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Question: So the school -- you say you set up a school. Now, are you -- is everybody just able -- I mean, is this internally? All you guys just kind of got together and said "hey let's start a school, we have nothing else to do"?

Answer: Right. No, it's internally. Yes. The school is set up by individuals in camp. ... I'm sure there must have been someone in the -- that was probably over all or thought up the idea or, you know, thought it would be a good idea to do that.

Question: But not the Germans. I mean, this is strictly prisoners.

Answer: This is strictly ours, yes.

Question: So basically, you're in camp and they say, "Well, we'll tell you when to get up and we'll tell you when to go to bed and we'll feed you --"

Answer: That's right. That's correct. And of course, when you get up and when you go to bed -- well, not so much going to bed, but getting up, you know you've got two roll calls you've got to make. One in the morning about, what was it, oh, around 8:00 o'clock, I guess, I've forgotten that, and the other's about 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. And you know you're going to have those. So you know you'll to have to get up. And it doesn't make any difference what the weather is. Always the roll call. And of course the Americans occasionally would -- the Germans would go through and they're very meticulous and they'd, you know, count the number of people, and occasionally we'd move from one -- one line to the other, and so we'd kind of mix up their count a little bit and so we'd have to go back and do it all over again -- it was a game that we played. You don't have too many opportunities to be too inventive and to show your --or to... make up -- make life a little difficult for the enemy, so you take what you have. But that also worked against us because if we were out in the rain, we had to stand in the rain until we finally got that count. As I say the Germans are very meticulous. They -- they had to account for everyone. And so that was always, you knew you had to get up because you had to go to roll call so that took care of that.

Question: And besides the cooking that you did -- they fed you in a mess hall?

Answer: No, we -- in our section of camp, we were -- everything was done in individual rooms. There was no large mess hall. The portion of camp that was first in did have a large mess hall and that existed for, I guess, about four or five months after it was there and then the thing burned down and so the fellows there didn't have -- they had to do the cooking in the rooms also, but for the most part we had ... we learned to take the materials from the Red Cross, and the Germans gave us some things -- they gave us some potatoes at times and some soup. And in the morning, kind of an oatmeal-barley type of soup occasionally with, you know, they were really laced with weevils, but at the very -- at the first -- first look, why you kind of turned up your nose but then you realized that, no what the heck, this is another source of protein so, you know, they, they just become part of the normal diet.

Question: Were you -- in your time there, I mean, a lot of the ones that we see from Dachau and places like that -- you see these soldiers that are just skin and bones by the time you get done -- I mean, what was your physical change from the time you -- in and out?

Answer: Well, as I say, when -- at the very beginning we had one Red Cross parcel per man per week. And plus some supplementary food from the Germans, potatoes and things of that nature. So it would, you know, the weight loss is going to be very , really quite minimal at that point. However, that was in early August. Sometime in -- by October it was one parcel for two people. Well, then it became one parcel for four people. And just before

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Christmas we were almost out of parcels entirely and in January we were. There were no longer any Red Cross parcels that the Germans were giving us. So we went on the German diet. Which is a plan -- the diet plan to guarantee weight reduction. We had about 800 calories a day and that was in the form of bread and perhaps some potatoes or dried vegetables. And occasionally some soup. But that was it. And so, you know, we did lose weight. And we did become very hungry. There are two examples of -- in my diary. I did keep a diary, that I think illustrate our -- our hunger. Sometime in, I think it was January, we had an ice storm in camp and a bunch of little birds got -- had trouble with the ice and so they banged into the barracks and, you know, they were killed. And we thought long and hard about the effort in taking these little birds. They weighed a few ounces apiece and taking off the feathers and putting them in the stew pot. And we finally decided that, well, that's probably too much. We weren't hungry enough yet. Too much effort. And so we didn't do anything with the birds. Little bit later on, sometime in February or early March, in my diary I see where we -- we were thinking about a cat. There was a cat strolling around the camp. And so we started to get very serious about doing in this cat. And having that cat be a part of our meal. We were getting very, very hungry. Well, we thought about it. We were ready to go into action. But the cat disappeared. And it wasn't -- you know, we had no idea what happened to the cat. And I didn't know anything about it until I was reading a fellow prisoner's book, a guy by the name of Roger Armstrong, USA The Hard Way. And in that he tells about his room also had designs on that cat. They were thinking about the cat. Then it disappeared. Then he talks about going next door and there the cat -- they had caught the cat and skinned it and it was in the pot. So that was the story of the cat. So those are two illustrations, incidents, in my diary, which indicate that we were getting pretty hungry. And of course when you get very very hungry, then that predominates -- that is the predominate feature of your thinking. You think about food. You think about food all the time. And you talk about food all the time. You don't talk about anything else. You don't talk that much about the war and what's happening, but you can visualize some -- some special meal. For me it was pancakes and butter and syrup. I could just see pancakes and just -- you know, really was obsessed with thinking about pancakes. So, you know, an illustration of thought process.

Question: Did that help, I mean, or was it a detriment to -- did it make you feel better or did it make you feel worse?

Answer: Well, we couldn't do anything about it. We knew we weren't going to get any. But we exchanged recipes. I guess it helped to pass away the time. We consumed, you know, many hours talking about our favorite restaurant and our favorite food and so forth. So it passed the time. Didn't help our situation any. Probably made us hungrier, but that's just the nature of what happens when you get very, very hungry.

Question: That's interesting 'cause you said -- and it was going to be one of my questions. You said you thought more of food than actually this war going on. So as time went by in here, did you disassociate from the war?

Answer: No, we didn't disassociate. We had a couple radios in camp. Germans tried to find them. I had no idea where they were. All I know is that every day we would have a little news sheet that had been typed up and brought into our room. And the room -- the news sheet would contain the news of the day. We had to post guards and make sure the Germans weren't around and so we'd read it and we'd pass it to the next room in our barracks and the last room would burn it or destroy it. So we were constantly aware of the war. So even though we had, you know, great -- spent a lot of our time thinking and talking and living food, we also were interested in how long we were -- in what was happening, and if there was any end in sight. And of course the radio and the information that the radios gave us coming

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primarily from BBC but also from the German radio was monitored as well. However, that was -- there was quite a little difference between the two. And no, we -- we were aware of the war, and because that was important to us, too.

Question: Now, again, a couple important things because you talked about a holiday. You talked about Christmas going by. You were in there again, over a year?

Answer: I was in there from August until the next May.

Question: Okay.

Answer: Not quite a full year. About ten months.

Question: So you had to face a New Years and Christmas, Thanksgiving.

Answer: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Question: Two parts of the question. One, it seems like that might have been harder times but also, one aspect we hadn't talked about. You still had the love of your wife back home.

Answer: Right.

Question: And you have no contact. You don't have the faintest if she knows where you are or anything like that. Is that something you had to turn off in there? Or is that something that -- that seems like that would be very hard.

Answer: Well along the way we were given some materials, some cards to write. We could write, I guess, cards and also letters. So we could send, I forget the number, about four a month or something like that. And so early on we started writing back home. But, you know, we had ... it wasn't until, I don't remember, December, I think, or maybe January, that I first got a letter from home. I got a letter from my -- from Reta at that time. So we had -- eventually we had communication. We had, I think I received probably about 20 pieces of mail, and I don't know how much she received. So there was -- you know, there was communication as we went on. And toward the end of our stay we -- she sent a Red Cross -- yeah, a Red Cross parcel. No, let's see, a care package, I guess it was called. And I received that. And so -- so we were starting to get some contact with -- with the States, with people in the States, with our family.

Question: So you know they know where you are.

Answer: Yes.

Question: Or they know you are captured. I don't know how specific they could get. I know that a lot of things get cut up as --.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: You get a letter from the home front. Was that -- what did that do to a prisoner? I guess to you, not to a prisoner but --

Answer: Yeah, in -- I'd say in most cases, certainly, it -- it said, okay, we understand that you are a prisoner and that -- so that's -- that relieves, I mean thinking the people back

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home, that kind of relieves us in that respect. And there is, you know, there is some, some news about events that have happened at home that -- it's kind of a bland letter but nevertheless it is from home and so you -- you know that other people know where you are and that's important to you. And occasionally you hear about some of the prisoners getting "Dear John" letters, saying, well, you know, you're gone, you're a prisoner, so I've decided our relationship is over, or I'm now -- I'm now married to someone else, or something of that nature. So those guys -- that was -- would be a really devastating blow. And there you'd need, of course, hopefully you would have a good group of guys in your room that could understand and help you through your situation. Didn't happen in my case at all. Fifty-six years later, I guess we've -- we stuck together.

Question: When you got those letters, were those letters that were worn out? I mean, was something -- you talked about not having time alone. Was that really time that you got a letter and --

Answer: Oh, yeah. You're always waiting for roll call, excuse, me, mail call. And hopefully you got a letter. I got the first letter in my room, I remember that. I guess I ended up, probably, as I mentioned before, around 20 pieces of mail, something like that. Some from my -- from my parents, and the majority from Ret

Answer: And yeah, those were -- those were precious times and times when you're alone because that focused on the -- on the life that you had and who you were and also the fact that you're going to stick it out so you could get back.

One of the ... one of the problems faced by prisoners is the -- is not knowing what's going to happen. We -- I could visualize or could think about the fact that sometime this war was going to end. But to get from where I was in Germany up on the Baltic Sea back home to America -- that was quite a jump. I couldn't see how that was going to happen. So there's always this feeling of -- of not knowing what's going to happen to you. Life in camp outside of the boredom and things of that nature, you know, we knew where we were and we could function pretty well, even though we wished we had more food. Eventually we did have more food. But it was that not knowing how we're going to go from that situation we're in back into a normal situation, back to America

Answer: And so that always faced us as well as I'm sure any prisoner, trying to figure out what the end was going to be. And you could -- there were all kinds of scenarios you could dream up, some of them not so good. And at one point the Germans did issue an order that all prisoners of war would be killed. And fortunately that was not carried out but it was there. I've seen a copy of the order. And my friends, my friends who were prisoners of war of the Japanese knew that the moment the first American soldier touched the soil of Japan, the mainland, they would be killed. They knew that. So, you know, we were -- from the situation you were in, it's always hard to just kind of visualize how you're going to get out of it. Cause we had never been there before.

Question: Did you guys talk about that or was that more of an internal thing. I mean did you say --

Answer: Both, both, yeah. Internal as well as, yeah, talking about it, yeah. Okay the war's coming along here pretty well, but what will happen to us. And so you internalized it and then also you talked about it as well, yeah.

Question: What about escape? Did you ever --

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Answer: Well, there were -- (coughs) excuse me. In Stalag Three as I mentioned before, there was a big escape. That was by the Brits, and there were 85 guys who went out through tunnels. And they had in that case a number of tunnels going and one of them finally was successful. In our case, in Barth One, there was -- there was an escape committee. And it was always very -- you know, it was always very important -- it was always something that was out there. But they frowned on individuals doing something on their own because it might foul up a more elaborate plan that they had. And the new barracks that were built were built on stilts -- they were about three feet off the ground, which meant tunneling was very, very difficult. Because you -- from where you were and where the ground was, pretty hard to disguise or to do something to start digging. But, you know, there were still attempts to escape. Some of them just went over the wire. They found a place where the guard towers -- kind of a shadow. And they attempted that. Some of them went out with -- with garbage. They had all kinds of attempts. I think that perhaps one individual from our camp did escape. I don't remember the details, and got back to England. But there -- we were not very successful. However, it was -- as I say, we had our organization in camp. As a matter of fact, doesn't relate to escapes, specifically, but one of our camp leaders, after roll call one morning, just got up on the steps and proceeded to tell us that we were getting much too friendly with the enemy and that we should do everything we possibly could to escape. We should always remember that the Germans were our enemy. And for that he ended up in solitary confinement and spent the next six months in solitary. But it was a -- a good example of leadership and we probably needed to be reminded, although everyone knew what the situation was. But we probably were not aggressive enough in thinking about escape and making life difficult for -- for our enemy, the Germans. Anyway, escape was there. We had an organization and attempts were made and to my knowledge I think I read that there was one individual that was successful in getting away from our camp.

Question: How did you finally get set free or when -- how did that all happen?

Answer: We took over our -- well, we knew that the Allied Alliance and the Russian Alliance were not too far away cause we could hear the -- the shells exploding and so forth. Now we're talking about last of April and early May, 1945. It was just a question as to whether the Allied Alliance would liberate us or the Russians would. On the 30th of April there was a ... half of the guards left the camp. Half the guard towers, when we awakened ... they were vacant. Following morning they were all gone. All the guards were gone. And in the guard towers were our own prisoners of war. So we had an internal organization that -- when the Germans left, that we would man the towers. Of course we weren't going to shoot anyone or anything such as that, but nonetheless it was a symbol, too, that the camp was ours. And we existed that way for a couple of days. You know, we had free run of the camp; there really weren't any restrictions except the barbed wire and our camp commander, Zempke, said stay in camp. Don't go wandering around the countryside. And early, I think it was about on May 2nd, the Russians came in. They were the closest. And so they came into camp and they said, well what are you doing with all these -- with all this barbed wire and all these fences and so forth. You know, you're free. Knock 'em down. And so that's what we did. And as soon as that happened, then of course, people started milling around. They started leaving camp and started walking, all over. And some of them started back to the American lines or the Allied lines and the camp was ours and we were free. But -- and we were liberated by the Russians. And the first group in was a bunch of -- of their, oh, kind of, not their first line troops by any means, but Cossacks, I guess, riding some very shaggy ponies. And they were fierce looking guys. And they were saying they had to kind of strike fear into the hearts of the civilians so they'd be a little easier to control. Anyway, they were the first ones we saw, and ... later on more elements of the main Russian Army came up and so the camp was obviously liberated. But then we spent the next 13 days arguing with the Russians, trying to get us -- we had an airfield nearby with a good enough runway. So we're trying --

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we spent that time trying to get permission for the group from the 8th Air Force to come in and fly on -- land on the runway and take us out. Which eventually they did on the 13th of May. But it took us awhile to get that permission and get it done.

One of the things that happened while we were at camp -- well, I'll go back just a minute. We had a -- as I mentioned before, we had a period when we were very hungry. That ended the first of April. Seventy-six thousand parcels came into camp and there were about 10,000 of us in camp, so we were well supplied with food -- these are Red Cross parcels -- these are the ones that -- you know, really -- we were happy to see. And 60 ton of potatoes the Germans brought in. So food no longer became priority number one. And we had all kinds of elaborate dishes. And we were also getting some parcels from home at that time. From there we were getting, you know, supplementary things, and so we were eating quite well the month of April. And in early May after the Russians came in, they drove in or they -- they brought us about 60 head of cattle. And many of them were Holstein cattle, the kind that you could milk. I remember in my diary I got up a couple mornings and went out and milked the cows and of course later on we slaughtered them so we had -- we started to put on weight. Started to -- had plenty of food and during that 13 days that we were waiting for the Russians, why life was pretty easy at that point. And of course the war was over also.

Eventually the 8th Air Force was allowed to come in and did pick us up and they took us to -- right outside of Camp Lucky Strike and so there we were processed and eventually found our way back to the United States -- 293 days later, after the first mission, or start of the first mission.

Question: So back to the US and then home, or you were headed straight home?

Answer: Well, back to the US. We stopped at Camp Mt. Standish in Massachusetts and, oh, there were, I don't know, I guess we were probably given orders which gave us 60 day leave and so we started from there and eventually wound our way -- in my case, to Nebraska, and ended there about the middle of -- around the middle of June, I guess, the 25th of June.

Question: So what was it like getting back to your -- theoretically you're still a newlywed.

Answer: Yes.

Question: So you're getting back to your bride.

Answer: Oh, yes.

Question: -- what was -- where did you meet up with your bride finally?

Answer: Well, I came into Lincoln, Nebraska, which we -- our farms are about 50 miles from Lincoln. And so Lincoln was the point that I -- the large place that -- the large city that I came into and Reta met me there. And so we did have a reunion and found that we could still get along with each other, although she points out and will point out, I guess, that I was more difficult to get along with after I came back than before. Anyway, good reunion. Then we took the bus down to our parents and had a great reunion again. My folks and her folks. And then the 60 days leave was extended by 30 more days and then the war was over in the interim and so then it became a matter of just mustering out.

Question: And then when the war -- well, let me move on to another one. Two -- first one. You talked about your living quarter and you had 23 gentlemen or whatever it was --

Answer: Yeah, 24.

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Question: Out of your whole life, and I talked to a lot of vets and have found this. Out of your whole life, World War II was actually, I mean on the time line, just a little spot in there. But yet I find that the bond that you talked about -- that the men and women had formed within this war environment, to be probably one of the most powerful life experiences they've had.

Answer: Right

Question: What is that -- because now, 50 years later, you're still in contact with all these people. Is this a second family or --

Answer: That's the way to say it, yeah. That's the way I would look at it. It's a second family. Yeah, we just -- as I -- you know, I think bonding is a good word. And because of that we were able to get through the long hours of the wintertime. It was, you know, a difficult winter, and we didn't have electricity. I can remember we did burn -- we did have Red Cross parcels, we had butter, I guess, which we used as a fuel. Conversation, we got, you know, very, very well acquainted. You're with these individuals 24 hours a day, months on end. And you -- we learned to adapt and to respect each other and to get together and feel very much like a family group. And even though, as you say, that World War II in terms of years was two, three, four years, something like that, is a pretty small part in a life of 70, 80 years, but nevertheless very powerful events and experiences during that time so that makes that period of time very, very important in the long span of one's life.

Question: Do you have a message for future generations? I mean, because we get into -- discussed all the time, are we glorifying war, are we not glorifying war -- World War II happened. I mean it's a part of our history. There's a lot of generations that are coming up right now; Buck Harmon who's coming up next will talk about being in school and it takes him -- he was halfway into a discussion before he realized that they thought he was talking about the Vietnam War. The high school students had not the faintest idea of World War II. Is there a message do you think the future generations -- that you would like to leave with them from or about World War II?

Answer: Well, about World War II. Well, I'll go back and I was thinking of something else and that is ... there is a statement that freedom is never free. And it's -- I just read it the other day at the Sackett Museum outside of Omaha, and that it has constantly -- every generation has to make certain through sacrifices and actions to keep freedom. I mean, to make certain that freedom still lives. And I think that would be very, very true right now. USS Cole, the sailors that were killed and the ones that were wounded, the families of the sailors that were killed, know very well that freedom is not free. And yet, you know, I think that's -- that's what the future generation -- one of the things they have to remember. Now, in my case, in World War II, we were -- it was a total -- pretty much a total effort. The country was involved and we were attacked and so forth and it became very important for us to win. Otherwise we certainly wouldn't be having this -- this interview. And -- but, you know, the country did beat the challenge and in my case and everybody else's case, the guys went, they did what they were supposed to do, tried to do at least, what they were supposed to do. And thought nothing about it. And that's one reason why, you know, there isn't -- there wasn't a lot of talk from a lot of the GI's in World War II because they just, you know, that's what was expected of them. Still getting back to the fact that for future generations, freedom isn't free and there are times when individuals -- every generation simply has to step up and try to make certain that that is true. That we do have freedom, but it always comes with a price. And it was a total effort in World War II and we were successful. There were other efforts in Korea and Vietnam and -- Bosnia and again, not involving everyone, but

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involving some, and again coming back to the same -- the same theme. Freedom is not free. It has to be a -- you have to defend it, probably every generation.

Question: Do you hold an animosity towards -- well, was your enemy that you fought against, was it a person, a country, people, that's a hard thing for me to conceptualize.

Answer: Well the enemy was people, obviously, but people who were a part of an ideology that was foreign to what we believed in and totally against our principles. No, I have no animosity to -- to the Germans. No, I don't think I ever have... had feelings of real hate. There were some -- some guards in camp you wouldn't invite over to your birthday party by any means. And ... but, no, a consuming hate, no, I don't have that and haven't had that. Either against -- certainly against the German people, but as you realize what did happen to a lot of -- a lot of people in concentration camps and so forth, there certainly were a number of people that were very evil. There was no question about that. You don't go through Mauthausen even today and look at the fake showers that actually were gassing chambers and the crematoriums and see the racks where they burned the bodies and so forth. In my case seeing the (inaudible) I was in, without knowing that there were some very evil people around. And ... I still don't have animosity ... to -- to Germany or the German people. But I fully realize that some periods of history, man's inhumanity to man aren't very pleasant reading. Things happen.

Question: I think that's a very good way to put it. I mean, war is such a hard concept to understand --

Answer: Yes.

Question: And like you said you can break it down to some very evil people within, you know. I mean, you know, we have to look at both sides there were some atrocities that happen, both sides --

Answer: Well yes.

Question: -- not because of necessarily evil command, it was because of a person that was demented or whatever word you want to give it to individuals. I know that some of the Japanese POW's talked about, early in the war, treatment was pretty good, later in the war this power corrupted these guards.

Answer: Yes, yes, I have a number of friends who were prisoners of war of the Japanese and it's -- they had a very, very difficult time. No question about it. And had some very, very cruel guards. We did -- we did too, but the structure was a little different, I think, probably in our case. There was enough structure because we were prisoners of the German Air Force. That probably helped our situation somewhat. I know in our camp, in Barth One, we had the leading European aces, American, European aces, in camp, and certainly that fact was -- was quite well known to Göring and, you know, to most, which undoubtedly must have helped us, in the long run.

Question: Did you ever at any point, whether it be when you were going down with your plane, in the concentration camp, did you ever think, I might die?

Answer: Yeah, I thought of that when I was in the airplane, yeah, before -- before I left -- that thought entered my mind. Right. Cause we were on fire. And at any moment the thing could blow up. I did learn -- this came about 50 years later from one of my gunners who was in the nose of the ship, that as he was trying to get out, there was an explosion in the ship

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and there was a direct hit on the co-pilot's seat, which is the seat that I was in. I had vacated a short time before that. So there's an element of luck also.

Question: Somebody's looking out for you -- your number wasn't up. Now, there were a crew of what, seven?

Answer: There were ten.

Question: Did all ten -- cause you talked about seven of them ending up in the first camp. Did all ten get out or not?

Answer: The tail gunner we know was injured in the airplane and we don't know for certain whether he died in the airplane -- that is, he never got out, or whether he -- he went down with the airplane itself.

That reminds me - I have to go back a little bit. This summer we went back to -- we took a trip, a tour of Europe, from Prague to Rome. And we stopped at Mauthausen, which is the concentration camp. It's the second time I'd been there. Prior to that I had -- my bomb group has a monthly magazine and in an issue not so long ago there was a statement about a certain Austrian, Karl Ofenseller, his name, who has become an expert on the raid I was shot down -- in which I was shot down, July 25th. And so I wrote to him immediately and I said, you know, I'm really interested in any details you have about this raid because I happened to be on it. And I told him I was a prisoner. And he wrote right back and we corresponded back and forth and we agreed to meet at Mauthausen, which is the concentration camp. I told him this was a stop on our tour. I knew exactly when we were going to be there, the day, and we agreed that we would probably meet in the afternoon and that was all arranged. So we did meet Karl Ofenseller and his wife Maria in Mauthausen. And, oh, in the -- in the letters back and forth he said I'll take you to the place where your plane crashed. And that was really something because I never expected to learn where that airplane that I left at 20,000 feet on fire and -- and not flyable condition by any means -- where that landed. So met Karl and his wife and he took us to the crash site. And he went through several small villages on the way, it's about 30 minutes away, and countryside, and I kept wondering, have I been here before. Could have been, cause I went through villages, and I went through countryside, and I thought it was about 30 or 45 minutes away, but -- where they first picked me up and took me to Mauthausen. So we saw the -- went to the crash site, and I have some pictures of that and you can see where the plane landed next to a house, you can see a propeller, you can see a burned out farmstead. The farm and the house and surrounding buildings were destroyed by a -- by two of our engines that exploded as they came close to the ground. Well all of this is a way of getting at something else. You asked about the person that was killed. We also talked to an eye witness, a person who was at the scene in July the 25th, 1944. And we asked him, how about -- do you know if anything -- what happened, what might have happened to our tail gunner? Well, he said there is a rumor that as this plane came down, that there was a body and a parachute that landed in a body of water which is not very far away from where we were. But he said no body was ever found so we don't know whether that was true or not. We do know that there was charred fragments of clothing in the airplane. So I'm not, you know, I'm not certain what happened to our tail gunner. We know he was killed, but whether he stayed in the plane and burned up with the plane or whether he was a part of this rumor of this body falling out. But to my knowledge, no one, or the eye witness anyway, didn't know that the body was ever found. So we had nine of us that survived. The pilot was -- ended up in the hospital and we had a couple of individuals who had severe injuries when they landed, so, but eventually, out of the ten, nine got out of the airplane. And I read about the summary of other - the other planes that went down over Lintz, and there was one other plane that had all of the guys got out, but in most planes, over half the crew were killed. So, which would

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be, we were extremely lucky in that respect, too. So it's a long, long story to tell you about our tail gunner. And being able to go to the spot where the airplane finally came to earth --

Question: That had to be, again just a mix of --

Answer: Yeah, yeah, a whole mix of emotions,

Question: -- emotions --

Answer: Yeah, I should say. First of all it was -- I never, you know, I knew the airplane had to come down but I didn't know where. And since I didn't know where I wouldn't even, you know, wouldn't even dawn on me that maybe somebody knew. And so here was this -- this individual who has -- who was a nine year old at the time of the raid. Talks about his -- tells about his mother taking him to the air raid shelter and feeling the concussion of the bombs and so forth. And becomes very much interested in this particular raid. And so now has -- has marked the spot of 11 airplanes that were destroyed over the target. He also showed me pictures of three German aces and he said any one of these -- they were all flying that day ... and you were attacked, of course, by fighters. He said any one of these three guys could have shot you down. So I saw, you know, pictures of individuals, three German flyers, who could have been responsible for -- for the fire and the mission ending as it did.

Question: Boy, that's amazing. It's amazing that in the scope of things that you could -- those set of circumstances run into the person --

Answer: Yeah.

Question: -- find out where it was and the other stories that go with it.

Answer: There's one more story that I'll just mention and then I've talked enough. At Mauthausen, in our tour, there were 88 of us on this particular tour, which meant that we had to have two buses as we were going to tour last summer from Prague to Rome. And the morning following the afternoon visit to the concentration camp at Mauthausen, a young man came on our bus from the other bus. He was a scientist at Richland, from the, I think, worked for the Atomic Energy Commission. Quite obviously a brilliant chap. And, in a very sober and very serious and a very quiet way, started talking to us. And he said -- he mentioned that he has an eye condition and it threatens his sight and he's had -- I don't know what the disease is -- he mentioned it but it was something I wasn't aware of what it was, maybe. Something that I didn't know anything about. And he said this -- I've been trying to treat this and been taking various treatments, medicines and drops and so forth to at least arrest the deterioration in my eyes. He said I really had some -- really have some mixed feeling about Mauthausen. Because he says, you see, I found some medicine, some drops that at least stop the condition or arrested it at this point -- not going to bring my sight back, but looks like these drops will keep it -- keep me from going blind. And he said these drops were part of the experimentation at Mauthausen that the Gestapo doctors, the treatment they figured out or they perfected, but of course they did all their experimentation on the inmates. And he said that was really a -- a sobering moment for me to be in this place and to know that my condition depended on what happened to the inmates many years ago. So it was -- just another -- another story.

Question: One of those ironies of war. I mean, out of the tragedy and out of the insanity --

Answer: Yes, that's right.

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Question: Boy, yeah. I mean, yeah, I could see where that again would be -- be pretty overwhelming.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: So then did you have a conversation with him, to let him know that you had been there?

Answer: Yes, I talked to -- part of the tour was my going -- going on and telling about my experiences, which I did, on both buses. So I had already done that on the bus that he was on, I think. And -- but it was -- that was very touching point of the -- of the whole 16 days.