after, did you ever go to college and get your degree at all?

**Sheridan:** [01:42:53] No. I did not.

**Pylinski:** [01:42:55] Just stayed a business man your whole life?

**Sheridan:** [01:42:58] You know, when I came out [of the military], I could have gone back to Indiana, but I'd had enough. I started working for my dad. I take a lot of courses that I need to have in the real estate business, in the appraisal business, did some accounting at night school at Northwestern, but never to the degree.

**Pylinski:** [01:43:13] Okay, excellent. Well, one question we've been asking a lot of our veterans that come through here is how do you feel about the boots you were issued when you came in? Obviously, you get your basic issue boots and then you're deployed, you know, into different installations and everything. What was what was your reaction to the boots that you were that you were issued? How did you feel about them?

**Sheridan:** [01:43:38] I always wanted to have a pair of paratrooper boots, which I'd never had. [Pylinski asserts: Right.] But basically, they were boots and I wore 'em. I never gave them a hell of a lot of thought, frankly.

**Pylinski:** [01:43:38] No conflict, no comments, no comment?

**Sheridan:** [01:43:54] Yeah.

**Pylinski:** [01:43:54] No worries.

**Pylinski:** [01:43:56] So and then in your opinion, how do you feel, having served in the military, how do you feel having served in the military benefited you or how do you feel about your service in the military, overall?

**Sheridan:** [01:44:09] I think it was a great transition period in my life from a seventeen, eighteen year old punk. I was probably still much of a punk when I got out but it helped me grow. It gave me confidence and travel. It gave me an opportunity to begin to get over being very bashful. I was apparently [when] very young, I was very bashful, and I was very pleased that I had done it and that I made it unscathed. I don't know that I felt like I saved the world or I did anything great, it was just something you did. [Pylinski affirms: Right.] And it beat going to engineering school.

**Pylinski:** [01:45:00] Well, there you go. Good deal. Is there anything that I didn't cover? Anything else you'd like to add for the interview?

**Sheridan:** [01:45:07] Not particular, I can't think of anything. I remember one incident might be kind of humorous in the sense when we were in California at Camp Cooke, getting ready to go over, we would go to L.A. and on vacation we could rent a bus. But one point we bought a Model A Ford and we're driving up and down the Coast Highway. And one time I remember in the middle of the night it broke down. I remember that we kind of shoved it off a cliff [Pylinski exclaims: What!] and then we all hitchhiked back. We had no way of fixing it and no way to get started. We didn't have any money. [Pylinski exclaims: Yeah!] You know, I was lucky in California because my sister by that time was living there. So the three of us could go to L.A and we'd sleep in her house, usually on the floor. Didn't make a heck of a lot of difference--

**Pylinski:** [01:45:53] Free room.

**Sheridan:** [01:45:53] And we started our escapade of drinking martinis.

**Pylinski:** [01:46:00] Oh. In Los Angeles. What did you think of L.A.?

**Sheridan:** [01:46:03] I thought it was kind of a fairyland at that time, you know?

**Pylinski:** [01:46:07] Yeah, did you see much of it? I mean did you get around?

**Sheridan:** [01:46:09] Not much, but a lot of Hollywood, a lot of parts of L.A. My sister and her husband were connected with people there. So I got to go to a few restaurants and things like that. But you know, it was fine. I've been back there quite often, both in the record business and seeing family. I mean, you know, just another place.

**Pylinski:** [01:46:37] Yeah, yeah. You've knocked off that off the other places you've been. Right, Mr. Sheridan, thank you very much, Sir. This has been a pleasure.

**Sheridan:** [01:46:43] Thank you, Aaron.

**Pylinski:** [01:46:43] I'm glad we had this time to talk.