YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Veterans Project

World War II POW Veteran

O.H. 284

CHARLES E. MYERS

Interviewed

by

Jeff Suchanek

on

May 1, 1981

CHARLES MYERS

Charles Myers enlisted in the United States Army in 1940. As a cadre he spent the early years of World War II training new draftees. He was finally sent overseas to the European Theatre in 1944 and took part in the Battle of the Bulge in December of that year. He was captured and taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans and spent the next three months as a POW in two camps: Ziegenhain and Bad Orb (Stalags IXA and IXB respectively). As such he is knowledgeable about German POW camps and treatment received by the prisoners such as quantity and quality of food and medical care, as well as escape attempts. Liberated in the spring of 1945, Charles returned home after a short period of rest and recuperation.

Born on May 4, 1920, the son of Ervin and Glena Myers, in Warren, Ohio, Charles spent much of his childhood on the move. He spent time in Springdale, Pennsylvania, before family moved to Niles, Ohio, finally settling in Mineral Ridge, Ohio. Charles graduated from Mineral Ridge High School in 1938. After the war he found employment first at the U.S. Steel Ohio Works and later at Hynes Steel where he is currently employed. A member of Wickcliff Christian Church and a resident of Austintown, Ohio, he is also involved in the Buckeye Barbed Wire Veterans Association, Ohio Chapter.

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INTERVIEWEE: CHARLES E. MYERS

INTERVIEWER: Jeff Suchanek

SUBJECT: Life as a POW, World War II

DATE: May 1, 1981

S: This is an interview with Charles E. Myers for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program Prisoner of War Project. This is May 1, 1981 and the interview is taking place at 4226 Patricia Avenue in Austintown, Ohio, at approximately 10:00 a.m.

Okay Chuck, can I call you Chuck?

M: Sure.

S: Let's start out with a little bit about your background. Where and when were you born?

M: I was born in Warren, Ohio, on Second Street on May 4, 1920.

S: Tell us a little bit about your neighborhood where you grew up. Was it a highly ethnic neighborhood?

M: Well, I don't remember how long we lived there. We went to Springdale, Pennsylvania, then shortly after I was born. We were down there until 1929. The neighborhood there was mixed, generally working class. There wasn't too much activity in the way of ethnic backgrounds; it didn't seem to make that much difference at the time. When we came back to Youngstown, in 1929, why then I got into, well, it was a different type of grade school in Niles.

S: Let's talk a little bit about your education. Where did you go to school?

M: Well I went to the grade school in Niles, and then we moved to Mineral Ridge, in which I graduated from Mineral Ridge High School in Weathersfield Township. I completed the twelve grades. I started there in the last half of third grade. It was a big change for me. The superintendent's boy and I didn't see eye to eye a lot of times so we went round and round at times. Other than that it was very good.

S: Did you participate in any activities when you were in school?

M: I was kind of small when I started to school and during the junior high I shot up like a bad weed, you know. I went out for basketball several times, and football. Consequently, I broke a collarbone and sprained my wrist and so on. I just wasn't built for athletics, I guess, because I grew up too fast. I didn't do much in the way of athletics.

S: Mr. Myers, you grew up during the Depression. What can you remember about the Depression?

M: When we came back from Pennsylvania my father was quite ill, stomach problems. My mother had to go to work. Dad kept house and it was pretty slim pickens at times. My mother was only making twelve dollars a week. My two older sisters were still in school so that was all we had to live on was the twelve dollars a week. It had it's good times too. We'd sit around and read more than we do now. We'd listen to the radio, we didn't have TV then. We seemed to be more of a family rather than what is going on right now. People talk about the good 'ole days, well in some respects the good 'ole days were good days, but I don't think that I would want to go through it again.

S: Now did you get into your military career, did you enlist or were you drafted?

M: I enlisted.

S: What year was that?

M: October 21, 1940.

S: What were your reasons for enlisting?

M: I had my mind set on being a machinist, getting into a machine shop as an apprentice. At the time very few

shops were taking that sort of program. I decided I'd be drafted anyhow, so I might just as well get in and get started at it, which I did. I was only 20, so my parents had to sign for me.

S: What was their reaction to your enlisting?

M: They thought the same as I did, that I might just as well get in and get something under my belt before something really starts.

S: There was this feeling then that something was going to happen?

M: Yes.

S: Where did you go for training?

M: I went from Youngstown to Fort Hayes; I was sworn in at Fort Hayes in Columbus. The First Battalion of the Tenth Infantry was stationed there, that would have been the Fifth Division. I was assigned to the heavy weapons company of the First Battalion.

S: What was training camp like? What do you remember the first time? First of all, did you go down by train?

M: No, we went down by bus. Twenty-five to thirty fellows from Youngstown went down.

S: Was it anybody you knew, from Youngstown?

M: I lived in the Ridge. The fellow I went to school with went with me. It was strange, they took me, but wouldn't take him because he had an infection on his back, pimples or something, whatever it was. This was in October. In January he was drafted, and they took him. They said he couldn't carry a pack, but he was well enough by January. That was my first encounter with men of various ages and backgrounds. It was not exactly frustrating, it was curious.

S: Can you remember your first impression as you stepped off this bus and you saw this camp?

M: "Man what did I get into?" I don't know whether you have been to Fort Hayes or not, but at that time it was massive, big, stone buildings, you know, grand buildings and the little things on top that would make

it look like a fort. As it turned out, it wasn't as scary or frightening as the first impression. It was enjoyable after you got into it and got used to the routine of exercising. As for my experience of training, we didn't have as much there as I will relate later on when I got into actual training of recruits. We had gun drill and close order drills and so on. One of the worst things in my memory is we had an inspection; I was on KP at the time, and everything was spit and polish. I was called out of the kitchen and I was told that I was going to be a truck driver, just an hour before inspection. I thought fine, I'll go get the truck and bring it up and raise the hood and so on. Here comes this general with these white gloves, across the rocker arm cover, on the motor. Of course, he got dirt on it. Well, it was explained to him that I just picked the truck up and put it up there for display. I didn't do anything with it. Boy, he sure looked down his nose at me. There was nothing I could do about it. I was a victim of circumstance. That was one of the more humorous, as I look back at it now; it wasn't humorous at the time, but it is humorous now.

S: What would a typical day be like for you at training camp?

M: We didn't have too much actual training at Fort Hayes. After the first of the year we went to Fort Custer, Michigan. That is where we actually got into training. Get up in the morning, have breakfast, go back and make our beds. Being in the heavy weapon platoon, we handled the 81 millimeter mortar and the 60 millimeter mortar, and those are pretty fair sized weapons, and heavy. We would get out on the parade ground and simulate firing and so on and then break for lunch. We'd go back at it again in the afternoon.

S: Now the heavy weapons platoon, was that all mortars or were there some fellows assigned heavy and light machine guns, or how did that work?

M: Yes. First and second platoon were light machine guns. The third platoon was heavy, 30 caliber, water-cooled machine guns, and then the fourth platoon was the 60's and the 81 millimeter mortars.

S: So you actually had quite a bit of training before the draftees began coming in? You were like cadre then, is that right?

M: No, this was the actual D Company of the Tenth Infantry. I was with the regular Army personnel. We were at full strength at that time, so we didn't get any draftees.

S: Oh, I see. Now you said you trained draftees, is that correct?

M: Yes. Later on in the spring they went around to the different companies. I didn't realize this then, and they asked for volunteers to go to Texas. I said, "Sure, I'm game for it." In May of 1941 we went to Camp Walters, Texas, which is designated IRTC, that is Infantry Replacement Training Center. I went to Texas as a pfc; going to Texas advanced my rank to corporal. What we did there was get men, two or three days out of civilian clothes, and take them through the complete thirteen-week cycle. That was rigorous, marching, hiking, training. Here we would simulate a rifle company, machine gun company, and a mortar company, all in the same program.

S: You said simulate. How many weapons and supplies were you given at that time?

M: We would be given several weapons so that they could see what they were looking at or see what they were supposed to be using, which was a 1903 Springfield bolt action rifle. What they used to train with was a stick with a couple of pieces of metal and a little hole between it, and you are supposed to sight the target with that. I imagine there were weapons available, but we didn't have them. It really didn't make any difference; when you are getting used to sighting in a target, it didn't make any difference whether you were looking down the barrel of a rifle or looking through the hole on a stick. We had enough of that. We could teach the people how to stack rifles, hook them together. In the first few cycles we didn't have all the weapons we needed, but later on we had a full complement of rifles.

S: Now how long did you do this, train these new recruits?

M: From June of 1941, dates are kind of vague. I was trying to remember last night, I went from Camp Walters to Fort Benning; I was in Fort Benning in 1943, so I was down there at Camp Walters for two years. In the two years time I was advanced to the rank of technical sergeant.

S: December 7, 1941, can you remember what you were doing?

M: Oh, absolutely! Another fellow sergeant and I had a three day pass, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. He was one of the fellows that went from Custer down there. We were in Fort Worth, and both single at the time, so needless to say we were enjoying ourselves. Sunday morning, the announcement came over speakers everywhere, all military personnel in uniform report back to your stations. We had civilian clothes with us, so we were in civilian clothes, so we just kind of . . .

S: Bent the rules a little?

M: Yes. We didn't report back until Monday morning. Nothing was said because we were in civilian clothes and it wasn't that much of an emergency at the moment.

S: Did the news of Pearl Harbor shock you?

M: Well, it did after I realized it. It was frustrating and shocking. Yes, after the realization that we had been attacked, yes.

S: What was the reaction of the camp you were at, Camp Walters, towards the Japanese and towards the Germans? I mean was there immediate hatred, or was it sort of, it's just a job to do man, let's do it?

M: At Camp Walters there was a much more cross section of people. We had a German cook, I think we had some Japanese Americans. There was, oh, a slight bit of hostility towards them. However, at this time we were close to the end of a cycle and the fellows had all been together at this time, so it diminished quite rapidly because of the friendships they had built up. The other cycles that came in then were, well, they were more gung-ho to get it over with, get their training in and get it over with.

S: Was the training, after war was declared, was it still thirteen weeks or did they shorten it?

M: No, we held it at thirteen weeks because there was so much to expose the people to, close-order drill, rifle butt manual, the use of a rifle and the aiming, and the target shooting, and the machine gun drill, and the mortar drill. Really, thirteen weeks wasn't enough, but then they said it was, so we gave them as much as we could in the thirteen weeks.

S: Did you notice that more weapons were available then after war broke out? Did they sort of open up the lockers and . . .

M: No. By this time we had all our weapons; everybody had a weapon. We still didn't have mortars that every squad could have one, but they all had their side arms and rifles to take care of them.

S: Okay, you said you were in Fort Benning then, in 1943. How did you get there?

M: Well, one lieutenant and I didn't see eye to eye. For the lack of a better explanation in those times, people coming out of ROTC were called ninety day wanderers. I suppose you have heard that expression before. I'd already had two and a half years under my belt of military experience and . . .

S: What was your rank at that time?

M: Technical Sergeant. As I say, we just didn't see eye to eye together, and I said, "All right, either attach me to another unit or send me somewhere, I have had it." I wound up at Fort Benning under the ASTP program, Army Specialist Training Program, which would take people with two or three years of college and give them just enough military training that they would know what it was about and they would send them off to other units. I was there for a year. It was basically the same as I had been doing at Camp Walters. At Camp Walters I was the senior instructor in charge of the company, under the first sergeant. At Fort Benning I was part of S-3 in battalion headquarters, which is supervising the training schedules for the rest of the company. I was there for a year, and then in June of 1944, I went to the 106th Division, Camp Aterberry, Indiana.

S: Then you went with the 106th Division, then you went overseas?

M: Yes.

S: Okay, where was your deport of embarkation at? Where did you leave and where did you . . .

M: Miles Standish in New York.

S: Where did you go to?

M: We went to England. We were over at, we landed at Firth of Clyde. Then we went to this little town of Stowe in the Wode. It sounds rather peculiar, but that is the way it has to be said. We were there, we landed there

in October. We were there for a month. Then we boarded ship at south of London, Portsmouth, I guess. I don't remember just where it was, and went into Le Havre. From there we went up to St. Vith, Belgium.

S: On the trip over to England, were there any restrictions on what you could do above deck? On deck?

M: No lights on deck at night and no smoking on deck after dark. I was never so sick in all my life. We went over on the _Aquatania_. That was an old ship that didn't have a stabilizer on it. It would pitch and roll at the same time. The _Aquatania_ is an English boat, and of course, they served a lot of dried eggs and so on. You saw that stuff rolling around in the plate, make way for the rail because it was coming up. As I say, I was never so sick in all my life.

S: Were there any precautions taken against possible U-boat action that you know of?

M: Yes, we went over without a convoy, so I don't know, you couldn't time it; it varied, every three or four minutes the boat was changing direction. Yes, there was evasive action taken all the way over. We were only on the water six days going from New York to Scotland.

S: That is pretty fast.

M: There were a lot of people on there too. I think it was, well, the whole 6th Division, which probably comprised close to almost 20,000 personnel.

S: Wow! That was an ocean liner then.

M: Yes, it was a converted cruise ship, but it took a lot of people. They had bunks stacked everywhere.

S: Can you remember if there were any strict rules, say observing the smoking rule or something?

M: Oh yes, it was black out after dark, it was completely blacked out. If they caught you on deck smoking, that was in the hole.

S: Describe your experience in England, what was the reaction of the people to GI's?

M: Well, there had been enough people through by that time. We didn't get over to England until November of 1944.

S: That is after D-day.

M: Yes. There had been enough American personnel through there that, well, they didn't pay much attention to us. Of course, being new in the area, we had trouble understanding them, like this Stowe in the Wode. This little kid came up to the fence and we asked him where we were, and he said, "You are in Stowe in the Wode." We looked at each other and we said, "You mean stone in the road?" "No, Stowe in the Wode." Something like that. It was a little hard to understand him, plus you go to town to get a brew, why you didn't know what you were walking into. Lots of times you would open the door, everything was blacked out. Open the door and it would be somebody's living room, the pubs were like that. I mean you couldn't tell what was a pub and what was somebody's living quarters. After a few trips to town we recognized the right door. All in all, we were over there to help them as much as they were helping us. They were cordial enough. If we did happen to walk into their living room, they invited us in. We'd chat for a bit, then we would pleasantly excuse ourselves and say what we were looking for and they would say, "Well, next door," or something like that. It was a pleasant experience.

S: Was there a feeling at that time, those people that you met, that the war was going the right way now, that Germany was finished?

M: Well, yes. It had been going on for a number of years then and by the time we got over there they were seeing the light at the end of the tunnel so to speak. They had been through quite a bit. Except where we were there was not the damage and devastation that there was around London and further south. But, yes, they were thanking us and saying well we'll get it over with and so on.

S: Do you remember the day that they said that you should get ready to move out, we're going?

M: It was cold. We had been preparing for 30 days to get it out and get moving, because it was such a small area that we were in. We were cooped up in metal quonset huts. We wanted to either get over or get back home. Yes, it was chilly. They ran us down to Portsmouth, put us up on boats. The worst trip was going across the English Channel. We were on that boat, they couldn't get us into the Port of Le Havre for five days. We sat out there in that boat waiting for a pilot to get out.

S: Was that just because the harbor was so busy?

M: Rough, the English Channel gets awfully rough. They wouldn't chance it. We finally got a pilot and it calmed down enough to take us in. We could see why, they were threading their way through sunken boats with just the stacks, just the stacks sticking up, and they knew what was under them and how close to them, but the rest of us didn't. We were looking over the side you know, and seeing these stacks sticking up, well I guess we were thankful they didn't try to take us in any sooner. Then when we disembarked we were in Le Havre, and we just stayed there overnight. They put us on the Redball Express and off we went.

S: What was the Redball Express?

M: That was the transportation unit from the coast to inland deposit areas. It was a Redball too. Nothing slowed them down. It was a pretty rough ride sitting in the back of those four by fours on a wooden slat, bouncing away.

S: Where did they take you?

M: We went into St. Vith Bel. We got right out of the trucks and walked right into line. The area in which they put us in was a sector that had been quiet for quite a number of months. The 106th, having never been under fire, that's what we wanted, a place to get acquainted with the situation and get our feelings more or less. We relieved the 24th Division at St. Vith. They supposedly went back and we were left up there all on our own. Things were going along quietly for the first few days, and then we kept seeing, it was like two hills with a valley between. Using binoculars we could see to the other hill. We kept calling back to headquarters saying that something is going on over yonder, you know.

S: What did you see?

M: Troop movements, Germans getting ready to do something, trucks and personnel and so on. We kept calling for artillery support. Right at that particular time we didn't have any ammunition. Everything had moved so fast I guess, that the supplies hadn't caught up with them yet. We didn't have any artillery support, and we didn't have air support. They told us that the weather was bad, that planes couldn't take off and so on. Several days later the Germans marched the whole company right through our line with the excuse that they were lost. Tactically and militarily, it was a poor excuse to stage a jump-off, to come through.

S: For the Germans?

M: Yes. I suppose that was one of the oddities of Hitler, do the most unexpected things. Tactically you couldn't defend it and you couldn't hold it too well. Like I said before, it was a quiet sector, there was nothing going on there. Here comes this company of Germans, marching through.

S: They marched through?

M: Yes, they just walked right on through. They had been challenged by our outposts and so on. We knew what they looked like, but we thought, let them go in the back and the rear guards can take care of them. I mean they didn't pose any threat to us, they were just like a company of soldiers out on a routine hike or something like that. What we found out later is that the officer in charge said that they were lost, they didn't know where they were.

S: They were later taken care of?

M: Oh yes, they were incarcerated, taken prisoner, sure. It just stunned us though to see this company of Germans marching through the line. We just let them go, until they got back, of course, or back further behind, and then they were taken care of. As I say, we called for artillery support and so on, but there was nothing to come. Several days later, which would have been probably around December the 10th, we were given the orders to pick up and move out. This is nice, why would we want to leave? We walked then for that day, into the, I guess it was the Ardennes Forest. We bivouaced that night right in an open field. Here German tanks were running all around us.

S: Did you know that?

M: We could here them. We just snuggled down in the sleeping bags and pulled our helmets over our head. Yes, we knew where they were. We were disturbed and curious about it as to why our outfit was marched right into the middle of things. We were told that we were making a strategic advance. Well, it was strategic all right, the next day we were captured, the whole 106th Division, with the exception of the company that was in the rear for support.

S: You didn't know that this was the Battle of the Bulge?

M: No, no I didn't.

S: But this is what this was?

M: This is what it was, yes. Strategically it was an awful place to come through, but they did.

S: Describe the Ardennes Forest. You say it was a bad place to come through?

M: Well, it was hilly, rocky, and just not a good place for tanks to forward and so on. It was rough enough on the foot soldier to get through. When we were pulled out and walked for a day or so it became a little more passable terrain. This was where they actually came through. This company walking through our lines was just a roost, a ploy so to speak.

S: Okay, describe for us the day of your capture, from the time you can remember in the morning, until late that evening.

M: Well, it was cold. It wasn't snowing, it was kind of a rainy day. We were kind of suspicious that something wasn't right. Then things became awfully confused. We were ordered to attack. Then all of a sudden they said, "Put down your arms, you are surrounded." The German loudspeakers, we were in their territory then and they told us to put down our arms and surrender. At that time they had anti-aircraft guns leveled on a flat projectory. They were just blowing the devil out of things. I walked past one lieutenant that was wounded. He called us every kind of name he could lay his tongue to for surrendering, some of which wouldn't sound good on tape. It was profanity and just everything. He was in agony and he was hurting. What could we do? We were told to lay down or else. Then they had, as I say, the anti-aircraft shells breaking all around us.

S: Your unit was taking casualties?

M: Yes.

S: Can you remember your thoughts as you went into combat for the first time? Did it seem real at first?

M: Well having been through infantry training cycles as many as I was, I went through seven of them, it was just kind of another exercise. This is what you try to instill in the men, you teach them, insist that

they pick this up so that it becomes almost a second nature, to defend yourself.

S: They are doing that under composure, right?

M: Yes. Well, it is just like another exercise. Of course, until you get hit or something, and then you realize, of course, that it is not just a game. It is something deadly serious. Well, I never fired a shot while I was in the war, not one shot in combat. Other ones did; we had one fellow who said, "Well, I am going to shoot this .45," and it almost ended up killing him. Right then there were about seven German soldiers that popped out of the woods and were drawing bayonets and everything, and everybody's hand went up. He pulled out his .45 and shot up in the air; of course they didn't know this. That was rather heroic, that instant right there, but then it . . .

S: Those are the fellows that more or less captured you?

M: Yes.

S: Can you describe to us your feelings when you realized that you had been captured?

M: Yes, quite a bit of frustration. We couldn't quite understand. Our company commander was a West Point graduate. We thought, well now what is West Point putting out? After the initial shock wore off, well, he had his orders too. The Germans were a little hostile, but not to the point of being brutal. Here again, as I say, after the initial shock wore off though, we are still alive, and that was something, because we had seen quite a few people who weren't. They herded us into groups and they started walking. The night of December 11th they walked us into what was a courtyard or something. It was a pretty good size, because there was quite a group of us. We were just left there, you kept warm as best you could. We were given, no, we weren't given any food that day or night. We were just left to move around and get reacquainted with one another.

S: What was the talk about? Can you remember what the guys were talking about?

M: No, I don't. I suppose it was, "Hope we get home or get back somehow," or "Hope they don't do something drastic to us." I think they realized too that it was their last push. They really wanted to go as far as they could, but they really didn't know how

far they could go. I think some of the soldiers had the feeling that this was it, that is was basically over for them, but they really didn't do any harm to us. Some prisoners were shot on the spot.

S: Not that you saw, did you see any of that?

M: Yes, sir.

S: You did?

M: Later on, yes. Well, the next day when they started walking us again, why all along the road we could see our own equipment, where the jeep driver tried to get away or something. We surmised he tried to get away, and he was laying over the wheel or stretched out over the side of the jeep or just hanging there with his foot maybe caught in the steering wheel or something, hanging down. That was disturbing. Well, we walked that day. They walked us for two days without much rest. If we did see somebody on the road, and somebody went to go to him, our guards would inform us that they were in charge and that we were to get back in line.

S: How would they do that?

M: In German. You soon learned what their commands meant. I don't remember now what they were. It was, "Get back in line or we'll give you some of the same."

S: Were you interrogated or searched?

M: Well, not until we got to a . . .

S: Okay, well then continue.

M: We were told to empty our pockets of all ammunition and any arms that we might have had right in the beginning. That was the extent of it at that point. Then we walked through a town called Prum. I have tried to reconstruct the route on a German map. I have got a map here, but well, I couldn't recognize the names, and most of the time we were walking out in the country. They put us in this courtyard, the third night. They gave us some cheese and crackers the next morning for breakfast. Then we were loaded into boxcars. We traveled several days, and then we parked, stopped. This would have been December 23rd, I suppose. We stopped and they let us get out and get some water. I don't know whether you know what a foreign boxcar

looks like it is about half the size of our boxcars. We were herded in there, sixty, seventy people in one boxcar. If there was enough of your group that you could compromise, some would sit, somebody would stand. Generally, at this point, they were getting pretty well riled up, angry at one another, and in some cases dysentary had set in. The smell in the boxcar, we were in there two days before we stopped, it was getting quite disturbing by our standards, now possibly not to them. It didn't make any difference to the Germans what we smelled like. To the individual persons it was messy. Maybe if you got a chance to sit down and stretch your legs out, and you touched somebody, well they would hollar at you, "Get your foot back," and so on. They were becoming, just in this short time, rather hostile to one another. As I say, if you were with a group of people that you had been with, you could get along with them, but anybody else, it was getting rough.

S: Do you think that maybe part of this hostility was frustration that they had been captured?

M: I believe most of it was, yes. I don't think that there was any real animosity towards each other as individuals. It was, "We got captured, how come?" As I say, I had been through enough training cycles and through enough orientation lectures in the training cycles. We tried to give them a little bit of everything, if they were captured, what to do, and so on.

S: You adapted pretty well?

M: Yes. After four or five lectures of the same thing it begins to sink in after a while. I suppose the people that we sent out didn't really get that much of it. I mean, it was something they had to sit through so they listened, partially. This was probably what they were trying to get out of their system, or trying to fathom, that they were captured, that they weren't their own boss anymore. I kind of took it in stride. I didn't like it at first, but there wasn't much I could do about it because they locked the door.

S: Were there any early attempts to escape from the boxcars or anything? Was there any talk about doing that?

M: Oh yes, there was always talk, but when you were moving it was a little rough. Of course, the door was always locked. We tried to find other ways out, but there was just no other way except through the door. We

didn't have anything that we could make a hole with or anything. There was no escape that I know of. Of course, I was only in one car out of the fifty car train. I might mention when we stopped in Diez, the Germans let us get out and stretch our legs. They gave us a Red Cross box. One box per seven people. Ordinarily it was designed for one person, which would have made an adequate snack. Whether the train was marked or not, I don't know. We had four engines shot off of us in the four days that we were parked at Diez. Every time they would get an engine up there and they would try to move it, it was shot off.

S: By aircraft?

M: Yes. Well, yes, by this time the weather had cleared and here come the airplanes and everything else, you know.

S: Was the train itself struck at all?

M: Yes, that is what I was going to say. In coming down for the engine they would start shooting before they got there and naturally they would get some of the first few cars. We surmised this; we saw some of the evidence of cars that were hit afterwards. Finally, they got an engine on us and they took us to Frankfurt on the main. Then from there we went to Bad Orb the next morning, on foot. Naturally, we were all glad to get out of the boxcars.

S: Describe Bad Orb, as you got out.

M: Well, mass confusion. They lined us up as they would and marched us into Bad Orb.

S: What did it look like? Describe it for us, as you marched in.

M: It was very similar to our camp here, a group of buildings with a fence around it. It was designated a POW camp, Stalag in German. It was just a camp with buildings that had no particular significance one way or another, other than the fact that they were going to keep us there. They had water in the buildings to wash with, but they had no sanitary facilities. You always had to go out in the slit trench to pass or make a stool. That was something we weren't accustomed to. Of course, you get accustomed to it in the field if you are there long enough. We were in Stalag IXA about December 28th or 29th. We were there for about a month. During

this time they took us down to the office, I suppose it was an office, and talked to each individual person.

S: Who was doing the talking?

M: The German . . .

S: Was it an officer?

M: Well, it would be an officer in some cases. They had several desks up where, I think, I talked to a sergeant. They wouldn't have privates talking, interrogating them, it would be noncommissioned officers or officers interrogating us. Actually, they could tell us more than we knew, of what went on, and where we were from and who we were. They knew more about us than we did.

S: What did they ask you? Can you remember?

M: Oh, where you were from, what your objective was, and so on.

S: Of course, what did you reply?

M: "We can't tell you that." We'd just give our name, rank, and serial number. Well, you have seen movies recently where the S-2 knew more about what was going on than the person. They started telling us what we were supposed to be there for. Fine, you know it, we don't, so there is nothing we can tell you. Actually, we couldn't tell them anything. We didn't know anything. We had only been on line ten days and hadn't even got accustomed to carrying a rifle, that meant business. There was no threatening violence or anything if you didn't say who you were and so on and so forth. As I said, they knew more about us than we did. There was nothing we could tell them that would help them.

S: At Bad Orb, were there guard towers along the fence? Can you remember?

M: Oh yes, it was set up for a prison camp. There were towers and men with machine guns and so on.

S: Can you remember how many guards, maybe, how many towers there were? How many guards could you see at any one time?

M: No, they didn't let us out of the barracks too much. All we could see was one portion of the fence. There was probably a guard tower every thirty feet that was manned. Here again, our scope of view was limited. I

think we could see approximately three or four guard towers from our vantage point. When we did get outside, the fence was quite large and there were quite a few towers and . . .

S: How many prisoners do you think Bad Orb would accommodate at any one time, while you were there? Were you the only group that was there?

M: Yes, everybody that was there was from the 106th or supporting units. We had, as I say, some of the 24th Division, who didn't get out of there. We had parts of the 24th and 106th. Oh, I would imagine there were probably 15,000 people there.

S: It was quite large?

M: It was large, yes. The German Army does not work their commissioned or noncommissioned officers, and Bad Orb, as I later found out, was basically a work camp. January 27th or 28th, they moved the officers out. I don't know where they sent them. Within two weeks, why, they had moved all the noncommissioned officers out. I, being a noncommissioned officer, then went to Ziegenhain, Stalag IXB. Ziegenhain was Northeast of Bad Orb.

S: How far away was it? Do you know? How long did the trip take?

M: Just one day. About 75 miles, that's all, it wasn't really that far. Bad Orb was just kind of a staging depot for this particular group, I suppose.

S: At Bad Orb, were the guards regular Old Guard troops or were they SS?

M: Well, at this time they were a few SS to keep the other guards in line. A lot of the guards were older people who couldn't stand the rigors of forced march and actual warfare. As I say, they did have enough SS people there that would put the shoe on you if they thought you were getting out of line. It was more of a staging area. I was only there a month and a half, something like that.

S: Describe Ziegenhain for us. Was it similar to Bad Orb with buildings and . . .

M: Yes, buildings and other compounds, as I recall, had one main street, driveway, alley, whatever you call it, right in the center of the camp, and then buildings on each side. There again, we were all noncommissioned

officers, and they just kind of settled down. They just put us in a building and fed us and so on. There was no interrogation, no mistreatment. Of course, it wasn't a summer camp either. We weren't mistreated, that I knew of. The fellow right next to you, or the building right next to you could have something going on and you wouldn't realize it. The guards were older men and they didn't want to fight with us. They would come in and talk to us. Most of them spoke English.

S: Is that right?

M: Yes.

S: What did you talk about?

M: Oh, family things, anything to get your mind off of the fact that you were stuck there.

S: Did they seem sympathetic?

M: Yes. They were just doing a job, which is what the rest of us were doing too.

S: What were your feelings, in your group, what were your feelings towards them? Was there any trading with them, cigarettes maybe?

M: Yes. There was trading going on. Those who could afford it bought cigarettes. I didn't have any money to speak of, so I kept what I had. There was trading going on. They could get you an extra portion of food and so on if you so desired or had the means to do it. The one guard, he would have been, their equivalent to ours would have been a teck sergeant; he would come into the barracks every once in a while, walk up to a person, and ask him where he is from, "Youngstown." "Oh yes, that's the big steel center isn't it?" He was educated in this country and he knew, he knew more about us than most of us did, ourselves. He would joke and be real jovial.

S: Would he come in with a rifle or anything?

M: No, no.

S: Okay.

M: No, he would carry a sidearms, but I suspect that it was unloaded, because he wouldn't come in with a loaded weapon. As far as I was concerned in what I saw, there was no reprisal of your being a Democratic (hypocrite or warmonger or something like that). As I say, he

would come in and it didn't make any difference who he talked to. Here again, the 106th was made up from people all over the country, not necessarily misfits, but somebody maybe another company didn't have a place for; they congealed them all in the 106th. We were represented all over the country. As I say, it didn't make any difference what part of the country you said you were from, he had something pertinent about that particular area that he knew about.

S: This was all still the same division? I mean all the officers and noncommissioned, right, this was like an officers' camp then?

M: No, noncommissioned officers.

S: Oh, noncommissioned officers.

M: They didn't separate privates, noncommissioned and commissioned officers.

S: Okay.

M: I don't know where the privates, as I understand it, stayed in Bad Orb. The noncommissioned officers came to Ziegenhain. The officers, I have no idea where they went. I have never heard from any of them. As a matter of fact, I don't recall a lot of their names.

S: There were no other units, noncommissioned officers from other units at this camp?

M: Oh yes. There were Russian, Italian, German, and French people taken in South Africa.

S: I see, so did you have any communication with these people?

M: No, each compound was fenced in.

S: I see.

M: In other words, the Americans were here, the French were down here, the Russians were over there.

S: They separated you by design?

M: Yes.

S: Okay.

M: Well, we could roam from our own barracks to barracks and talk to our own people. That was permitted, but to go anywhere else, no.

S: As far as American units there, were there other American units that were noncommissioned officers that were represented in this?

M: No, when they got the 106th they got enough to . . .

S: To handle?

M: Yes, we were all in the same outfit. I got kind of mixed up with people I didn't really know. Of course, you know them after a while.

S: With the guards that would come in, would you discuss how the war was going at all, or was that sort of taboo?

M: That was taboo. While they would speak English, any time that you would mention anything about the situation we found ourselves in, "No comprehend."

S: Oh, I see.

M: It was strange in a way, because as I say, they would talk English, speak English with us.

S: Just what they wanted to.

M: Yes. We had, I don't know who he was, whether he was a newspaper correspondent or a newsman of some kind, a very good Frenchman. He really kept us up to date on the happenings. We knew just about when we were going to be liberated.

S: How did he . . .

M: I don't know how he got his information, whether he was . . . Once he left the building we didn't know where he went. Whether he was permitted access to a radio, which none of the rest of us had, we don't know. But we assumed that he did have access to some information. He had to have it because things that he told us later, when we were released, we knew they were true.

S: You knew pretty much what was going on?

M: Yes.

S: Okay.

M: Several people tried to escape, but they wound up hanging on the fence.

S: Did you see that?

M: Yes.

S: These were . . .

M: American POW's. The guard towers were around, quite prevalent on the perimeter of the camp. They would leave the fellows hang there as a reminder that it doesn't pay to try and go over the fence. There were some that got away, I don't know of any particular ones. At this time, and the news that we were getting, we knew that the war was winding down, that the Germans couldn't last that much longer. I, myself, was content to stay put; I was alive, I didn't ever try to escape. I suppose I was thankful to be alive and I didn't want to push my luck.

S: Do you think that that was the feeling maybe generally, since the war was coming to a close anyway, why risk your life?

M: Yes, I think it was. In this letter, this fellow was with the Canon company, whether he might have had some pertinent information or something other than what the rest of us knew, that they wanted it, or he might have just been a person who couldn't take this, and . . .

S: Rebelled?

M: Yes, yes. They did the only thing they could, was give him special treatment. I wasn't aware of any beatings in our camp. The last day, we were liberated on Good Friday, I don't even remember the date, March 29th or something like that. Several days prior to that they took us out and marched us out. We were, they asked for volunteers to take a walk, and . . .

S: Did that sound suspicious at all?

M: We could see our artillery bursts at night and hear them during the day, so we knew that they weren't far away. They told us that we were going to take a walk and see what we could do about rebuilding that railroad bed. Well, an extra days rations for a few hours work, well, we went along with that. They walked us out to a railroad that had been bombed, and we threw some gravel and stones in it and so on. They took us back and we got our extra rations. The German Army does not work their noncoms. As I say, we were all noncommissioned officers and . . .

S: I see, so you didn't have many work details then?

M: No, no. That was probably the worst part of it, which way do you twittle your thumbs, right or left. It was quite boring and there was nothing to occupy our time with.

S: Mainly you were supposed to stay in your barracks, is that correct? Or were you . . .

M: No, we didn't have to. We could visit within our American compound. After awhile the only thing left to talk about was food or women. That is the way the conversation went mostly. (Laughter) What we were going to do when we got back home and so on and so forth. The old fellow we had for guard, he was crippled. I doubt if he could have held the gun up and stood up when he shot it.

We had coal detail every once in a while. They would take us down to the coal pile and fill up our container for the barracks. Of course, he would be standing there with his back to us smoking a cigarette. We were throwing it down our pant leg and everything else to get a little extra, because it was cold, and all we had were two potbelly stoves and a building that was probably 50 feet long.

S: How many bunks were in there?

M: Oh gracious, four high, ten long. Forty. Well, there were probably accommodations for 1000 people in the one building.

S: Wow! How many buildings were in the American section?

M: I think there were three buildings for the American compound.

S: Were you given a mattress or blanket or something like that?

M: There was a straw bedtick onthe bunk. If you had a blanket you were lucky. They didn't give us any blankets, just what we had. There were more bed bugs than anything. You would wake up and feel something crawling on your face, and here it was a bed bug. You would pick up the straw tick, they had, oh, one by fours for slats across. You would pick up the tick and they were just pushing each other off of the slats, the bed bugs.

S: Were you ever given showers, once in a while?

M: No, no. There was a washroom there. We washed, kept ourselves as clean as we could without soap. No, we were never given a shower.

S: How about to shave and stuff like that?

M: No, if you had a razor, fine, if you didn't, why . . .

S: So a lot of the men were bearded, I suppose?

M: Yes, yes. A lot of them threw everything away. They didn't want to carry anything, so they did without. I, fortunately, kept a razor; I don't know why. One of the barrack guards in the American compound was not an older man. He was more belligerent. He started ordering people around, he would give a couple of them the butt of the rifle. Later on, he was strung up on the fence. The people in the barracks just got enough of it, and when we were close to being liberated, we would, like on Thursday night, we knew something was amiss because our guards didn't come around. He did come down and they jumped him and they strung him up on the fence.

S: What do you mean, they strung him up?

M: Well, they killed him and then hooked him on the fence. They took care of him. They said they would. Then the next morning there were no Germans around.

S: This is the concluding part of the Charles Myers interview. Describe your day of liberation. You said the guards weren't there?

M: Yes, on a Thursday evening sometimes, they left. Friday morning when we woke up, it happened to be Good Friday, and no one came into the barracks. We would go outside and there wasn't a soul, there wasn't a German in sight. We thought, well, here we are. Some of the Russians decided they were going to find some more food, so they went out and apparently they weren't challenged or anything, they just walked out the gate and pretty soon, the next day or so, they came back with some big, fat hogs. The German guards just left, left us on our own.

S: How long was it until you saw your first American troops?

M: Eight days.

S: You were alone for eight days?

M: Yes.

S: Did anyone attempt to leave to go find someone else, or were they afraid they would walk right in the middle of the line?

M: Well, most of us stayed, yes. Friday afternoon we were told that the American troops were in the area, that we should stay put.

S: Who told . . .

M: Well, the MP's, military police from advanced units.

S: Oh, I see. Those were the first regular troops you saw then?

M: Yes, yes. We were told to stay where we were, that we would be taken care of.

S: What was your reaction?

M: Jubilant, it was over with as far as we were concerned The war wasn't over at that time yet, but there was a lot of hugging and jumping around, and joyfulness. As I say, we were there for eight days until some general, I forget what his name was, came in and inspected us. "How long have these men been here?" he said. Eight days he was told. He said, "These men will be out of here tonight, absolutely." They set up disinfecting tents. They deloused everybody, and that night we were on a truck heading back. Just that quick. They were moving so fast, trying to catch the Germans, I suppose. The advanced troops didn't have the facilities to take care of this many people. When this general came up, they found them real quick. That night, we were trucked to an airport and flew into Le Havre again, Camp Lucky Strike.

S: Were you, how should I say, debriefed maybe?

M: No.

S: No?

M: No. Well, I say no, I think they more or less realized we didn't have anything to give in the way of information or anything and there was nothing to take away from us.

S: There weren't any questions about how your treatment was?

M: Yes, they asked us. As I say, the noncoms were not mistreated, that I know about. Well, they asked you,

"Have you been mistreated? How was your treatment?" You say, "Fine, they fed us with what they had." But as far as debriefing, no, there was no actual thing. Then when we got back to Lucky Strike at Le Havre, we went to medical examinations.

S: What kind of shape were you in personally and the guys in general?

M: Well, most of them that were physically well-built held up a little better. The rest of us, it was kind of, well, I had been in an IRTC where I would keep up with the marching, but when it came to the exercise, I was in the back, you know, watching the rest of them do this. Physically I was in good shape, but I could have been in better.

S: Did you lose any weight?

M: Oh, yes. I went from 190 down to about 145. I was only a prisoner 110 days. The Germans didn't have a lot of food, so we didn't get fed a lot. Maybe one loaf of bread for seven, eight, nine people.

S: Per day?

M: Per day. We would get what they called Chickory Tea, where it was so weak that it was just like colored water, for breakfast. Then the bread would come, two or three o'clock in the afternoon, and that was it.

S: Was the bread of substantial consistency or was it like what we buy today?

M: Well, it was a dark, wheat bread, as I recall. It was rather sour. It was good. Of course, some people didn't like it, because it wouldn't have made any difference if it was angel food cake, they wouldn't have like it under the conditions. It was substantial. Some of it could have stood baking a little longer. It was kind of hard in the center, or gooey, I should say. This is what they told us, that they didn't have a whole lot of food and that they had to make it last. Well, we found some cabbages buried out beyond our compound, beyond the fence. Here again, it wouldn't have been enough to give us a substantial meal, that is, so many people.

S: How about other vegetables, any potatoes?

M: No, no. At Bad Orb we saw a horse come in on a sled, and all we saw leave was the hoofs and the hide. The

next night we had what looked like ground beef or ground meat. We assumed it was the horse, it was good. We ate it. Very little meat, very few vegetables. It was mostly bread and a little bit of margarine. Occasionally they would give us a little bit of jelly. Here again, now it was divided among seven people. Sometimes we would get a couple extra loaves, and break it down and it would be enough for five people, so you would get a little more.

S: Were there different cliques in . . .

M: Yes, there were. However, they weren't to the point that they were suspicious of one another. I mean, we had to divide up for the portions we were given to eat.

S: So you would eat with the same seven guys?

M: Yes, yes.

S: Okay.

M: Even some of the people would save a portion of this meager meal they gave us and nibble on it later, which in some instances would kind of tee the rest of them off. Some of them would gobble it down as soon as they got it. We were hungry, we were all hungry. Then the willpower . . . some of the people too, stole some of the food that we were given. It would tick some of the rest of them off.

S: Were there any fights?

M: Oh, yes. They weren't malicious fights. They would bat each other around for awhile. I think looking back on it, it was more for exercise than actual animosity against one another.

S: Just to relieve the tension maybe?

M: Yes, sure. I recall one time, before we were liberated, some American planes or English planes--I don't know, they were so high we couldn't tell--they came over and wagged their wings that they realized it was a POW camp. Well, one of the trigger-happy guards on the tower shot at it. Needless to say, we got strafed. They strafed that whole camp trying to get that one tower. There was a group of French Moroccans outside in their open area. They got quite a few of them with their fifty caliber slugs, you know, they make a pretty good hole. It just so happened that I was in the washroom when I saw this plane diving and I stood there for a second and all of a sudden I saw the wings starting to smoke. In the next

few instances I heard bullets coming through the washroom. I managed to duck them. One fellow, sitting on the top bunk with his field jacket on, the slug ripped through the portion of his sleeve. Never touched him, just tore that sleeve all to heck, though. The reason I know there were Moroccans killed is because we saw them carrying them down the main street.

S: What was the reaction of the prisoners there, towards that?

M: Well, they wanted to go pull that guard tower down right then.

S: Oh, there was no animosity towards the pilot?

M: No, no. Well, your first reaction was, "You could have shot me." No, we heard the machine gun in the tower go off first. We knew that he was trying to retaliate to get the guard. None of the Americans were hit, fortunately. It's too bad some of the other people were. When they strafe they start soon and end late, and hope they get in between.

S: What kind of machine guns were up on these towers, were they just the hand machine guns or were they like a light machine gun?

M: Well, they were a light machine gun that was mounted on a tripod. They had hand-held automatic weapons too. We didn't see too much of them. We did see them swing around occasionally just to exercise their arms I suppose. Other than that, there was, as far as I was concerned now, very little instance of mistreatment or hostility on the part of the Germans, or brutality. There was none that I knew of.

S: Were you aware that the camp was marked anywhere, like on the roofs, that the pilots would know that that was a POW camp?

M: No. I got bronchial pneumonia and the one building that was set up for a hospital, it had a red cross on top. Other than that, I have no idea whether the camp was marked or not. I think our intelligence probably had them all spotted though, and knew that they were prisoner of war camps.

S: How was the medical treatment there, if somebody was ill?

M: They had a few Band Aids, very little medicine. This bronchial pneumonia that I got, we had a French doctor and he said, "There is nothing I can do for you." However, what he did amazed me. One of these little yellow dessert cups, he took a swab of alcohol and lit it and just ran around the ring of it, the edge of it, and he put, oh, seven or eight of them on my back. While they were hot he put them on there. Then they would draw, that was the only treatment I had that cured me.

S: It was a French doctor who was, maybe, a prisoner himself, that . . .

M: Yes.

S: There was no German . . .

M: No, no German medical staff.

S: Are you aware that the treatment was, that they tried to make sure that you got some kind of medical treatment though, I mean if you came down with some type of . . .

M: The fact that the hospital was available, yes. They provided the best they could, I suppose. Here again, we were taken in the last segments of the war and their supplies were spread as thin as ours were, trying to keep up with them. I suppose they provided the best they could at the time.

S: How often did you get Red Cross packages in the mail?

M: None.

S: You didn't get any at all?

M: The only Red Cross box we got was in the boxcar. As I say, it was split up amongst seven or eight people.

S: And no mail? You were unable to send letters yourself to let your family know that you were all right?

M: I was looking through my scrapbook downstairs, yes, I sent several letters. I don't remember sending them but the wife got them. About one a month is what we were allowed to send.

S: Was there anything known as the cooler, like you see on that old television show, Hogan's Heroes? Was there anything like that in case you got out of line?

M: Not that I knew of. There probably was a solitary confinement for people that were too belligerent and did get out of line. No one in our barracks seemed to wish to antagonize them that much. I mean they were our guards and they had a perfect right to shoot you if they so felt that way. They didn't have to answer to anybody. That was one of the greatest fears on my part.

m

S: You felt that they could just arbitrarily shoot you if they felt like it?

M: Yes. Of course, he would have probably wound up suffering as much as I did. But yes. As a matter of fact, probably more joking than not he said, "I can shoot you any time." Well, as I said, I would rather be a live coward than a dead hero. We didn't give them any, I didn't give them any problems, let's put it that way. I suppose that there were some that couldn't handle the situation that well, not that I handled it any better, but then, well, I just didn't want to make too many waves.

S: Okay, I want to go back just briefly, to the day you were liberated and the MP's came. Did the MP's hang around to make sure, I know in some camps the MP's would take over the jobs of the guards to make sure everyone just didn't scatter.

M: As I recall, they did. Yes, they didn't throw open the gates and say, "You are liberated," and leave. No, they stayed around to maintain order, discipline, certainly. Get a group of people that large, and turn them loose, why they would probably do more damage themselves and so on. These Russians that did take off, they, as I say, they brought back some hogs. Of course, they skinned them and cooked them right away. The worst case of dysentary you ever saw, eating green pork. Gracious, if you couldn't make it to the door, you tried to get out the window. Most of the time it didn't hold even trying to get out the window.

S: Was there any mingling between the groups then after you were liberated?

M: Well, there were to the ones that were bilingual, that could understand what they were saying. As I recall, they dropped off some white bread, and some of the Russians were carrying it around like an angel food cake, you know. They had never seen bread this white, and as soft as it was, our soft diet. We were fed pretty well. They marveled at this bread. That was one thing that stuck in my mind.

S: Did you notice that the MP's maybe guarded the Russians or the French maybe a little more closely?

M: No, no.

S: Were you aware of, during your stay there, that maybe more Russians, there was more gunfire say from the Russian sector than there were more escape attempts?

M: Well, I wasn't aware of it, no. Being at Bad Orb and Ziegenhain, we were in, as I recall, the Southern part of Germany. We weren't that close to Berlin. All we could see would be the report in the sky of gunfire. As far as the POW camps that I know of there were no arms available to prisoners.

S: Okay, can you think of anything maybe we haven't covered? Can you describe maybe a typical day when you would wake up in the morning? I mean, what would the day consist of? What time would they . . .

M: When are we going to get fed?

S: You were fed once a day, is that it?

M: Twice. We would get our coffee or tea, whatever they would call it, Chickory Tea, in the morning, and our bread in the afternoon. It was only twice a day, and here again, we had our canteens. A canteen cupful is about what we got.

S: Would there be a roll call in the morning or anything?

M: No, I don't recall being hustled out. In Bad Orb, now, every morning we had a head count. Here again, somebody did try to escape in Bad Orb. He would start here, line us up in rows of five deep, and somebody, when he would count here, would kneel down, and we knew that there would be somebody missing further down the line so he would go down there and try and cover for them. I suppose there were some people who escaped then, as I recall. Remembering this, the guard counted about four or five times, "Get back in the barracks," and we had to stay there; we weren't allowed to go out to train and we weren't fed or anything, most of the day.

S: They knew somebody was missing?

M: Yes. There were no reprisals of it, that I know of. There might have been some if they were captured again, but . . .

S: Okay, can you think of anything else, maybe an experience that you had, that you would like to inform us of? Any emotions and feelings about your experiences as a prisoner of war?

M: Nothing other than, when these hostages came back, I felt for them, but I think they were probably given too much notoriety. However, I also realize that a smaller group, there was a lot more done for a smaller group than there would have been for say, thirty, forty thousand POW's coming back. They just couldn't give everybody a car or give them a vacation and so on. There was a tinge of what they were given, in my mind, that they were doing too much for them. I mean after all, they didn't put their life on the line. Their life was in jeopardy while they were there, don't misunderstand me. They were over there more or less on a volunteer basis. Some of us enlisted; we were told where to go and what to do with it. We had to be there. There was just a twinge of resentment, not enough that I would deny any of them anything they got, I just think it was a little overdone.

S: Were you given any special welcome or anything when you came home, the fact that you were a prisoner of war?

M: No, no. I didn't even get a victory medal from the war at the war's end. I see now in the paper they are going to give us some sort of medal. I have no idea what it is. No, we were brought back to the States and given an opportunity to take our wives with us. We were given, I was given 45 days leave. At the end of which time I was to report back to Miami Beach. That was something big, you know. My wife was with me for 15 days down there, which was very nice. I don't mean to make light of it. That's all, I spent 25 days at the Sands Hotel in Miami Beach, which was nice, orientation speeches and so on. With the length of service that I had, I had more than enough points to get out. They sent me back to Atterberry where I was mustered out.

S: Okay, thank you.

M: I appreciate it.

END OF INTERVIEW