



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
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PRESS RELEASE

**Voices of Veterans: Mess Sgt. Melvin Brown Shares
His Story of Service During WWII and D-Day**

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Austin — Today, Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham is proud to introduce the next installment of the series highlighting the VLB's Voices of Veterans oral history program. In this special episode, we highlight the service of Veterans who experienced D-Day. Today, we hear the story of U.S. Army Mess Sgt. Veteran Melvin Brown, who served in the 2nd Infantry Division during WWII.

Brown was born on November 22, 1921 in Franklin County, Texas and is one of ten children. Brown said his siblings grew up on a farm as sharecroppers and described those times as "tough" when the Depression began, especially because of his age.

VOICES OF VETERANS

name Brown, Melvin		
military branch Army	rank Tech. Sergeant	conflict WWII
date interviewed 01/04/2006		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> interview available on voicesofveterans.org

Tech. Sergeant Melvin Brown served in the U.S. Army from 1940 to 1945. As a mess sergeant in the 2nd Infantry Division, Brown remembers serving General Eisenhower's nephew. He also vividly recalls participating in the D-Day landing at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944 and was awarded the Purple Heart and two Bronze Stars for his service to our country.

"Being young when the Depression era came along in the 30's, 31, 32 and 33, I can remember that very distinctively," Brown recalled. "My Dad worked in the field, we chopped the cotton, the corn and did everything. My Dad worked mules all the time because he thought horses were meant to ride, but we ended up making a pretty good living as far as sharecroppers was concerned back in those days."

Brown entered the service after volunteering for the U.S. Army in 1940 with one of his best friends, someone he said he ran around the farm with growing up but who, sadly, never made it home from the war as he was killed in action.

Brown said he volunteered for the military because he didn't find much pleasure in doing farm work for the rest of his life.

"I hung my cotton sack on a fence and told my Dad I had picked my last bowl of cotton and he asked me what I planned to do and I told him I was going to join the Army," he explained, "and that's exactly what I had done and I'm not sorry about it one bit."

Brown said he joined the Army for a couple of reasons and one of those was because every so often you'd see a man in uniform around town and it would catch his attention. The other, he said, was because his Dad was in the Army as an Infantryman during WWI in France. All four of the Brown brothers went into the service like their father did before them, Brown said, and all of them came home.

The interview with Brown was recorded on record in 2006, 61 years after he left the Army but said he'll never forget where he was and what he was doing when news came in that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.



"I can tell you that if it happened yesterday," Brown said, raising his voice a little louder. "I was at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio at Division Headquarters and it was Sunday morning just after chow time and it came over the radio that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor."

Brown said it caught everyone off guard and it was only a few hours later everyone was out of civilian clothes and into their military uniforms. He said there were times before the bombing they would be in civilian clothes most Friday nights and through the weekend but when Pearl Harbor happened, that all came to a screeching halt.

As a Mess Sgt. in the 2nd Infantry Division, Brown remembered the times he served General Eisenhower's nephew. He also vividly recalled participating in the D-Day landing at Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944, which was preceded by a couple days in the English Channel ahead of the invasion, a time recalled by Brown "as hell."

"I remember hitting the beach in the afternoon on D-Day like it happened yesterday," Brown said as he recalled the day in his mind. "When you look out in the water and you see arms and legs and all that, it's, it's horrible."

After a lengthy pause, Brown comes back on the phone, visibly shaken and crying.

"I just can't talk about it, I can't," he mustered.

To listen to Mess Sgt. Brown tell his story, click the button below.

[Voices of Veterans: Mess Sgt. Melvin Brown](#)

Veterans can email VoicesofVeterans@glo.texas.gov to tell their stories. Please note that the Veteran must be a resident of Texas at the time of their interview.

Voices of Veterans is a state agency's first Veteran oral history program. It records the stories of Texas Veterans through their time in service and after returning home from combat.

The VLB records interviews with veterans over the phone or in person. Their interviews are then permanently archived in the Office of Veterans Records at the GLO, where they join the historical documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barret Travis.

Veterans' interviews are also available to researchers, historians, genealogists, and the public. These precious records inspire future generations and remind us of our Veterans' sacrifices.

To listen to the over 500 archived stories of Veterans documented through the GLO's Voices of Veterans oral history program, click the button below:

[Voices of Veterans](#)