

Ferrell, Bob-5-9-98

[Speaker 1]

It's an interview with Mr. Bob Farrell, Bristol, Virginia, May 9th, 1998. I am Dr. John McManus. Well, that thing that's been sitting there and growing dust, that's my shadow box that tells a lot of the history when I was a Private and when I was a First Lieutenant and a Major.

How did you get into the service? Well, I was born in Dothan, Alabama. Dothan?

Yes, Genesis 37, 17th. I heard them say, let us go into Dothan. That's an old town in Samaria where Joseph was sold into slavery with his coat of many colors by his brothers.

And that's the name of the town in South Alabama from whence I came. And on the masthead of the newspaper down there, it says Genesis 37, 17th. I heard them say, let us go into Dothan.

And I was from probably, wasn't poor, but I didn't know it. I was poor, in a sense of the word. My father was a traveling slave and my mother was a homebody because women didn't work back then, except for school teachers and nurses.

And I was fortunate enough to make such grades that I graduated from high school when I was 16. And I was a bookworm. I liked academia.

And the fact that I was asthmatic meant that I couldn't get out and play baseball or whatever, so I turned inward with the books. And since I was asthmatic, I couldn't play any instruments, wind instruments, so I took up playing the drums. But anyway, I went off to Auburn and by the time that I turned 18, I was in the middle of my first quarter of my junior year in college because I went straight on through, no summer job back then.

I had tried to get in the Royal Air Force when I was 17.

[Speaker 2]

Why?

[Speaker 1]

I wanted to get in the war because I wasn't old enough to get in the war, except for the Marines, but they lied and took them away. There were 15, 14, 13 Marines. And I was told that it looked like the United States was going to get in the war that I could just hold tight until I turned 18.

At that time, the regulation was that you had to have two years of college before you could apply to be an aviation cadet. And I didn't have. I was just into the sixth or seventh week of my first quarter of my junior year.

So when I turned 18, I left for the service. Having enlisted, gone down and enlisted at my hometown, which had a fighter training base called Napier Field. And when I turned 18, they sent me a telegram saying, you can come now.

I got on a train with 2,600 other students at Auburn University. At that time, it was not called Auburn University. It was not VPI.

It was Alabama Polytechnic Institute. It was a land-grant college. Because each state, Lincoln saw that each state had a land-grant college.

And so I went off to the military and went to basic training in Miami Beach, Florida. I went from there to aviation students. They had so many people backed up.

They didn't have sufficient training bases to hold. And so they commandeered the colleges. Like King College, like Henry, like Milligan, like, I don't know, maybe even UT.

I don't know. Commandeered the colleges. And so I went up there and became, went to the 57th College Training Detachment at the University of Alabama.

And there I took such things as mathematics and geometry and code and, I don't remember now, things like that, while waiting for an opening in the cadet program. Then I went from there to San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center, where everybody went, I suppose. I don't know everybody.

That's a big word. But most anybody I knew went to S-A-A-C, San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center. There you took what they called a psychomotor test to see whether you were to be a pilot or a bombardier or a navigator or whatever, whatever.

And then from there you went to a training base. My training base was in Houston, Texas, Ellington Air Force Base, Houston, Texas. I stayed there.

It was a large base having two or three or four sections there. And I graduated April 21, 1944, which is pretty far along in the war, but at that time I was just 19. So I received a 15-day leave, I guess.

Back then, if it was an officer, it was called a leave. If you were an enlisted man, it was called furlough. And in the meantime, my parents had left to go from Alabama and moved up to some God-forsaken place nobody had ever heard of called Bristol, Tennessee.

So I came through into this airport out here never having seen this country place here and visited. And from here I went to the combat crew training at Pueblo, Colorado. Now, combat crew training was arranged so that part of the crew showed up the first third, two or three members of the extra big joined us at the second third, and then all of the members joined at the third third phase of it.

Leave training in old combat weary B-24s at Pueblo on the airfield. Graduated from there, and the crew went to a staging area, which was called, as it was called back then, Repo-Depo, replacement people or whatever. And that was at Lincoln Army Airfield, Lincoln, Nebraska.

And there you awaited your assignment to see. A plane would come in, and they would say, here's the plane. You go to wherever, Bombay, India or Honolulu or wherever.

And the assignment came in for us to go to Europe. And here's a bunch of people that are 18 and 19 and 20 years old. We had one we called Granddad on the crew, and he was 22 years old.

That's just the nature of it. The war was fought by millions of people that were 17, 18 and 19. And we went from Lincoln Army Air Base to Bangor, Maine.

Now, up until World War II, there probably hadn't been more than 200 or 300 flights across the North Atlantic. A, it would have been too expensive. B, they didn't have the type of air.

They only had those flying boats that were able to go that far. And so they had what was called a northern route, and then they had a southern route, which was a fellow here in Brussels, a southern route by the way, of Belen and Brazil and up and off to the Ascension Islands. And the Ascension Islands went into Port Laudy in French Morocco, and up to Europe, the southern route.

So we went the northern route. And there they had airline pilots who had been from director commissions to try to teach these young, you know, golly, most fellows would be out nowadays. I'm not able to relate to these people that acted juvenile as they did, because I didn't have any juvenile family.

And to fly over 2,400 miles of water, and most of us had never been further away than Abingdon from our hometown because the nation was in a depression. There was no money. There were no roads, literally, big roads.

So they gave us maps. We flew over, flew just south of Prince Christian Sound in Greenland, went to a place called Stonaway, Scotland, and turned on a radio beacon and went to a place called Stone, England, where all the airplanes landed. Then the airplanes then would be taken to the various sundry combat bases that needed them because yesterday so many were shot down, like 60 and 70 and 80 planes a day being shot down was about the norm.

You can imagine, America, the Vietnams, there were that many planes being shot down. You have to get out in the arms of one of the last as many as 12 one day in Vietnam. It was the norm because we lost 30,000 airplanes during World War II.

And so we were there in the staging area and then each of the combat groups would levy against the people there, saying we need five right-waist gunners, four left-waist gunners, two long-haired gunners, six tail gunners, whatever, whatever. And we were levied on by the 2nd Air Division. Now in England, when you look at England, it looks like a distorted wine bottle.

It comes down, got a hump like that, and then a neck that goes way up towards the Shetland Islands. And the 2nd Bomb Division was composed of about, I don't know exactly, I can look it up, time is a racer, right, 13 combat groups. Their headquarters was located in Norwich, N-O-R-W-I-C, England, which is about 65 miles north, northeast, almost due north of London.

And all around that 2nd Bomb Division, which is the 2nd Faction, were the groups that were flying B-24s. I was then assigned to the 755th Combat Squadron. Which is part of which group?

The 458th. The 458th and that? The 458th Bomb Division.

B-24. B-24, the whole division of B-24. There were three divisions in the 8th Air Force at this time.

At an earlier time, it was different, but the fighters were involved in an earlier time, but now the fighters were withdrawn and assigned to a unit called the 9th Air Force. And we were under Major General Shetland. And we flew out of Norwich along with, let's see, here is red with vertical stripes, and there would be red with horizontal stripes, and red with diagonal stripes, and black with white stripes, and black with diagonals, and black with verticals, and green would give you the 15 groups.

So you were color-coded as well as voice-coded. That was the way to tell you about it. And I was on the 458th Bomb Group, which was part of the 96th Combat Wing, which was part of the 2nd Air Division, which was part of the 8th Air Force.

And the 755th Squadron would have been normally three squadrons to the group. Now, this is pretty far along in the war, but we weren't over in New England until about 8 or 9, 10 months later, and then we just fiddled around for a while, flying easy, short missions, as it were, against occupied France. So now the 8th Air Force was swelling up to its eventual ability to put 1,000 planes in the air.

Three divisions. The 1st and the 3rd Division would be 17, and the 2nd Division was only P-24s. All others were under, at that time, Lieutenant General James Doolittle.

Now, Doolittle had been in World War I and had come out a captain and gone to MIT and got a Ph.D. degree in aeronautical engineering, which was, you know, a lot of what they were doing back then. He was a reserve officer. And a reserve officer back then was a bad, bad work.

The union of ring knockers, which was the West Point, was so strong that a reserve officer couldn't get anywhere. For instance, Curtis LeMay, when he graduated from the University of Ohio ROTC program, he was put in there and then ushered back out to reserve status. Most people don't know he was a reserve officer.

The head of the missile command was also in there when they put him in. There were just so many slots available for officers, and they rotated him in and threw him out, rotated him in and threw him out, regardless of how good they were. Anyway, so when the war came along, in the meantime, in the reserve status, Doolittle had advanced to the rank of major.

He was recalled to active duty. And he was a very famous person. He was far more famous in the Air Corps than the Air Corps was.

Nobody knew a damn thing about the Air Corps. And he was a racing pilot of very international fame. And then he led the Doolittle Raid as a lieutenant.

Anyway, he took over from Ira Eaker as commander of the Air Force. And I began to fly missions. My base, which was at Norris, as all of the bases of the 2nd Air Division were around the town of Norris-Chamberlain, my base was Royal Air Force Station Horsham St. Faith. We commanded a Royal Air Force base, which was a permanent base of concrete and linoleum and all that. This was part of the deal when Churchill got the destroyers, fitted the destroyers, and we got the ability to land at Bermuda and have a base in Bermuda and whatever. So I flew missions out of there to Berlin, to Luton, to Hanover, to Pfaffenhausen, to Karlsruhe, to Magdeburg.

And we were mounting a seven-day campaign bombing Cologne. Now, Cologne was a target in which there were selected areas that you could not bomb because of the political pull of Ford Motor Company and General Motors who had automobile plants there in that great city, as well as the famous cathedrals there. Not that we were that good at bombing.

We thought we were more than we really were. The committee that went around after the war and checked the aiming sites against where the bombs landed, the bomb survey, anyway, on the second or third day, the second division was bombing onto the target of Cologne. We started that.

And in the meantime, we had been elevated to deputy lead. You get to be deputy lead by skill and cunning and the fact that your number is such a pocket idea. The lead scout to go out in the engine and shoot you first, you know.

Who in the heck wants to be out there first? So we took off, and no one gives much thought to how do you assemble 500 or 1,000 airmen. It is a prodigious task because of the crop washing.

And after all, these are all young kids. We didn't know at the time that we were young kids because everybody else was that way. But as you look back on it in retrospect, oh, my God, there were 21, 22-year-old majors and 23-year-old lieutenant colonels and 25-year-old colonels and 28-year-old brigadier generals like the time of Custer, when Custer was...

And I have been flying ever since. Whether there was a break, I'd be flying today. I have 8,435 hours, and I have my own twin-engine airplane up there.

But most of the people that were in the Air Corps would change its name to Air Force later on, U.S. Army Air Force later on. It was U.S. Air Service, then U.S. Army Air Corps, then U.S. Army Air Force, then United States Air Force. They changed its name about four times.

So we took off, and we got about... I was interrupting myself. How do you assemble that many planes?

We were flying maybe 300 or 500 planes that their entire division was. So what you do, they had things called splashers and bunchers. And why it had those synonyms, I don't know.

One plane would fly up here and get over that radio beacon, and he'd make a circle. Next one would go up, and he'd turn around so I could get on the man's left. Next one would come up, and he'd get on the man's right.

Now we've got a three-plane formation. He would go back to this buncher here. Then the next three planes would come and get on the right over here.

Then the next three would come and get on the left. Then the next three would come and get entailed in Charlie's flight. And that would take all kinds of time and fuel.

It went back and forth and back. And finally we got out over the wash, which was the area between DF and London, over the channel. And the lead called and said, we're going down, we've got engine trouble.

It appeared through the clouds. Suddenly we were leading. And I looked around and there was all these.

Anyway, we flew over and hit the normal coastline, which is in Holland, called the Sider, which is UIDB. I don't know if that's what you see there. And it was that area where you cleared your guns.

All the guns were being fired for effect to see if the gun barrels were frozen or if cosmoline was in the way. And then from there we started towards our target, Colombo. When you go to a target, you hit a thing called the IP, which is the initial point.

There, the formation goes into bombing formation, where these airplanes that are in a V of Vs will swing into a V of T. So that you... Unless you're...

[Speaker 2]

Straight behind the lead.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, unless you're area bombing. Like you say, we want to bomb the whole area. Then you bomb into a V of Vs.

Otherwise, you bomb in straight. And so we went from the initial point. And the initial point is normally 20 to 50 miles, in which all these massive amounts of planes are going to get squirreled.

And we made the run to the target. After you hit the target, then you turn and go to a thing called the RP, which is the rally point. Our initial point would be Morristown, for instance.

We would make a run against Bristol. Then after that, and the straggling around the planes would then all go over to a rally point, which is, say, like Lebanon. Tasked to get back into formation, and then go back.

As we approached the target, we were about 26,000 or 28,000. We could see the flag. Mind you, the back of the German Air Force was broken in March and April of 1944.

Was this happening about August? I think it was October 14th. And this is, what, your second or third mission?

No, this is my nine-and-a-half mission. And the flight was pretty heavy. We had an altered crew.

One member of our crew, who was of Jewish faith, his name had been Silberstein. And he changed it to Sills, like the opera singer, Sills. And that's a famous change of name for Jewish people.

And he had asked to be off of that mission because his brother had been in Operation Abridged Tukar, which was Operation Market Garden. And we had been flying on a mission to Karlsruhe about two or three days early and had passed over it. In fact, we didn't know what it was.

The only history collector told us was Operation Market Garden. And all these airplanes calling all these gliders and all these paratroopers and these second-hundred-person British ships were there. And his brother had been wounded in Abridged Tukar.

And they didn't... Anyway, and so the colonel let him off. And we picked up a spare tail.

Because we were the crew, the nose turret operation was replaced by a commissioned officer. How did you navigate it? Well, they gave us two navigators.

I was a radio operator. Engineer behind the upper marked two-way centers. There.

And suddenly, one burst hit right off the front of my nose gun position. Nose turret. And suddenly it was covered with blood.

And it was occupied at that time by Lieutenant Miller C. Miller. He was on the ground position in a place called Teleco.

And he had just joined our crew as a spare. That's sort of like hitching a ride to Knoxville, Indiana, in a car wreck. You know what I mean?

And the second burst burst between the number three engine and the side of the airplane, which blew out the side where the radio compartment was operated by sergeants and the random sheriffs. The third, there were four gun batteries, normally. These are 88mm, the world's best guns.

At that time, in fact, I don't know. The third one hit the ball of the turret. But fortunately, the ball of the turret gun was out of it over the target.

It got out over the target. Because the fighters hold off. They don't come up.

There's communication between the flak commanders and the fighter commanders. Otherwise, they're on fighters with each other. They wait sort of like buzzards circling the car because they wait.

And then the fourth shell exploded off the tail. I guess it didn't hit. Well, it shot the controls out.

The airplane did a slow turn right. Now, as you're coming down the Rhine River, the Rhine comes down through Cologne and goes down to a very large sea called Bocart. B-O-C-A-R-T.

There, the river does a 180-degree turn and turns straight down and goes back down towards Switzerland. And so we all bandaged it because of A, the altitude, B, the speed, C, the wind. When eight or nine or ten men bail out of the bomber, they are stretched out over maybe 20 or 30 miles here once they hit the drain.

Some being on one side of the Rhine River and some being on the other. I landed. I bailed out through the Mosville closure doors.

The fire was in the bomb bay. Fuel coming from the overhead wing tank was caught by about the heated metal of it and the aircraft was blown up. Germans, Americans invent words.

We say give me some skiing man and all that kind of weird. The Germans build words. For instance, we say paratrooper.

The Germans say Fallschirmjäger. Descending parasol fighter. So they get long words in German.

Plus the fact that it's very difficult. Anyway, I bailed out and landed right in the side of a farmhouse, maybe ten feet from the side of a farmhouse in a garden, a household garden. And when I bailed out, I had remembered what they had said in training.

Don't pull the ripcord because they will shoot you when you are descending because certain areas in Germany kill aviators when they land or shoot them when they are descending. So I delayed about five miles of the free fall before the shooting. Trying to remember what they said.

Well, go down, descend until you can recognize things on the ground and pull the ripcord. Well, by the time you pull the D-ring and the seconds pass by between that and the deployment of the initial small shoot, then of the bigger shoot, you've lost four miles in 67 seconds and you're going 130. Anyway, I delayed a little too long.

By the time the shoot destroyed and went to the left and to the right, and I was on the ground. Anyway, the German jumped on my back as the shoot was dragging me across the ground. I was trying to pull the bottom shroud.

The shoot collapsed as the ground wind pulled across. You don't pull the top shroud, you pull the bottom. Then I had my shoulder hoist on my 45.

The guy had a pitchfork and he was standing up on my back and he reached down and got my 45 and was dragging me through his garden. And everybody had been taught by Hitler to say, before you see war, it's awful. They may not have understood what it meant, but that's what they said.

So, I was taken down into the town a little bit each way. There, two other members of the crew had been captured. And we were put up in a wagon reminiscent of the hunchback of Notre Dame, with the wooden wheel thing that you see the straw in and the hunchback in.

And we were held up in the square and the crowd began to assemble and the guy was verse and verse talking, don't be riotous. There were these American murders and there was a

woman out in the crowd who was leading the anti-American and killed them hanging the scoundrels that they were away with. We understood later on that her child had been killed in the rain the day before.

So she was leading this kill. Well, things were getting pretty nasty. We knew it was going to come.

Out of the crowd appeared an old, old, old fellow. He was a 60-year-old resurgent. He took his uniform home and took his rifle home that time.

And that rifle he took us away from the crowd, saved us. Well, they had in this little village, little farming village a fire hall that kept horse-drawn fire engines, like you see in the old Keystone County where you can go. And they would go out and grab somebody's horses to pull them, whoever's horses were closest by.

So the handful of the two-fire engines out had them just a couple of windows up high where you could see through, but you couldn't see through just enough, and locked the door and put us in. The three of us. And this reserve is being called the Local Army Command.

And I don't remember that time, but two or three hours later, a man showed up in a fugitive that had the doors that opened, probably like the old 1936 forward chief. He was from the 28th Light Infantry Division. He came and picked us up along with our parachutes and took us to some castle.

I think it was in Walt Disney's castle. There we were interviewed by some German officer. It was like bread with jam or bread in Germany.

You know, they baked it for me for a year as I carved out a cut and got the salt through it. Hell, I'm going to eat that thing. I remember saying I was glad to get that, but at that time I was still cocky.

And from there we were taken to the local police jail. Franklin jail. Now, when we had been hit, the bombardier had pulled the navigator out of the nose turret.

He'd been hitting it on the right side of his head. And it was bleeding and he lost his eyesight. He snapped a parachute off.

So you walked around with a harness on and you snapped the parachute body onto the harness like this that you wore around because you couldn't walk around with a parachute on all the time. It was too much of an impediment. So, the man wasn't conscious or semi-conscious.

So they put him on. We had a camera hatch in the airplane. Inside the camera hatch was about a 20-foot webbing with a hook on the end of it.

They hooked the hook on the D-ring and threw him out of the airplane. That's when we snatched and pulled the D-ring and he floated down. It was there going to the bathroom in this German civilian police-type jail.

Then we saw the second-level bandages all over his head. We had to lead him up to the wall so he could urinate in the urinal. And I don't remember, I think we spent one day in the civilian jail.

It was there we were taken on a military vehicle to a thing called Dulag, D-U-L-A-G. Air Temporary. This was an assembly prison.

You'd stay there two, three, or four days and they'd gather him up. Because the 8th Air Force alone was losing 15, 16, 17 planes a day. The 9th Air Force, and I was down in the 10th Troop Carrier Command and all that.

By the time you had all those in you, you had quite a number. So, I was in American training. Then I was shipped to my prison training to Hope.

S-O-H-E-A Hope. There, I was working in the prison where the movie, The Great Escape, Steve McQueen, Digging the Cone, all that business. I've been shown a million times on TV.

That's the prison I was in. That prison was composed of 14,000 funnels. That's the one prison.

There were 23 prisons. There were 14,000 commissioned officers in that prison. Mr. Hammond, I remember, Mr. Hammond ran to do certain tasks that I just don't remember. And there I was in Starlight Loop 3, which was composed, and these are just rough, one Brigadier General who had been military attache for 12 or 13 full terms, about 60-some-odd prisoners, and it comes 3,000-something majors and some 8,000-9,000 campers. There, the prison that you saw, The Great Escape, you saw how the barracks were up and coming through. The American commander, there were three divisions to the camp.

One was the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal New Zealand Air Force, Royal Indian Air Force, Royal Pakistani Air Force, Royal whatever, whatever, the British Empire. That was all in the north compound. And then I was in the south compound.

And then to the left of that was the west compound for the three separate divisions of it. And I was assigned by the ex-committee chairman. And the ex-committee was the super secret underground part of the prison.

It was run by Lieutenant Colonel Albert P. Clark, who was a Spitfire pilot who had been shot at in North Africa by the Indian Force Academy. The ex-committee then made an assignment.

My assignment was dirt disposal for some of these. And what you did is you became part of a very elaborate, wide scheme of things. They had a committed to counterfeit German money.

They had a committed to counterfeit German railroad tickets and passports. Because everywhere you went in Germany you had to show paper. If you went here to the grocery store you probably stopped there four or five times.

Then they had a committee to teach you quickly enough German to allow you to answer certain questions. Then they had a committee that taught you how to fly German airplanes. They'd make a mock-up out of cardboard.

These were men that had been at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and had flown German planes and captured German planes that were shot at. So that when you got in there and looked at all this stuff in German you wouldn't pull the wrong lever. Then they had a committee on map makers.

These fellows had been cartographers in St. Louis. Cartographers. The occasion of making all the American maps.

And they made maps that allowed you to escape the war. Then they had a committee to convert that dumb looking brown American uniforms because brown was not a color. Europe was either black or dark gray.

There were no reds, no greens, no purples. That's the damn color. Period.

And Americans got shot down with that uniform on and brown shoes. I think brown shoes. It was their giveaway.

These fellows, there was a law in Germany that if you were caught out of uniform you were automatically shot. So what they did is they took the uniform, these ex-tailors, cut it, kept the inside things, all the uniforms had inside them. Quartermaster, general of the Asian and Philadelphia Pennsylvania.

Then they dyed this with blackberry jam or something like that. They got it from the Swiss Red Cross offices. So all of these people would go together under the, whether you wanted to or not, that's just your assignment.

Because the whole camp was divided up into companies. All the first lieutenants and second lieutenants were privates. All the majors were sergeants.

And they just made an American control of the inside of the camp. And they were divided up into when you fall out of a row, just like you were in the infantry. And you didn't escape because you wanted to escape, you escaped because you were assigned to escape.

The whole organization then went following to see that you got to escape. For instance, in the prison camp room I was in, the secret radio operating in communication with BBC in London, I didn't even know it and I was in the same room with him. He'd do it at night after everybody was asleep.

I didn't know that until the war was over. The radio communication. So if you follow the movie The Great Escape, you know that they dug the tunnels and brought the dirt up.

Well, how are you going to dispose of dirt? Well, you put it on the ground. Because when you dig it down below, that's a different story.

The socks and the shoes were all on the ground. So what the colonel would do is he would assign 30 men to walk around the compound. He would assign 8 of us dirt haulers to get in the middle of those dirt.

So that all these other guys saw the sluts as these old steppin' fetches used to do in the old movies. The guys about to drag their feet in order to intermingle the top dirt with our dirt so they'd gradually change color away faster this time. First off, you fill the walls with dirt.

Then you fill the ceiling with dirt until the ceilings are almost ready to fall. Then you dispose of it by walking around the compound. There were always 3 colonels.

One to get out. One to keep going. One to give away.

So if things got tough, you gave it away by saying something for the Germans to catch on and they'd think, ah, we got the right one. They got Colonel A and you're digging in Colonel C. Then on January the 4th, 1945 we suddenly got the news we had to move out.

Now it was cold. This was the coldest winter in the history of Europe. That Marshall and Sukhov 3rd Ukrainian Army was and we had in this prison camp what was called political.

We had Churchill and these were people they were going to hold as political hostages. So we started out on a death march tonight. In the meantime we were all malnourished.

I was 178 when I was shot down. I was 112 pounds when I was executed. So we started out towards Germany.

Pulling wooden sleds with what little accumulation of things we had. And those people whose health was not good, who had been wounded, who had caused diseases, began to fall by the wayside and when they did they would be shot. Well, we marched and they could open the gates to anywhere because you didn't have the strength to do it.

We ended up in a tank train station, a Panzer train station in Germany called Spremburg. And there they would roll the tanks out of the buildings and we slept on the train. Being led by an old, old, old man, 38 years old.

The second night we marched to a place called Moscow, M-O-S-C-O-U. And slept in a place, in a glass factory where they had the big ovens going and it was real warm. And though the commanding officer decided that so many people were falling by the wayside, he would try to do something to prevent their execution.

So he assigned West Point graduates to stay with those people so that the Germans would think twice before they would shoot the West Point guys. And the nominee of the West Point graduates were by that time Lieutenant Colonels of the Winter Class. Two or three years before the war started, they took them right there.

Custer went from a major to a brigadier general in about a year, back in the States. So at that time, the co-pilot who was in bed there fell by the wayside along with four or five others and the commanding officer stayed with them and the Russians were caught on our tail as they were coming toward Berlin. We were going down one side of the road and the German reinforcements were going down the other side.

Horses on artillery. The horses mainly because horses could do what mechanized couldn't do. It's surprising to say in this day and time that they could.

They could later eat the horses. And they could maneuver much better. And from Moscow, they put us on two prison trains.

They divided us up and I didn't know how. Two prison trains. One prison train was going to the infamous town of Olympus.

Nuremberg. How many went there? Not pretty.

And the rest of us went to a place called Mooseburg. M-O-O-S-E-R-G which was north-northeast of Munich. Six or eight or ten kilometers.

I don't know. From the Munich to Dresden to Chemnitz to Berlin, all about. And there I entered an international camp of about 120,000.

There were the Punjabis. There were the Sikhs. There were the pro-American Italians.

There was the Polish, Free Polish Brigade members. There were the Free French Brigade members. There were the Sudanese.

All international students. It was in this camp that I met the people that were the remnants of Operation was told by these people. This brigade.

There was one brigade that fought with the British Sikhs. As you could see, which was holding the British army. They were told how this was supposed to be the water that was going around the inn.

And the 30th Corps and the General Horrocks were supposed to bring their armor in. And he never made it because over in that area the land is flat and it comes up to the three feet road and the ground is mushy or marshy or whatever. So tanks were not easy to deploy.

This would have been better for horse drawn cavalry. I don't mean mechanized cavalry. The roads were built up so therefore if you shot up a tank at the beginning and shot up one at the end then the people caught in between were able to be slaughtered.

So he did not hook up with the 6th Parachute Division at Arnhem. The 82nd held Nijmegen and the 31st held Arnhem and they partially succeeded the 6th Division. And it was there that I learned first hand from these people not knowing about what this Operation Mardi Gras became part of history later on in the movies.

But this was a hero well it wasn't a hero conceived it was a hero produced because the Dutch Underground began sending I'm talking first person sender to these people who were the survivors. The Dutch Underground began to send messages back to these things. Something was wrong around Nijmegen there were troops moving.

I may be telling you something you already know about this. And what had happened was you know Kettler ran the war. He would say this division stays, you don't move, you don't surrender, fight to the last man.

You know he had micro-managed the war. The 15th Panzer Division asked to be relieved to go into R&R and get new replacements. And Kettler said okay.

Where do you want us to pull out of that? Kettler said just go up to arms. At the same time the British paratrooper division had been disbanded after the high losses had decreased.

It was under the commanding general by the name of Student. And all the members of that first parachute were put out into other divisions. Either Student or some of his cohorts finally prevailed upon Hitler to re-institute the parachute division.

And Student selected for retraining for them all to come and needed a place to call home. The word went out to the German command that all the members of the parachute would if they wanted to come back to the retraining school that they were going to establish a little place called home. All these trains and all this was creating a situation that when the parachute dropped them they were landing on top of the Panzer division and a parachute was in which is there were some people that thought the Germans were very good so they just asked their way back.

And I got all this information. But anyway, on April the 29th I'm standing looking out through the barbed wire like a tourist. I've been in this April, January, February, March and I hear gunfire and I see a little Piper airplane flying over an artillery spot.

And there was a German machine gun nest up in the belfry of the church. And I heard the fire. Later on it was told to me that a company of Hitler Junkers was across the road trying to stop that T in the ocean.

They fought there very bravely but we ran over them. And suddenly the spire of that church disappeared as the artillery blew the spire out and killed that machine gun. And tanks then ran through the barbed wire and liberated it.

And Patton pulled out of the line the 26th Corps and the Major General Leroy Adams whose son was in the position. He was the 1st Lieutenant of the 19th whatever. And so they had remembered the problem that they had at the end of World War I where everybody went out and ate food because they were starved to death and they died because someone couldn't stand the richness of the food.

So we then were taken by trucks to a town called Ingolstadt on the airfield line. And converted B-17s flew in there and picked us up. Flew us out to Lahore.

At Lahore, France, they had built three or four temporary tent cities by the name of Lucky Strike, Old Gold, and Chesterfield. And these were a delousing and debriefing area where intelligence people interviewed everybody and you had your haircut and you were with a DDT giving you uniforms and giving you IDs and new dog tags and kind of awaiting the arrival of ships to take back and forward this ship. I remember Eisenhower came into our

tent and he said, well we don't have enough ships to take this many because it doesn't have all of the normal troop ship on the terrace like 2,000 people.

You're talking about 50, 50, 80, 100 merchants. We didn't have that many available for that. Plus the war wasn't over.

It was still 9 or 10 more days. Well, I decided that we decided we'd go AWF and try to get back to the bomb group and fly back to the state. So we jumped in and we departed the ride or whatever on a 3,000 parachute ship and flew to Leage.

And there then we got another ride on a British parachute ship and to Croydon and got there and found out that the word was out. Nobody goes without orders. Well, before I left Leage I had to have some money.

So they had set up a temporary pay office and I went up there and I was in this new uniform and appeared before the window and at that time when I'd been in prison camp I was probably 8 or 9 and the guy started counting out the money and he was just like in a bank behind the little steel bank like it used to be he had a steel program and the money was lying there and I reached for it and he said by the way, let me see your order so I grabbed the money and ran and blew the whistle. The MP came running and I alluded in. Anyway, we got back to Croydon and they didn't want to let us through the lines and they gave them a soft story about being an experimental war and they felt sorry for us.

Well, we went down to the big Red Cross Center and got in the cafeteria and got some cash and said that'll be 3 shillings and 6 pence or whatever and let's see your order because the word had gone out that there were about 20 AWL people so we then went to the Cheeky Train Terminal on the far side of Texas but we realized that we couldn't get through because they had a bunch of MPs at the railroad station that they always got so one of them surrendered to the MPs. Well, they took us to the office of the Brigadier General of the Anaheim County Headquarters in Croydon Square CROV and man, he cheered us up one time and man, he said, for this, you're going to go all the way back to England and start with a sentence.

I'll do all those shots and all that debriefing and all that delight and retribution and I did, we did and then finally we got on a ship in what was a captured Italian line called the White Camp I mean, it wasn't converted to English and we sailed across the ocean to Fort Dickson and from there I got a train to Fort McPherson the troops would leave and my mother met me and I stayed home for 30 days and then we headed back to Miami Beach what had been a basic training center now was converted back into a retraining getting ready for the Pacific War so I went into retraining there for about 2 or 3 weeks and getting squared off and getting the papers and from there I was ordered to Forest Field Field in Louisiana which was the B-29 train in the meantime August had come and the bomb was dropped so that stopped all the B-29 crews out that came in but I was shipped to Ellington Field, Houston, Texas and because I had been an engineering student I was made assistant post-engineer there I was to work and manually see the vase along the cleaning of the trees and putting in new light bulbs and painting of the rocks you know, everything, paint the rocks with German prisoners as they thought I was so I did that and in the first part of 1946 I must have been back to this area here because I had left in the middle of my first quarter of my senior year

and I left before 3 years later I was not qualified to go back, tripped for going back to Auburn for a little money so I tripped there and went back to Auburn did my stated ed and graduated in 1937 in the School of Mechanical Engineering in Japan later I was in King Ladder Hill power plant and it was hydraulics lab strength and material lab and stopped there for I went back to my hometown Tokamalabow then got enticed to come up to a place called West Tennessee again in the meantime I got recalled to CUNY and reported to Murfreesboro Army Airfield in Murfreesboro, Tennessee busted out of World War II as First Lieutenant and Captain in the year 1937 and then I missed the furlough and called up fighter planes and finally called up mockery and was involved in that and in 1965 I was recalled to active duty in the Dominican Republic where we were trying to prevent the communists from taking over the Dominican yeah flew with the 82nd Airborne Draconian San Isidro I was in the airfield in the Dominican Republic and I was back on active duty for seven months there until and then I came back here I came out of that and then I came back to here and in April of 1967 I was recalled to Vietnam here myself and my neighbors were available for me to come back and look after my family which I did and I had to ask for most of these invasion plans they say General So-and-so came up with the plan well there was General So-and-so that's the credit card and so when I had to come off of active duty that ended in Vietnam just as an aside to this at that time the 101st Airborne Division which was in Fort Campbell, Kentucky was in house over in Vietnam so the base was empty and the government was generating up a thing called a Light Infantry Division which we had not had in years at Fort Carson in Colorado was the 5th Mechanized Division and Fort Hood was the 3rd Armored Division and the DMV was the 2nd Marine Division it had 62,000 men which was normally the strength of three and a half divisions the Marines still used a full regiment division we went to the triangular division at the beginning of World War II we went to the square division to the triangular division composed of three regiments the Marines did not so we were going to take two regiments on the initial way we were going to go in to a place called VIN V-I-N-H