

Shirlee Connors Carlson oral history with Valier Jandreau

MCC-00071

Finding Aid

Prepared by Lisa Ornstein; revised by Kathryn Donahue, August 2013

Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes

University of Maine at Fort Kent

Fort Kent, Maine

Shirlee Connors Carlson oral history with Valier Jandreau

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Collection Title: Shirlee Connors Carlson oral history with Valier Jandreau

Citation: Shirlee Connors Carlson oral history with Valier Jandreau, MCC-00071, Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

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Provenance and Chain of Custody: Shirlee Carlson Connors created this sound recording as an assignment for a University of Maine at Fort Kent Fall semester 1987 course entitled History 353: History of Maine. The recording was initially submitted to Professor Roger Paradis, who brought it to the Archives in March 1991.

Inclusive Date Range: 1940-45; 1961-75

Bulk Date Range: 1940-45

Language: English

Physical Characteristics/Condition: C-90 audio cassette, audibility good to fair (considerable white noise and a constant low-frequency hum)

Quantity: 1

Access: There are no restrictions on this collection

Prepared by: Lisa Ornstein, February 2000.

Biographical information:

[Archives Director Lisa Ornstein gathered the following information from correspondence with Robert D. Daigle, Commander of VFW Post 9609, and from a phone conversation with Valier Jandreau on 3 February 2000.]

Valier Jandreau was born 27 November 1921 in Saint Francis, Maine, the son of Antoine Jandreau and Edith Boucher. He was working as a lumberjack in the Moosehead Lake , Maine region when he volunteered for military service in 1945. He served November 1940 to March 1945, serving with the 26th Regiment of the 1st Division Infantry of the United States Army.

During WW II, Mr. Jandreau served in England, North Africa, Sicily, and France, including the Battle of Normandy, attaining the rank of staff sergeant. Following his discharge, he returned to Saint Francis, Maine and married Winifred Jandreau on September 2, 1946. Mr. Jandreau subsequently worked 32 years as a logger, primarily for International Paper (approximately 27 years) with an additional term of employment for Great Northern Paper.

Shirlee Connors Carlson was born on December 26, 1935, daughter of James Connors and Rose McBreairty. She is a graduate of the University of Maine at Fort Kent and was an exchange student attending the University of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. She is a self-published author including many titles: *A Time for Eagles*; *The Lobster who ate the Pine Tree*; *A Letter to Acadia*; *The Legend of Joe McKiel*; and several other books including cookbooks.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection consists of an audio recording of an interview conducted by Shirlee Connors Carlson with World War II veteran Valier Jandreau of Saint Francis, Maine, concerning his experiences in World War II. The tape was recorded by Shirlee Connors Carlson as a class assignment for a Fall semester 1987 course at the University of Maine at Fort Kent entitled History 353: History of Maine.

Summary of Contents

Tape 1/1 (A165)

Side A: Valier Jandreau of Saint Francis, Maine reminisces about his Army experiences during his military service in the United States Army's 1st Infantry from October 1940 to March 1945. He mentions his enlistment and briefly outlines his military service, including his transfer from Fort Devons, Massachusetts to England, where he took part in landing anti-aircraft weapons during the later part of the "Blitz," his subsequent transfer to Africa in 1943, where he took part in the Tunisian campaign, and his later transfer to Sicily.

Mr. Jandreau then details at length his military experience in England, including a description of the "Blitz," his Atlantic crossing on the Queen Mary with an entire division of 18,000 men, his landing in Plymouth, and his subsequent transfer to the south English coast for approximately six months. He discusses the anti-aircraft techniques which his division used and the destruction of English towns which he witnessed.

Mr. Jandreau relates his subsequent transfer to Inverness, Scotland, where his division practices amphibious landing. He then describes his transfer to Africa, his landing at Oran and the taking of Tunisia. He discusses tank ballets in the region.

Mr. Jandreau discusses the importance of the re-supplying of war materials by the United States to England following the battle of Dunkirk. He describes the use of the naval convoy and of the inadequacy of training equipment for American soldiers in the early days of the war.

Mr. Jandreau discusses his participation in the invasion of Sicily, his subsequent return to England and his participation in the invasion of Normandy on D-day. He discusses his battlefield experiences in Normandy from his arrival on 6 June 1945 until 14 June when he was wounded, hospitalized in the field and at Cheltenham, England, and sent home via hospital ship. He describes the conditions of that crossing, and the role of hospital ships in the war. He discusses being sent home because of recurrent malaria which he contracted in Africa and which first flared up when he was wounded in Normandy.

Mr. Jandreau discusses Normandy, where he served as a platoon sergeant. He discusses the loss of 3,000 American troops on D-day and of the 10,000 Allied soldiers buried in Normandy. He describes the loss of 33 of the 40 men in his platoon during the first six days of battle and the factors which contributed to the high casualties in this engagement. He discusses techniques used for destroying enemy "pill boxes".

Mr. Jandreau discusses the surrender of Germany in 1945 and other veterans from his village of Saint Francis, Maine. He discusses troop morale during the invasion of Normandy and the sense of hopelessness that many soldiers felt about their chances of survival. He describes the hardships faced by the U.S. infantry on the front line. He describes rations.

Side B: Mr. Jandreau continues his description of rations. He speaks at length on the high rate of non-combat deaths among the U.S. infantry during WWII, which he attributes to the Army's strategy of pushing their infantry beyond the point of endurance. He compares American and British treatment of front line troops, He discusses the toll taken by shell shock and heat exhaustion among American troops, including an anecdote about an experience in Sicily where a commanding general, who refused to move his men forward because of heavy losses due to heat exhaustion, was relieved of his command. He discusses running out of rations and water during combat, the transport of food and the wounded, and the roles of medics and inadequate staffing of field hospitals.

Mr. Jandreau comments at length on the United States Army's historic lack of defense strategy in training its military elite and how this adversely affected the Army's performance during the Vietnam Conflict.

Mr. Jandreau discusses the "when in doubt, shoot" policy which was taught to United States infantry during WWII and compares attitudes toward civilian casualties between the Second World War and Vietnam. He relates how he almost killed a civilian family during the invasion of Normandy.

Mr. Jandreau responds to questioning about the history of WWII, including Hitler's early invasions, the destruction of the Jewish people, the development of "Hitler Youth," and the role of the Gestapo and the S.S.