

Transcription
Euclid Boyer
Interviewed by: Don McLean
- January 20, 1989 -

Don: Okay, I'm talking with Euclid Boyer. He's a well known man in the Metis community. Euclid, how many boards are you sitting on now and what are you doing?

Euclid: I sit on three boards, and I'm also the president of the Northern Fur Conservation of Trappers Association.

Don: And what board are you sitting on.

Euclid: I sit on Gabriel Dumont provincial board and then I sit on the alcohol council, known as SNAC, and I sit on a provincial board there. And then I sit on a local board at home and I'm also involved with the Metis Society.

Don: And where is home now.

Euclid: Chitek Lake, SK.

Don: Chitek Lake. And you've been there for how many years now.

Euclid: Well I'll tell you what, I moved there in 1941 from a homestead where my dad had homesteaded in 1929 and in those days it was pretty rough. You had no work, well there was work, but there was no money to pay you with. So I had to work for fifty cents a day, cutting brush mind you.

Don: This was in 1942?

Euclid: No, this was 1940.

Don: 40. Okay.

Euclid: That was in the fall of the year. Mind you we had to cut brush from daylight till dark for 50 cents.

Don: For fifty cents.

Euclid: And in the wintertime back home, there was nothing on the homestead, there was nothing there. Nobody had any work. So I decided to go north to Chitek Lake, me and a couple of

other guys from home. So I took, came in a cutter and I drove. They give us about 75 miles to drive. It took us about 2 days to get there. Got work there in 1940.

Don: You come from down south there did you Euclid?

Euclid: No, we came from St. Laurent, SK. North of Batoche. Along the side of the Saskatchewan River, South Saskatchewan River. But anyways, going back to my move to Chitek Lake, I got in there in 1941 in November. I thought I'd go work for the winter, and I'm still there today, about 40 some odd years later.

Don: But you've been away for awhile in the war?

Euclid: Oh, I've been away a bit. In the spring of 1942 I wanted to go and work on the Alaska highways. The Alaska highways was paying good wages at that time and they were just starting construction from Fort St. John on, and you didn't need much qualification to get on. You could go to Edmonton those days and hire on as a truck driver. They'd give you a truck load and send you on. That kind of attracted me very strongly, so I thought before I go, I might as well see if I get rejected from the army and then I'd be free. Cause I know if I went I'd be called back. So I went and joined up. And no way of getting rejected. I passed A-1, and there I was stuck for 3 years.

Don: How old were you then Euclid?

Euclid: I was 20 years old.

Don: Let's go back a bit. Where did you go to school?

Euclid: I never did have much schooling. I went to school at country school in a district called Woodhill district south of Shell Lake. And I only went up to grade 8.

Don: How many in the family?

Euclid: There wasn't too many in our family. There was 6 of us. 4 boys and 2 girls.

Don: So you didn't get far in school. How far did you go?

Euclid: What grade?

Don: Yeah, what grade did you finish at?

Euclid: Grade 8.

Don: Grade 8. And you were 20 years old when you joined up. And that was in 1942?

Euclid: Yeah.

Don: So you were born in 22.

Euclid: 1921.

Don: 21. What made you join up Euclid?

Euclid: First of all I didn't want to be called in. I didn't want to be a zombie. And secondly I said I wanted to go Northwest to Alaska, to work on the Alaska highway, and I didn't want to have to do that and have to come back with my green call in the army, so I thought I might as well get it over with see if I can get rejected or whatever. If I have to go, I have to go anyways. So there I was.

Don: Where did you train?

Euclid: I took my basic training in Camrose, Alberta. And I was a badboy for awhile. I didn't like discipline coming off the homestead and work in the bush and stuff like that, being your own boss, and young fellow from the homestead, you don't have too much discipline. So I couldn't understand discipline. I ran away a few times from the army, but just to let them know that I wanted to do what I wanted to do.

Don: And they had other ideas?

Euclid: And they had other ideas. And they punish you for it. They put you in detention, and that didn't prove to be much good either. So when I decided to soldier, I just went right ahead.

Don: And you joined up with the infantry?

Euclid: I beg your pardon?

Don: Did you join the infantry? What unit did you join?

Euclid: I'll tell you what. I always wanted to drive trucks. So I joined the army service corp. I wanted to be a truck driver. But after awhile I learned that it was kind of a

gimmick. They go by category. If you were A-1 you didn't get a chance to drive truck. You went right with the rifles and machine guns. And they decided that.

Don: So you took your basic then and where did you go after that?

Euclid: We went, took advance training at Currie barracks in Calgary.

Don: Anybody from up home with you?

Euclid: No.

Don: You were on your own?

Euclid: Yes sir.

Don: Where there anymore Metis or Indian folks in that...?

Euclid: There was Indian, but I never, a few Metis I guess, but those days, I don't know. Your fellow soldier was like a brother to you, so it didn't make much difference.

Don: You got along good with the guys. They never gave you any hassle in the army?

Euclid: No way. I could always hold my own.

Don: Well you were about 200 pounds weren't you.

Euclid: Yes.

Don: Well that might have made a difference too.

Euclid: Well it could be.

Don: But the rest of them were pretty well farm boys and regular folks anyways.

Euclid: Oh yes, and they proved to be one of the best soldiers in the front lines of the Canadian Soldiers.

Don: Yeah.

Euclid: Rough and tough.

Don: You bet yeah. Especially the guys from the west. They were pretty independent. They could make there own mind up on the spot.

Euclid: Oh you bet you. We always use to kid the other guys from Eastern Canada, we'd ask them were they come from they'd say Montreal or something like that. We'd say, shit you're not even Canada. Canada starts from Winnipeg west.

Don: So, the army days in Canada, was that pretty much of a good time?

Euclid: Well, pretty much. There was some pretty stiff training. They had to put you through and get you on a drill and train for action, and it was all kind of kids play as far as that goes. The only thing was it was hard. There was a lot of exercise.

Don: Parade square?

Euclid: Parade square. Lots of it. You had to understand the basic rules of regimental life.

Don: Yeah. They sort of break you down and then remake you.

Euclid: Oh yeah. And you never done any thinking when you were in the army. They did all that for you.

Don: Yeah. Just to obey commands, that's all. And you finally come around to that. Everybody has to.

Euclid: Yeah. They always told me Boyer, if we can't break you, we'll break your mother's heart. And I guess they would do that.

Don: They'd do that too, the buggers. You took bren guns, sten, 36 grenade, and a lot of practice with the three odd three, infield?

Euclid: Yeah.

Don: You guys were pretty good shots coming from the bush anyways, weren't you?

Euclid: Oh yeah.

Don: Did you have a rifle with the house and do hunting and that?

Euclid: Oh yes, that's the only thing that kept us alive is hunting.

Don: So you'd take to that pretty good?

Euclid: Oh yeah. Most Western guys were real good. I don't want to brag them up, but they made first class soldiers. And if they trained on one thing, they took it seriously once they understood the whole make up of it.

Don: So how long were you in Canada before you went over?

Euclid: Well I went over, about 2 years in Canada, and I went overseas for a year, 3 years all together.

Don: You went over in 44 then?

Euclid: Yep.

Don: In the fall or ?

Euclid: No, spring.

Don: Spring. From Halifax?

Euclid: We went over from Halifax, but we were suppose to go direct to Halifax and get on a ship, get on a boat and go across when we left Calgary, but there was, a _____ was in on the train. We were packed full. There was a whole train load of troops. And the car I was in broke out with scarlet fever. So we got quarantined for 30 days at, where in the heck is it now. In Nova Scotia anyways.

Don: Debert, or one of those places?

Euclid: No, let me think of it now.

Don: They put you in an army base there?

Euclid: Oh yes, yes.

Don: Did you come down with scarlet fever?

Euclid: Not me, no.

Don: What were your thoughts when you were getting on board the ship to leave Canada?

Euclid: It kind of gives you a feeling that maybe you're leaving home maybe for good, and hoping you all came back. A lot of guys were crying. We had a Negro, well more than one, but we were all mixed up you know. I believe there was a few Americans on there two. Some Negroes on top deck there, they had a recreation area. We were all in there, and we had a piano. And some of those guys got on the piano and sang there. They were playing the blues. I can remember that very clearly like today. And guys were breaking down with tears and everything. I never got seasick, but I just about got seasick. I had to go and lay down in my hammock.

Don: Did you have quite a rough trip across?

Euclid: Quite rough, yep.

Don: Where did you land?

Euclid: We landed at South Hampton, England.

Don: How did you find the British, how did they get along with the Canadians?

Euclid: They got along pretty good with Canadians actually, but I don't know. Most guys got along real well with the womenfolk in England, and even the Indians, like the native boys, the English girls weren't scared of them. They didn't know what they were, they thought they were just Canadian, and it was great.

Don: A lot of English girls married native boys didn't they?

Euclid: Oh yes.

Don: The Native Canadian was seen by a lot of the English as a type of heroic type of a person, and you got treated pretty good eh?

Euclid: Oh yes, pretty good. No discrimination once you're in uniform. That's one thing I say now, the only time the natives were equal to the whites was when you had a uniform on.

Don: Yeah, isn't that a strange thing?

Euclid: It is a strange thing.

Don: You'd wonder just what would make that happen.

Euclid: Well, I don't know. It's, what general public is taught at home and books at the beginning, cowboys and Indians and stuff like that, it still goes back to that old history. Then it's pretty hard for the native people now to make it in public life or otherwise, unless you're one of the topnotch scientists, or doctors. If you really know your stuff you can make it. Otherwise the general public of the native people whether they're from north or south doesn't make a bit of difference, the white people are prejudice against them for some reason. I get a kick out of that sometime when I hear people talk, even government people say they got to educate the native people, especially the Indian. I say before you do that, educate the white people towards the native people. Let them know that those native people are not just bums or want to live on welfare. Give them something to do and they will get back on there own feet and do it very well.

Don: See one of the things about the army was that there was native guys and white guys right along side each other, and whatever prejudice they had that disappeared just because you were working with each other, seeing each other as buddies and comrades.

Euclid: You were equal. I don't know what done it, but it sure made a difference. And the funny part of it, the native people at that time, especially the Treaty Indian, once they got in uniform they were treated like white man. They could go in the bar and have a drink along side there white man chum, you know. And before they got into the uniform, they weren't allowed to take a drink in public.

Don: They weren't allowed in bars, were they?

Euclid: No. And after they come home when they were fortunate enough to come back, they were treated the same thing. Once they took the uniform off, no more social with the white people. They couldn't even go in the pub until the government some 10-15 years later, even maybe more that they allowed Treaty Indians to go into the bar.

Don: Well, are you a treaty Euclid or a Métis?

Euclid: No, I'm a Métis.

Don: So you could go in.

Euclid: Oh yes, I could go in. Me, I was in there drinking.

Don: You weren't married when you went over?

Euclid: No, I wasn't married, and I decided when I left that I wasn't going to get married overseas, and I didn't. I came back and I got married a year later.

Don: What's your wife's name?

Euclid: My wife's name is Helen Lucier.

Don: How many kids do you guys got?

Euclid: I got, we raised 12 kids. 7 boys and 5 girls.

Don: That was a job.

Euclid: 11 of them are living, I got 1 boy that got killed in 1977 in the first of October in Fort St. James, BC in an accident. My kids are all working, and they all got fairly good jobs. Some are in business, and

Don: Are they working down south or up at home?

Euclid: None, there's none around home.

Don: No. They had to go away to get a job.

Euclid: They had to go away.

Don: Do they have a bit of an education Euclid?

Euclid: Oh yes, some of them graduated and tried to get them through school. None of them got less than grade 11, but when they get in the mid-teens, it's hard to stay in school, especially the boys when they can go out and make money. At that time they could go to BC and make 10-15 dollars an hour.

Don: Working in the bush?

Euclid: Working in the bush. They were all bushwhackers to begin with, but later on they started there own business some of them and go in different things. I always, I brought up my

family without any social help, welfare or anything. And I worked and I made it with my two hands, I swept.

Don: Let's go back to England. Did you go into advance training over there, schemes and stuff?

Euclid: No, I wasn't

Don: Now you were infantry when you got over there. You weren't in the service corp anymore.

Euclid: No, I wasn't in the service corp anymore.

Don: What did you get transferred to?

Euclid: First of all I was transferred to just reinforcement infantry. I was training for the infantry. And then I, when I was ready to go, they sent me over

Don: Over to France.

Euclid: with the Algonquins.

Don: The Algonquin regiment.

Euclid: That's an Ontario regiment I believe. And they called us the Mohawks. And then I got over there, got into France and they were just out of Normandy when I got in there, just past Conn, and they sent us, I got transferred to the Blackwash. Canadian, Royal Island Regiment of Canada.

Don: The Royal Hound Regiment it was called.

Euclid: Yep.

Don: And that's when you went into action?

Euclid: Yes.

Don: _____ the pipes and all that?

Euclid: What's that?

Don: Did they go in with the pipes playing?

Euclid: No, we went with the guns.

Don: To hell with the pipes.

Euclid: To hell with the pipes and the kilt.

Don: They say that when the Camerons landed at Dieppe that night and all hell was breaking loose

Euclid: Oh yes, I had a lot of friends

Don: And they had a piper and he jumped off and he started playing the Black Bear. And they went in with the pipes playing. But one guy was on television and he said he was pretty scared, because they were getting shot at from everywhere. And this piper jumped in the water and started playing and he said he was never so ready to die in all his life. I guess it was for morale. But anyways, you went into action just after Conn?

Euclid: Yep.

Don: Up through France and into Belgium?

Euclid: No, I never went into Belgium.

Don: Didn't get into Belgium.

Euclid: Never got out of France. I got wounded and taken prisoner.

Don: Did you? Tell us about that.

Euclid: Well I received two gun shot wounds in action and as a matter of fact I came back with a bullet in my shoulder and I carried it around for 17 years and they took it out of me in University hospital right here in Saskatoon.

Don: Can you remember much about that when you got hit?

Euclid: Oh yes.

Don: What happened, tell us about it.

Euclid: Well they were cross firing on us. We were in that little town.

Don: Were you in an advanced party?

Euclid: Yep, advanced party.

Don: Walk into a trap?

Euclid: Yep. They crossfired on us and we were pinned right down.

Don: What was the country like?

Euclid: It was flat country.

Don: Flat country. _____?

Euclid: Oh yeah, a lot of _____.

Don: And you got caught in a crossfire.

Euclid: Yep.

Don: So they had it set up and they had the plan of action. They were just waiting for you to come up.

Euclid: Well they were well camouflaged, we couldn't see them. They were on both sides of this road.

Don: Did most of the guys get it?

Euclid: Oh yeah, there was only about 2 that came back from our regiment that didn't get killed or taken prisoner.

Don: Is that a fact.

Euclid: Yeah, that happened about

Don: Now in a regiment, how many men would you be talking about?

Euclid: Well if you have a full regiment you have quite a number

Don: It's in the hundreds. We're talking about 600 I believe. And out of that 600 only a handful came back.

Euclid: That's correct. The rest were taken prisoner or being killed.

Don: What part of the country was that when you were being caught in the crossfire?

Euclid: That was about 5 miles the other side of Conn. A little place called Masarone. And we were to take this other little town, I don't recall the name of it. And they said the Germans had pushed back, that was the information our officers told us, but that wasn't the case. They were just well camouflaged waiting for us.

Don: Well, that must have left some pretty big impression on your mind. What day was that when you got hit?

Euclid: That was on the fifth of August.

Don: 1944. And most of your friends got killed or captured. Can you remember your feelings about that when it was all over and you were taken prisoner.

Euclid: Well, we didn't know if we were even going to live very long after we were taken prisoner, because we were up against the SS troops. One of the toughest men that Hitler had, and they were, it was all made up of young fellows under 20.

Don: Hitler youth.

Euclid: Yeah. And they knew nothing else but fight.

Don: They were good soldiers eh.

Euclid: They were good soldiers.

Don: How did they treat you when you were captured?

Euclid: They didn't treat us all that bad, but the only thing was that you didn't have much food.

Don: They didn't go out of there way to make you miserable?

Euclid: No, no.

Don: Treat you like men. Treated you with a certain amount of honour?

Euclid: A certain amount I'd say. But the medical supplies were running low, they'd put bandages on your wounds and wrap it up with cray paper, remember the cray paper

Don: So when you got wounded the medics you had were Germans?

Euclid: Oh yeah.

Don: It was the Germans who treated your wounds. What do you remember about the Germans, what were your feelings. You had gone through all this hell and most of the guys had got hit and finally you were in the hands of the Germans. What were your feelings towards them, anger, or fear, or what?

Euclid: Not really anger. There was nothing personal against you, it was something that we had to do and something that they had to do.

Don: My old man said the same thing. He was in World War I. He said he had nothing against them, they were good soldiers and they were just doing the same thing that we were. Is that the feeling you had?

Euclid: Oh yes, that's pretty well the feeling that I got. And then that same night they brought us into a hospital, into a big hospital in Paris. And we went in there by trucks, Red Cross trucks and some of the guys were stretcher cases, and some of the guys could walk, I could walk myself because it was only my shoulders.

Don: Did you lose a lot of blood?

Euclid: Oh I lost a lot of blood, a lot of blood. But I was strong and I could stand quite a bit.

Don: What did that feel like when you got hit?

Euclid: Just like, when I got hit in the shoulder blade, I was laying down, a couple of guys standing behind a big tank and they come on the highway, on the road, and they hollered fire the machine gun and it went through me like a red hot iron that went through you. And the one in the shoulder I hardly didn't feel it because I was kind of numb. My shoulder was dislocated as well from hitting the ground when I went over an approach.

Don: So these were two Germans in behind a tank?

Euclid: Oh absolutely.

Don: And they opened up with small arms and got you. Were they coming at you with the tanks as well?

Euclid: No, they were going past.

Don: And they hollered before they fired?

Euclid: Oh yeah, they were hollering.

Don: Did the other guys get killed in the party?

Euclid: Oh yeah...

Don: How many guys in that bunch?

Euclid: Oh I don't remember that. When they took us in there, we didn't know how we were going to be treated but all that mattered at that time was hope to God they don't torture you too much. Like I said they took us to Paris finally and after they got us back from the line they put us in an old barn there, and of course we had guards outside there. And we were in pain we didn't feel much like going anywhere.

Don: How long were you in that barn?

Euclid: We were only there a matter of hours. And then they moved us by truck to Paris. And we got in there and they unloaded us in kind of a big hall there. And there was rows and rows of stretchers full of wounded soldiers and they were not all Canadians, they were English

Don: Oh these were all wounded prisoners?

Euclid: Oh yes. And Americans and some Germans. We were mixed up. So we got into this big hospital, and I was on a stretcher by this time and I was getting weaker and they had no more room and there was no beds, so they put me off the main hallway into the nurses office and that's where I laid for the night, on a stretcher, on the floor. And then I was dry and I really wanted a drink of water, and the nurses were all grey nuns. And they all spoke French. So I asked one of the nuns when they come by for a

Don: Could you speak French?

Euclid: Oh yes, I could get along with them real good with French. And they were very surprised as a matter of fact. But you had to watch that too, because most of the Germans could

talk French, because they had occupied that part of France for over 4 years.

Don: Now I'm not sure if we caught that, so you were laying on the aisle and the grey nuns they spoke French. So you asked for a drink of water and she said she would check and see if there was any bosch around first, and if they weren't there then she went and got you the water.

Euclid: No, she went and got me a cup of wine.

Don: She got me some wine.

Euclid: You don't drink water in France,

Don: Oh that was good. Was she sort of sympathetic to you.

Euclid: She was real nice. Yep, oh yes. And felt sorry for us. And they were very nice.

Don: Your wounds began to heal right there even though you didn't have really good medical treatment.

Euclid: No, well they had nothing. They didn't have it. So we stayed there 3 days

Don: Where you in quite a bit of pain?

Euclid: In my shoulder I had a lot of pain and next morning when they found a bed for me finally, and I went to bed and then some young Germans, wounded German soldiers too, and one came up to my bed and started talking. And he talked good English. Said he went to University and London, England, and they called him back just before the war. And they were telling him propaganda telling him that London was all flattened out with bombs. And he asked me if that was the case. And I said no. That was never the case. So we sat there and talked for a long time. He said we don't want to fight either, but they're making us fight. What are we going to do. And he asked me if I smoked, and he said I smoke too, but he said our ration here is only 3 cigarettes a day that we get. And he said I'll give you mine, I'm going to quit smoking. If I only get three cigarettes a day I might as well

Don: And you were out eh?

Euclid: And I was out.

Don: So that smoke would taste pretty good eh?

Euclid: Oh yeah, but it was different tobacco that we were use to as Canadians.

Don: Well he seemed like a damn decent guy.

Euclid: Like I said before, they were pretty nice, a lot of them once we got talking. And they didn't want to fight anymore than we did as a matter of fact. All the soldiers we could turn them loose and they'd be the happiest bunch you'd ever see. But they couldn't do that. I guess as far as that goes, the same goes for the other side.

Don: So how long were you laid up in the hospital?

Euclid: I was laid up in the hospital in France for, we finally ended up in Schlon, in France when we left Paris they moved us out of there, 125 kms. and it took them about 5 days to get us there on the train, because the Americans were bombing all the rail lines. And we only had enough food for 24 hours. And I'm telling you it was a son of a gun to be hungry, and, the worst was water.

Don: So you were 4 days without food and water on that train?

Euclid: I beg your pardon?

Don: You were about 4 days without food and water on that train?

Euclid: Yes. And finally when we arrived there, they moved us into this makeshift hospital. There was 97 of us. And we were taken care of by German doctors. But of course there was some American doctors. We had one who was looking after us there, he was an American, had been captured, and he was of German decent.

Don: Did he speak it?

Euclid: Oh yeah. He spoke German. But the guards were all German. And we didn't have much food. All we ate was spaghetti soup twice a day. And we got one Red Cross parcel at the time we were there, and it taste pretty good.

Don: And they let you have it? They didn't take it themselves?

Euclid: Oh yeah.

Don: Well, how did you come out of that. Were you still in the hospital when the allies advanced?

Euclid: Yeah, the Americans came through there, and pushed the Germans right out.

Don: And the Germans just left there, and left you be?

Euclid: Left us, but surprising enough, there was one sergeant who was medical corp of German and he was supposed to leave on a bike the early hours of the morning, and all the Germans got pushed back. And when it was all done and said he said to our German, American doctor, he said I'm not going, I want to stay.

Don: Wise choice.

Euclid: I want to be your prisoner, but I hope you can get me in the medical services when I get back to wherever it is they take me. So when he was certain that the Germans went back, he had a belt and a pistol so he took it off and gave it to the German doctor and said, you're my prisoner now, but in a few hours I'll be your prisoner. So at daylight, they start looking for contacts with the American army from getting us out of there, and they did. They finally found them and they moved us back in a field hospital.

Don: Can you remember what unit of the Americans came in?

Euclid: No, I can't remember that.

Don: They were, were you glad to see them?

Euclid: Oh you bet yeah, we were all glad to see them. But the night before, we were taken back there when the Germans were there, and the allies were bombing there and shelling over the town.

Don: Were they coming pretty close?

Euclid: They were pretty close.

Don: They wouldn't know it was a hospital?

Euclid: No, no.

Don: You'd just be lucky you didn't get hit.

Euclid: We went down and all moved down into the reinforced basement into a shelter. And everybody was praying. Some didn't even know how to pray, but they were trying.

Don: They were making one up. You betcha.

Euclid: You know, I must say, there has to be Someone up above, because that's the first thing you have in mind when you get really scared is the Lord.

Don: All the soldiers say that.

Euclid: Absolutely.

Don: And they know it.

Euclid: Oh they know, they know it. They have had the fear. If they went into action, and anybody who had it rough and went into action and came back and said he'd tell you so and he could tell you he was never scared, you can always tell him that he never seen too much. Because it's only human.

Don: Did you carry a good luck charm?

Euclid: Never carried nothing.

Don: My brother carried, he was in the Winnipegs, and he carried a good luck charm. And I was just a kid, maybe 5-6 years old, and I wrote him a letter, and he used that for his good luck charm. Had it right there.

Euclid: And a lot of our own people when they take German prisoners or come to a dead German they take all the jewellery or watch or rings, valuables, and I never wanted anything to do with any souvenirs. I thought if I can get back myself, that's souvenir enough for me.

Don: Yeah a lot of guys liked, a German officer they liked those loogers, and they'd bring a looger back. My brother didn't do any of that either, he couldn't stand it.

Euclid: I couldn't either.

Don: Nor my dad. Well when the Americans got there then, they shipped you back to England?

Euclid: Well they shipped us back in this field hospital and then they got us some more Red Cross trucks and they brought us back quite a few miles and to another field hospital. But we were away, quite aways back from the front lines. And then we moved

Don: Did you get any penicillin or sulphur or any of that stuff? The Germans wouldn't have it, so you were sure lucky you never got infection.

Euclid: But I guess, we ate a lot of moldy bread, I guess maybe that's maybe where the penicillin came from, made with mold stuff eh.

Don: Might have done it.

Euclid: Maybe that was okay, but we had a chunk of bread that looked like bannock, but it was very, very dark.

Don: Yeah, German bread.

Euclid: And that some of that was moldy. But you ate it because you were hungry.

Don: So that was the last of the action that you saw then?

Euclid: That was the last of the action I saw.

Don: Now the war would be over hitting around 45.

Euclid: Yeah, at 45 it was over.

Don: Where were you when it was over?

Euclid: I was back home.

Don: In Canada?

Euclid: Yeah.

Don: Was that a pretty, pretty exciting day? The day we signed the treaty?

Euclid: Yeah, but those days I use to drink a lot and I use to wash out all the sorrows and memories and everything else, I guess I'd get drunk and everyone would be happy anyways.

Don: Do you ever think about your buddies over there. The ones that didn't make it?

Euclid: I beg your pardon?

Don: Do you ever think about your buddies over there. The ones that got killed?

Euclid: Oh yeah. Every soldier is your buddy in the army. And some are more special than others. And you get that in civilian life too. That's very hard when you see your buddies getting knocked off and dying on both sides of you. It's just very, very hard to take.

Don: Did you ever wonder, I know I'm asking this because I know my brother did. He come back home and he sat on a log behind the barn after the war, just when he got back, and here was all these initials carved in the log. And about two-thirds of them were dead. And he sat there and he looked at those initials and he started to cry.

Euclid: Yeah. I've never had that experience

Don: And he wondered why he was the one that was selected to live. Because the Winnipegs were just like the Blackwatch, of the originals that went in, there was just a handful of guys alive. And he wondered why in God's name he lived and they died. Have you ever wondered that?

Euclid: I felt that way too. But I always got thinking that if your time is up your time is up. It's not your number, you're going to go through somehow.

Don: That's what every soldier said, didn't they. Did you ever notice, I know my dad was talking about guys when they got killed, why they were going up the line in World War I, guys would get really nervous, not like ordinary. And they got killed and they had this notion that they were going to get killed. They've seen that happened so many times. Have you noticed that?

Euclid: I noticed that too.

Don: I wonder what it is?

Euclid: I don't know. You must just get that feeling I suppose.

Don: Yeah. So anyways, the war has been over for 40 years. You're back home and was it worth it all Euclid?

Euclid: Well, I think about that sometimes. I think if you look at it in general terms and look at a broad sense I guess it was worth it, because the Germans were defeated. And there was something that we accomplished, but when we went and we asked many, and some of the high rank officers what are we fighting for, for freedom and free country. But 40 some years later, I wonder if that is true. You know. Do we have freedom and everything with it in this country? It makes you wonder. Because everything around you is all regulated and if you break, if you don't follow the straight line, there's, the law is there to grab you and punish you.

Don: And there's still poverty and racism. So it had to be done, but I just wonder. I don't want to think about that too much.

Euclid: No, I never hardly think about it, and I don't like to even talk about the war experience, especially some people, some guys that don't know anything about it. I find it much easier talking with a return man that's been there, and then we both know what we're talking about and we both know what the other guy is talking about.

Don: There's a feeling that if you weren't there you can never pick it up.

Euclid: Oh yeah, that's right. That's very much correct. You know the thing was in Canada here, before the war it was real hard times. People were really hard up. But they were close. And then once the war broke out, the jobs got plentiful, money started circulating. People got money, more independent and there was more trouble. And it still exists today. Because every other, I think what happens today is that everybody is too independent. I remember even after I came back from overseas, I use to, my only means of transportation that I had was horses. And I always liked horses. And it was slow. But you met somebody on the road you could always stop and talk or say hello. Now you're driving 60 miles an hour you don't have time to say hi.

Don: And even after you talk sometimes you haven't got time to say hi.

Euclid: No, that's right.

Don: Especially in the city.

Euclid: Always in a hurry to get there, and once you get there all you have to do is wait anyways.

Don: It's a lot like the army. Hurry, hurry, hurry and then wait.

Euclid: Yeah.

Don: Listen Euclid. I can't tell you how much I appreciated talking to you. I know that sometimes this brings up a lot of painful memories, but I'm going to my best, and the Institute is going to do it's best to pass some of this on to the others.

Euclid: Well I'm glad I had the opportunity to pass some experience, but I'm not really sure I could sit here all day and talk about it. But the time won't allow me, because I have some delegates I still have to look after. I think, I appreciate the opportunity to make a little contribution to some of the general public, whoever is going to read the book, and if any of them were my buddies, or had the same experience during the second World War maybe you should put my address and let them get back to me.

Don: I sure will. What is your address?

Euclid: My address is: Box 6
Chitek Lake, SK
S0J 0L0

Don: Thanks Euclid.

Euclid: Oh, you're more than welcome.