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We Lt. Col Leon McGinnis and Carrie Huggins  
Interviewee (print) Interviewer (print)

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the home of Lt. Col Leon McGinnis's home

on the date(s) of February 5, 1995  
for the oral history collection being compiled by Dr. Marshall.

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Interviewee's signature

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Date Feb. 5, 1995

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Date Feb. 5, 1995

**History 202 Project**  
**conducted in 1995 by:Carrie Huggins**  
**for Dr. Suzanne Marshall**

April 17, 1995

Lt. Col. Leon F. McGinnis

by: Carrie Huggins

February 5, 1995

home of Mr. McGinnis

502 Main St., Springville, AL.

subject: Time in WWII

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#### Slide 2

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## Title

History is a very important part of the world today. If we did not know the history of our country and our world, we would only let history repeat itself. Also, we would not know all the interesting and fun facts about our world. Historical study and review are very essential. We may get the facts from books and other sources, but until you hear it one on one from someone who lived that historical event you and not really understand or feel the impact. WWII and the Great Depression were two of the biggest historical events in American History. These events made a big impact on so many people. What is so sad though, is that many youth of today do not understand it or even care. That is why I took the time to sit down and interview someone from this era. A few years from now these people will be gone. This tape is for learning and to know exactly what it was like.

Lt. Col. Leon F. McGinnis is <sup>a</sup> man of high standing. One would be honored to make his acquaintance. Lt Col. McGinnis is a resident of Springville, Alabama, and he has been all of his life. He was born in Springville at the corner of Jan and Forman Street. He now resides in the home of his late parents with his wife.

Mr. McGinnis finished school in 1930 during the Great Depression. He knew how it felt to be poverty stricken. Mr. McGinnis ~~was quoted as saying~~ <sup>s</sup>, "when you have little, it becomes extremely valuable." He feels that great patriotism falls in bad times.

~~He~~ In 1942, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Mr. McGinnis joined the war effort. He was twenty-eight. As a result of

scoring extremely high on his mathematical aptitude test, he was made an artilleryman. During the war, he was stationed in Europe. He traveled to France, Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. He trained at Fort. Seal Oklahoma. Lt. Col. McGinnis did not have to fight because he had an exemption from the war because his father was ill and his mother could not support herself. He did get an allowance of fifty dollars a month that was given to his family. When he moved up to first Lieutenant, his mother and father received one-hundred and fifty dollars. He found an old income tax return not long ago, and it revealed that he was paying income tax on eighteen-hundred dollars a year.

His unit was the first to sail directly from the U.S. and arrive ~~directly~~ in France. They arrived three weeks after D-Day in Normandy. The time of year was miserable and rainy. The Germans were getting a heavy defeat from air-pilots and artillerymen. Lt. Col. McGinnis said, "we were good at artillery." Not only was he an artilleryman, he was also an executive officer. He knew every problem and appointed where every gun and shell would go. "It was worse than being married to two women at the same time," say Mr. McGinnis.

Lt. Col. McGinnis witnessed many events in the war that we have never even heard of or witnessed. For example: small bombings of enemy tanks, mornings at the camps before battles, and the devastation of the war itself. For example, on a morning after being in battle all night, one of the men in his unit took his breakfast and coffee and <sup>set</sup> sat his coffee in a dead German

Wow!

soldier's hand. Death was not uncommon. It was an everyday part of their life.

On December 15, they had fought all the way into the edge of Germany. At that point, they were called to go north. He then participated in the Battle of the Bulge. After the atomic bomb was dropped and the war was officially over, Lt. Col. McGinnis stayed on in Europe and assisted in some final activities. Mr. McGinnis felt that parts of the war were uneconomical, but there was a certain amount of satisfaction from the war.

Mr. McGinnis left the war and immediately began searching for his wife. Also, he joined the Army Reserve. He organized the National Guard Unit in Ashville, Alabama and the unit at Springville also. He organized and commanded many others, also. Since his time in WWII (which was 210 days in battle), he has gone on to live a very prosperous life. He has kept a journal of each day in the war and also has maps of the route his unit took. Also, Mr. McGinnis has begun to write a book on his time in the war. *gms*

Lt. Col. Leon F. McGinnis is an essential part of American History. He gave me some advice that should be passed on and that is that this type of work should be continued and kept in some type <sup>2</sup> safe place for future study and guide. After interviewing Mr. McGinnis, one has a better understanding of the times of depression and WWII. Also, your heart is filled with pride knowing what he did for our country and we the people. We can only be thankful to him and know that we are indebted to him and all the men <sup>who</sup> that have gone to battle for us at least once in

their lifetime. Again, history is essential and let us not ever forget the importance of that.

yes!!

Good info.

Paper could use some revisions to smooth it out. Good use of quotes - use more!

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