Harold H. Brown was born on 19 August 1924 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He attended local schools, graduating from North High School in 1942. Anxious to join the war effort, in September Harold volunteered for the Army Air Corps.

Following Basic Training, in 1943 Harold passed air cadet qualifying tests and was sent to Tuskegee Army Air Field, Alabama. Tuskegee was home to the all-black 99th Fighter Squadron, formed in 1941; here Harold went through pre-flight, Basic, and advanced training, and received an officer’s commission.

Following training, in mid-1944, Second Lieutenant Harold Brown was shipped overseas to be part of the segregated 332nd Fighter Group, stationed in Italy. The 332nd Fighter Group became known as the “Red Tails” because of the distinctive markings on their aircraft. While a member of the 332nd Fighter Group Harold flew bomber escort missions as well as strafing missions against ground targets.

Flying a strafing mission on 4 March 1945, Harold’s plane was shot down near Linz, Austria, and he bailed out. Barely surviving angry German civilians upon landing, what Harold called “the most frightening moment of my life,” he was first taken to an airdrome at nearby Wels before being transported in mid-March to Stalag XIII-D, at Nürnberg. With Germany rapidly collapsing, this camp was emptied and the prisoners marched south to Stalag VII-A, at Moosburg. This overcrowded facility was liberated by American forces on 29 April 1945. Harold spent some weeks at Camp Lucky Strike, the central American POW repatriation facility in Le Havre, France, before returning to the United States.

Harold remained in the Air Corps (after 1947 Air Force) after World War II; he served in Korea, and finally retired in 1965 with the rank of lieutenant colonel. After retirement he settled in Columbus, Ohio, and attended Ohio State University, using GI Bill benefits to earn a doctoral degree. Harold was for many years an administrator at Columbus State Community College, retiring in 1986.

At the time of this interview (July 2003) Harold lived in Columbus, Ohio.
Interview key:
T = Thomas Saylor
H = Harold Brown
Lawrence Brown = Harold Brown’s brother, present for part of the interview
[text] = words added by editor, either for clarification or explanation
(***) = words or phrase unclear
NOTE: interview has been edited for clarity

Tape 1, Side A. Counter begins at 000.

T: This is an interview for the POW Oral History Project. My name is Thomas Saylor. Today is Saturday, 12 July, 2003, and this our interview with Dr. Harold Brown of Hilliard, Ohio. First, Dr. Brown, on the record, thanks very much for taking time this morning to speak with me.

H: That’s quite all right, sir.

T: So we’ve talked for a little bit and I know that you were born on 19 August, 1924, here in Minneapolis. Graduated from Minneapolis North High School 1942 and entered the US Army Air Corps later that year in 1942. You were a volunteer. To jump ahead a bit, you were a career military man. Retired from the US Air Force as a lieutenant colonel in 1965. Veteran of World War II and of Korea. After the military, settled in Ohio, in the Columbus area for a beneficiary of the GI Bill for a number of degrees, bachelors, masters and Ph.D. from Ohio State University. You worked more than twenty years at what is now known as Columbus State Community College in Columbus, Ohio. I want to start. You were a pilot during the war and I want to go back to that briefly. From your experience, do you remember the first time that you flew an aircraft?

H: Yes.

T: What was that like?

H: (chuckles) Let me see. That goes back to the summer of 1941. I had saved just about forty bucks, or something close to forty dollars, and went out to Wold-Chamberlain, you know, where the big international airport is now, and hooked up with one of the fixed base operators and he was charging, as best I can remember, something like seven dollars. It might have been seven and a half, or seven dollars an hour dual instruction in a little Piper Cub and that was that summer. Now it was in June or July... was probably early summer... because it only went on for about ten days or so, and I didn’t have any more money, so I wound up taking four or five lessons. Didn’t even solo the airplane but flew it for that amount of time. Then ran out of money. But that would have been early summer in 1941.

T: What is it that attracted you to aircraft? Forty dollars was a lot of money in those days.
H: You bet it was a lot of money. A whole lot of money. I don't know. To be quite honest with you. I can recall a movie. It was with Errol Flynn, David Nivens and "Dawn Patrol." As a matter of fact I've got a copy of "Dawn Patrol" right now. A good friend of mine, Lew Gross, one of my instructors years ago (**), talked to me. He was an old Navy guy and he, too, fell in love with "Dawn Patrol" as a young kid, and that somewhat attracted him to flying. We used to periodically look at "Dawn Patrol"--eat peanuts and drink beer as we watched this old movie. From there, I don't know if that is where the very initial interest in flying started or not, but it was something around that time. I just got interested in flying. I can remember going up to the little library up here on Emerson Avenue and Olson Boulevard. The library's still there isn't it?

T: Yes, it is.

H: They had a book up there, “The Life of an Army Air Corps Cadet: Randolph Field, West Point of the Air.” I read that book so many times that I almost memorized it, I read it so many times. But again, that was during those early years and I would guess that I was about eleven, maybe twelve. Something in there.

T: This is something that for a number of years you've been interested in.

H: Yes. Oh, yes. And I was into model airplanes. There was a guy by the name of Stone. Stone was really big in model airplanes. He built everything. From model airplanes, the interest kept going and going and, oh, boy, one of these days... That was about the time, fourteen, fifteen or so, you started hearing a little bit about Tuskegee and how they were trying to open it up and there was all the articles going on in Pittsburgh Courier and whatnot and the big battle. I can recall so well, and it was Bobby Miller, another friend of ours who has passed, he was... Bobby was about a year or so older than I was. But I could remember Bobby Miller talking one day. He said, “You can’t get in the military to fly. That's what all these articles are about.” I said, "By the time I'm ready, all the problems will be solved and I'll walk right in.”

(1, A, 104)

T: So you thought as an African-American you would be able to fly.

H: Oh, yes. I said, all the problems will be solved by then. They're arguing right now, but you watch and see. This thing will open wide up, you watch and see. And it did.

T: Now when the war came, you were still in high school when the war started.

H: Oh, yes.

T: Did you see the war as, from your own perspective, the opening to get into what you wanted to do, to fly airplanes?
H: No. I didn’t even look at it in those terms. I was interested in flying, and the easiest way to learn how to fly and to get good training was military. The fact the war was going on was somewhat incidental to the whole idea of flying.

T: So joining the military to learn how to fly is something you might have done, war or no war.

H: War or no war. It was learning how to fly. The fact that a war was going on was strictly incidental.

T: Did that make you think twice about wanting to fly because of where that might lead?

H: No. No, didn’t even impact it. As a matter of fact, the war was so far away... yes, there was a war going on, but the war was going on way over there. It didn’t even impact the decision at all.

T: It was surely far away from Minneapolis.

H: And then, after you got into flying and you came close to graduating, yes, you knew where you were eventually going. But then that was great. Because the way they taught you anyway was... to be a fighter pilot you've got to be raunchy.

T: Raunchy? (chuckles)

H: Raunchy. And I can remember saying Mister... and all that meant was just an over amount of cockiness.

T: Did you have that?

H: Oh, hell. I thought I was the greatest pilot that ever said good morning to an airplane, and I never thought I would ever get shot or nothing else. But now I see why old men send young men to war.

T: How would you explain that?

H: Simple. Young men will live forever. They'll never die, and they'll survive anything. That's the attitude you have to have if you're going to win and fight a war. Fearless.

T: You mentioned cocky, fearless.

H: Yes. As you get a little older you start wising up and you realize that hey, you too can get shot down or anything else. But as you get older and older and older. And
the older you get, the less likely it is that you want to go out and fight a war. Unless you're setting back as general. You gotta send the young guys out.

T: Desktop fighting.

H: Yes.

T: When you were at Tuskegee, and you were at Tuskegee after 1942, was it such that you could have been multi-engine aircraft or fighter aircraft? Did you have to make a decision?

(1, A, 160)

H: They made the decision. It was after you had finished up your basic flying and you went into advanced. You went into advanced single-engine or you went into advanced multi.

T: So the road forked in a sense.

H: Yes.

T: And they made the decision for you?

H: The very last phase of flying. Some people they put into advanced multi-engine because of their physical size. They were just big. The cockpits were small. As a matter of fact, if you take a P-39 for example, your physical structure has to be such that you could get into that little cockpit, and you couldn't be over five feet eleven and weigh more than two hundred and some pounds to even fit in it.

T: So literally physical size.

H: Oh, yes. And I can remember big Chappy James, General James, is six foot three, six four, two hundred fifty pounds. Wanted to fly the [P-]39. They said you can't fit in it. So they took the seat out and he sat on the floor of the airplane on just a little pad just so he could fly it. He wanted to fly it. That's how he flew it.

T: I see. So if you were too big you might get pushed out of fighter aircraft.

H: Oh, yes. Absolutely. Yes.

T: So the decision was made for you...

H: Now that was only one little factor. That was not the primary factor.

T: No, but initially it was a limiting factor.
H: Yes.

T: If you were too big, no matter how good you were...

H: You may very well be assigned to bombers. But there were other considerations and what was that one little dividing line that separated a fighter pilot from a twin-engine pilot? If you talk to many fighter pilots they would laugh and say what they did was take you dummies out and put you dummies over there in the twin-engine, and the hot rocks went over to the fighters.

T: Now is that true, Dr. Brown?

H: *(laughs)* No, not really. No. No. Because they had some fantastic pilots that were over in twin-engine. And it took the same kind of skills to fly. And I don’t think it took more or less skills to fly a fighter than to fly a twin-engine airplane. Twin is a little bigger. You have more throttles in your hand.

T: Different skill set?

H: That was... yes. It was still an airplane. You’re a pilot. You can fly single-engine. You can fly multi-engine.

T: What ultimately makes a good fighter pilot?

H: A good fighter pilot? Well, first you have to have a lot of skill. And I think it does take a reasonable amount of recklessness, but it is controlled recklessness. Willing to take a risk. I can recall things I did as a fighter pilot I wouldn’t dream of doing today. I can recall coming back over the field, buzzing the field, pulling out, rolling the airplane. I wouldn’t any more do that today than nothing. I’m a little older, a little wiser, and I now know that, hey, if you miscalculate you can kill yourself. But then dying in an aircraft was perhaps the very last thing on my mind. I felt I was good enough. I always felt I was a pretty good pilot. So I rolled the thing on the ground, no big deal about that. So I guess there is that recklessness, but it is very controlled recklessness.

T: Good way to put it.

H: You will take the chance but it’s a calculated chance which is calculated in your favor. Yes. There was a risk rolling on the ground, but I thought I can do that. I’ve done that a hundred times. I can roll an airplane. That’s no big deal. And it doesn’t become a big deal unless you miscalculate. Then it is a big deal.

*(1, A, 201)*

T: Then people die like that, right?
H: Yes. But up until that point it’s no big deal.

T: How did the pilot training process change you do you think? I mean the person who stood there, got their wings and their commission. Harold Brown. How was he a different person than the person who went in the service?

H: Different person. I don’t know if it was the flying per se that made me a different person or had any impact on me, but what I think it was the recognition which came after being commissioned and a pilot which impacted me more than anything. Back in those days I can recall we left the Tuskegee for a week. We went to Chicago and spent a night there. I was in nightclubs. They looked at you and you were a little young God. Oh, there’s a pilot. That’s one of those pilots. And somebody read someplace, yes, they’re training them down in Tuskegee. We were ushered in...

T: In uniform now.

H: Given all the amenities... Yes. In those days everyone wore a uniform.

T: That’s right.

H: Every place you went you were getting all the amenities. You were welcome. Please come in. Let me shake your hand. We were all reasonably young, you know. Nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two. People almost exalted us. We were the heroes.

T: As a young man—you were nineteen, twenty years old; did that go to your head?

H: Go to my head? I loved it. Yes, it went to my head! Sure it did. Absolutely. I was the greatest thing that ever walked down the street. Yes. And there was that certain amount of cockiness. Although I think I was reasonably reserved.

T: In comparison you mean.

H: Yes. With some of the others it was much more. But it certainly made a difference in my life.

T: Now you spent a number of weeks going across the Atlantic. Getting closer to the war. And by the time you got to Italy you were stationed at Ramatelly, by Naples. At the end of 1944 the war was quite close. It’s no more distance. Do you remember the first mission that you flew? What you might call a combat mission out of Italy?

H: Yes. I remember the first one. Of course your first few missions you are flying the wing of an older pilot. The pilot was Captain John... what was John’s last name? As a matter of fact John died in a B-25 crash in 1945, down at Tuskegee, returning from Chicago. I’ll think of his name here. But his first name was John. Real neat guy.
I would guess he was a good five, six years older than I was. He was one of the older guys.

T: That is older for that time.

H: Yes. So he had gone over and he had flown umpteen missions and was well-seasoned. I flew his wing on the very first mission. He said, stay with me, and whatnot, and you just follow me. I'll tell you what to... and so forth. Okay, fine. That was rather interesting on that first mission. There's a reasonable amount of apprehension. Here's where it now starts settling in. Before it was all fun and games. Now you're going off on a real mission.

First thing you sweated out was that little single engine. Is this engine going to run for the six hours the way it was advertised? Get you there and get you home. Because there were many guys who flew missions, engine trouble and whatnot, and wound up either jumping out, bailing out or crash landing strictly because of engine problems. Not a bullet had touched them. But they still parked it up in Germany someplace or if they were able to get it back over the bomb line up in northern Italy then they parked it there.

So first you always sweated out the engine. Other than that, on that first mission apprehensions came from I wonder if we're going to run into any fighters or if we're going to run into anything. Well, it was uneventful. We picked up our bombers, flew a fairly normal mission, didn't encounter any enemy fighters, nothing. Very routine. Nothing but just a long mission. About six, six and a half hours long. By the time you got back you were tired. Sitting in that little cramped cockpit and boom, that was the first mission. But you're happy to get it over with.

(1, A, 269)

T: Yes. Anti-climactic in a way.

H: As you flew more and more, it became more of a routine and you kind of got in the swing of it. That was about it.

T: You were flying escort missions for bombers that were going from Italy up to Austria or Germany.

H: Yes.

T: You mentioned the missions became fairly routine. Was there a mission that you recall that was not routine? Where you did run into fighters or some other incident?

H: I would say the missions that were anything other than routine were those missions where a couple of things happened. One, let's say you were going to Munich and Munich was briefed to have eight hundred guns and they could put up six hundred fighters. But you're going to bomb Munich today. Now the tensions ran a little higher because you didn't know what was going to happen. As the guys
would sometimes say, oh, oh, if you get home today this is going to be DFC day. The only way you’d get home is shoot down a couple airplanes. That way you can get back home.

Well, you would go up and on some of those missions there was nothing. On other missions you would go up and the flak is so thick it looks like a black cloud hanging over the target. I used to see those poor old bomber guys hit the IP, turn into the target, and once you start in after the IP, you fly a straight line because it’s now the bomber who is flying and lining up the target. They were flying in that black cloud of flak. We would fly around the flak and you could see airplanes getting hit. You could see the flak. You’d say, oh, oh, there’s a 17 that just went down. Watch and see if there’s any chutes. They would come off of that target raggedy. The formation which was so beautiful going in... now it’s a ragged formation. They’re struggling to get off the target. They’ve lost two or three airplanes. Maybe a couple of guys have got engines shot out and they’re hollering and screaming.

Now it gets very, very serious. The full realization that hey, this is for real, really, really sinks in when you see something like that and you start seeing guys bailing out, jumping out. I recall a number of occasions. They would come off the target, and we were giving them fighter protection trying to get them out of the target area, and you get halfway home and you hear some poor guy up there saying hey, I’ve lost two engines. Are there any fighters in the area? I need fighter cover, fighter cover. And there’s a couple of times a guy said, hey, how’s your fuel level? I got some decent fuel. Why don’t you go back up and see if you can find this guy? So you run back up. Sometimes you’d pick them up, sometimes you didn’t. You’d pick them up and they’re in the window waving at you. Hey, fighters! Fighters!

T: Happy to see you.

H: Oh, man! Now. Because those were the guys that the enemy fighters looked for.

T: The guys lagging behind.

H: Oh, man, the stragglers. The guys that had an engine or two knocked out. They were duck soup. They would just walk in and wipe them out.

T: Wow. This flak over targets sounds like it was much more of an issue for the bombers than it was for you guys.

H: Oh, yes. It was no issue for me at all. We wouldn’t fly through it. We’d fly around it. Because there was nothing we could do, you know, flying in there with them.

T: Yes.

(1, A, 300)

H: And the fighters weren’t about to go in. So they’re going to sit on the other side. Their either going to hit them before they hit the target... and that’s what they would
try to do. Hit them before they dropped their bombs. But after they dropped the bombs, they knew a lot of them were going to be sitting ducks. Engines out and whatever. Raggedly formations. They would just sit there and wait for them. We’d go around to the other side... you see the fighters, they’d either back off or else they would jump them.

T: By this time, late ’44 and early ’45, how often did you run into German aircraft? German fighter planes.

H: I would say of all the missions that I flew...

T: And that would be thirty?

H: Yes. Thirty of them. I would say perhaps six or seven of those missions I never saw an enemy fighter. I would say on all the rest of them I saw enemy fighters. They were sitting off there. We would watch them. Sometimes they would attack, sometimes they wouldn’t. Out of those twenty-two or twenty-three missions that I saw enemy fighters, I would say there were about seven, eight, maybe nine missions that they actually attacked the bombers and came in on them. The other times they sat out. They played games. They would come in. We’d turn to them and they would break it off and go off. Seven, eight they actually came in on us. So there wasn’t fighting every day. No. And you weren’t in aerial combat every day. No. That was not the case at all. Now, earlier in the war, it happened much more frequently. As a matter of fact, very early in the war every time you flew, it was just the opposite. You could make bet you were going to run into a fighter and the only way you were going to get home was to outrun them, outfight them, or something or other.

T: So things had changed by late ’44.

H: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, we were in control of the skies. We could come and go as we pleased. They were definitely on the defensive and they were putting up fewer and fewer airplanes. And we were putting up more and more aircraft. Now the ratio of friendly aircraft to enemy aircraft kept getting greater and greater and greater. Until finally at the end of the war you could go anyplace you wanted to go and if you saw an enemy fighter it was strictly by accident.

T: So things had really changed.

H: Oh, yes.

T: The times you saw them was few. How many times did you actually engage each other?

H: The times that I engaged them was probably five or six times. As far as I know the guys I shot at are sitting home having a glass of wine the same way I am.
T: So it was really different than earlier in the war when there was much greater chance of...

H: Now, the guys did shoot down a number of enemy fighters. Shot down a bunch of them. I didn’t shoot down any. I shot at them. A few of them. Never got any victories. But Bob Williams, a good friend of mine, towards the end of the war got a couple of Folk-Wulff 190s, the guys who did the movie for HBO. You know, “Tuskegee Airmen,” the HBO movie. For two days... one day they went up and they got twenty-two, twenty-three victories. Went right back the next day and got twenty-three, twenty-four. They got close to fifty aircraft in just those two days. But Bob said he actually felt that they were just kind of desperate and they were hitting certain targets. I can’t remember what target they were at. They just put them up there, and they came up and Bob even thought they were even less experienced. That they just didn’t put up that big of a fight.

T: How things had changed in a couple years.

(1, A, 355)

H: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, they had some hot rocks. If you go back two years earlier. They had some of the finest pilots in the world. You ran into those guys [and] it took all of your skills to survive some of those battles. But as the war went on and on, they were getting knocked down and the more experienced pilots were becoming fewer and fewer and fewer. And then, actually, the Americans were really getting better and better and better at it. So the Americans were getting better.

T: The scales really just tipped, and it went exactly the other direction.

H: Exactly.

T: When you’re in the air like that though, I mean you could think maybe these pilots aren’t as experienced, maybe they’re not quite as good.

H: But you don’t know.

T: But you don’t know. So what goes through your mind when you do see enemy planes? In those times when you did engage them. What kind of thoughts do you have?

H: All you had was one thought in mind. Today is my day. I’m going to get a couple of victories.

T: So again it’s the self-confidence...
H: Oh, yes. Oh. I just looked forward to the day that I could actually engage a couple. Oh, yes. There was still that same old cockiness. Most of the guys. Now to be very honest, there were a few that made no bones about it. They said if I never see one that’s okay. But they were very, very few.

T: As a young hotshot pilot as you describe yourself, did you look at guys like that, who shied away from combat, as somehow not as good a pilot as you?

H: Yes. Yes. Yes. Oh yes. I didn’t tell him that. But yes. I thought to myself, it is best that you never run into one or else you won’t get back home. Yes. They’ll blow you out of the sky.

T: There was this cockiness and self-confidence. They really had to march together. You had to believe you could do it.

H: Oh, you better believe it, or else you were in a lot of trouble. You were already, you know, defeated, before you ever got involved in it. Yes.

T: Now, again, taking your story forward, it was 4 March 1945 that you were shot down over...

H: You know, I’m going to have to check that day because I always confuse that date with the date of March 10.

T: Early March. The first week of March.

H: Let’s just use March 4, because I think... Turn that thing off a minute.

End of Tape 1, Side A. Side B begins at counter 381.

T: The next thing, Dr. Brown, is when you were shot down in the first week of March 1945, you were on a strafing mission. I’m wondering if you can talk about how a strafing mission differs from the kind of missions that you had been flying which was bomber escorts.

H: Well, anytime you start flying at low levels you’re going to get more and more people shooting back at you. I had been on three strafing missions where it was strictly strafing missions and it’s interesting, because I got hit on every mission.

T: No kidding.

H: And didn’t even know it. I can remember the first time I came back. The crew chief: “How did...” “Ah, great mission.” Came back and looked and he says. “Oh, oh. You’ve got a hole.” And way back in the elevator section there was a little hole with little small arms [fire] you know.
T: Because they could hit you with those things, couldn’t they?

H: Oh, yes. They would shoot anything at that low altitude. You’re passing right over them. You could take a rifle.

T: And you could hit them from the ground with a rifle.

H: Oh, yes. It was highly unlikely. Here you’re coming in at four hundred miles an hour and this yo yo with his rifle... he isn’t likely to hit you. And even if he did, he would have to hit something very, very vital within the engine or something to bring you down, which is highly unlikely. But it only demonstrates that they were much more riskier, because everybody is shooting at you. Or anyone who can shoot will shoot at you. Whereas up in the air that never happened.

T: It was either flak or fighters but that was it.

H: Flak or a fighter or no one. So the strafing missions, we usually lost someone almost every strafing mission. It was hard for me to think... even on missions that I didn’t fly on throughout all of the books. Most of the guys that went down, went down on strafing missions. You always lost someone.

T: On those missions did you carry rockets or bombs...


T: And you were just to...

H: Yes.

T: Now the mission you were on which was in the area of Linz, Austria...

(1, B, 427)

H: Yes.

T: What was the target for that day?

H: We were hitting the marshalling yards from just south of Linz, a hundred miles to the southeast of Linz. It was a very, very heavily traveled area. They wanted it wiped out. So they sent the 332nd up they just selected one squadron, just to go up and just to wipe out that one area.

T: You flew with the 332nd Fighter Group?

H: It was the 332nd Fighter Group which was made up of four squadrons. The 99th, the 100th, the 301st and 302nd.
T: Which one were you in?

H: 99th. So that was the target. This hundred mile stretch of marshalling yard, and it was very heavily trafficked.

T: Because you knew from experience that these missions were more dangerous for your own safety, did you approach them differently? Go into them with a little more care or fear or...

H: No. It was balls out. You saw them, and boom! All you did was swept right in. Then those were railway traffic, engines and rest. You went right in on them.

T: So this cockiness and self-confidence, it stayed with you.

H: You actually kind of got into it. And it actually became a fun thing really.

T: How so?

H: It was kind of neat to go in on a target and the train is here, and the tail end of it is here, and you start shooting close to the tail end of the train, the caboose, and you just walk right up the train shooting all the way up, and if you hit something that had an explosives on it, it would blow and you would say, “Good deal!” And you’d get up to the engine and you’d hold your fire an extra two or three seconds, and the engine would blow. You peel up off the thing. That was kind of... it was a fun thing. Really. It was really fun. And you didn’t give anything else a thought. You were just having a ball. That’s the best way I can explain it.

(1, B, 466)

T: Maybe that’s what it took to be successful at this game.

H: I don’t know. But it was fun (laughs).

T: Walk us through getting shot down.

H: It wasn’t fun. No fun at all. None at all.

T: Your plane had been hit before, you mentioned, on some strafing missions.

H: Yes.

T: What happened this time that brought your plane down?

H: There was a whole explosion of... they were shooting at me. When the [train] engine blew, I was sitting on top of it.
T: The train you were shooting.

H: Yes. And everything blew. It took the boxcars that had the guns in it, the engine went. This big explosion happened as I was sitting right over it.

T: So just a timing thing?

H: Yes. If it had blown three seconds before, or even two seconds before, I might have time to pull up and at least to get away from the major part of that explosion. But it went over just as I passed. The whole thing blew and I was caught right in the doggoned middle of it. All the debris that blew up, that came up in the air when it blew up, that hit the airplane and knocked off the oil line, damaged the engine and that’s when the oil pressure... I lost all of the oil in the thing. The oil pressure was going to zero. The old temperature was swinging up to maximum. Then I lost all of my coolant. It came out of the engine. An inline engine without coolant doesn’t run. Yes, it just freezes on you.

T: So you knew pretty quickly your plane was done for.

H: Well, initially no. I went through it, rolled the airplane out. I came out of the explosion on my back. I rolled it out and came up. I looked around and there was all kinds of crap in the cockpit. But I said, “Hell, the thing is still flying. No sweat!” I said, “Boy, the gorgeous gun film pictures I took!” Because I was on the trigger all the way. I said, “Oh, man, this is going to be great when I get back!” Then a short while--I’m sure I’m talking about a matter of seconds, afterwards--that’s when the gauges start going crazy on me, and I was pulling up trying to get altitude because I knew I was in trouble. Obviously.

Then I lost all of the coolant because... As a matter of fact, I would bet that airplane ran about three or four minutes. Probably something less than five minutes. About three or four minutes, because I had pulled up and I was up about a thousand feet or so and Bill Campbell, Lucas and the guys who were waiting on it, they came around me and circled me and Campbell was waving at me looking at back. I looked back and saw smoke trailing out and of course, by then the engine instruments were telling me, you’re in deep trouble here. So I turned and I headed due east. I said, if this thing can just run for maybe fifteen, twenty minutes, I can get pretty close to the Russian lines and I just might get out of this. Well, it ran for no more than a minute or so.

T: Did the engine just freeze up?

H: Yes.

T: Then of course, when that happens the propeller stops.
H: Well, it didn’t really stop. That’s the way I say it. It doesn’t quite do that. Yes. The thing is windmilling. And by windmilling, no power. The prop is just windmilling. Turning.

T: The wind is turning the prop.

(1, B, 526)

H: Yes. But it was clear that hey, this is the end of the road. Now let’s start thinking about getting out of the airplane.

T: What’s going through your mind now when it’s clear that you’re not going to make it to any safe place?

H: Well, the first thing you think about is your own safety. It was clear that there was no place to crash land. It was the foothills of the Alps and the hills and whatnot. Snow yea deep on the ground. So that was out of the question.

T: Yes.

H: So I knew immediately, I gotta get out of this damn thing.

T: With a parachute.

H: Yes. So it was self-survival. So I rolled up and did what I had to do to get out of it. I didn’t even think in terms of the chute, will it open or will it not? I had better things to think about, like getting out. So I got out of it.

T: You put the canopy back and literally just walk out of the plane? Is that kind of how you do it?

H: Well, there was a way that you could jettison the whole canopy. So I jettisoned the canopy. It flew off. I rolled the plane over. Tipped the stick forward and undid my safety belt. The plane up and it popped me out of the back.

T: So you almost fell out of the plane?

H: Yes. It rolled over. That was the easy way to get out. And you could get out in a hurry. Particularly if you kick the stick over the nose will pop up a little bit and will almost propel you out. Without any restraint on. Of course I had unbuckled the safety belt and the shoulder straps. So no restraints. You almost throw yourself out.

T: I see. Now had you made a parachute jump before ever?

H: No.
T: So this is the first time you pulled the cord...

H: That’s right. That’s right.

T: First and last by the way?

H: First and the last time. I would never be a skydiver. To jump out of a good flying airplane makes no sense to me *chuckles*. No indeed.

T: What's going through your mind as you're drifting down in this parachute? You weren't hit by the way? You were not injured?

H: No. First, things are happening so doggoned fast, and you're doing things automatically. Because you've gone over this thing ten thousand times in your mind. You know what you have to do. So there aren't any other thoughts. It’s just get out of the airplane. Get the chute open. Boom. And by the time that I felt this jolt of the chute I said, well, okay, I’ve got a good chute, and within a matter of a very short while the ground was coming up. Because I wasn't that high to begin with. Then, boom, I hit the ground.

Then after I hit the ground and whatnot, snow up to my knees and so forth, now it’s, what do you do now? I’m out of this thing. But that was the only time I even thought rationally about, what do I do? What’s the next step? Or anything such as that. You’re going through a whole lot of motion and you’re just doing it out of training and you do it automatically and it’s happening so fast that you don’t even give a thought to, will it open? Will this happen? You just do it.

T: And only once you hit the ground were the automatic steps over.

H: Yes. After the chute opens, then you have a few seconds. Well, I got a good chute. Good. And the ground is coming up, and because that ground is coming up so fast it isn’t funny. I don’t know what the rate of descent is when that chute opens, but boy, you are dropping fast! And I can recall for just a second that golly, I’m falling awful fast! But there was snow and no problem.

Then after that I’m kind of gathering my wits about me. I pulled up the chute and I grabbed the chute and there was a small wooded area so I started, you know, tromping through the snow trying to get down into this wooded area. I got close to it and there was still no one around me. The only other thing that I remember is how quiet it got because the guys were circling me as I was coming down in the chute. I could see Campbell, right to this day, sitting in that plane as he came by. Campbell waved at me.

(1, B, 593)

T: So they knew you were okay on the ground.
H: Oh, yes. And then they broke off to go home and it got so quiet. The quietness was just unbelievably quiet. Land of snow. For just a second I thought, man, I’m up here all by myself. And you could hear the airplanes die out in the distance. Now you’re all alone. Not a soul you can turn to. So I grabbed my little escape pack. You carry a little escape pack with you. And it had a map, a compass and a few other little things in it. And I knew just about where the Russian lines were to the east and I said, boy, if there’s some way I could just evade and if I can just head east, and make some decent time heading east without being picked up, I just may be able to get to the Russian lines. I thought, okay, this is what I’m going to do and I knew the direction in which I was going to go, well, that was when a couple of guys came up over the top of the hill. They were standing up on the hill, and they slung off their rifles.

T: Civilians or military guys?

H: No. No. These were civilians. Constables. And they picked me up. Marched me back to the village.

T: What happened along the way? This first encounter between German civilians and you, how did that go?

H: Well, first I was scared as hell. Now I guess the fear is pretty much from the unknown, not knowing what’s going to happen. You don’t speak their language. You got a mob of people staring at you. Cursing and everything else. I assume that’s what they were doing in Germany. And you’re wondering, what are you going to do? What’s going to happen next? Then you start having a few thoughts about, you know, cases where the intelligence officer always brief you, whatever you do, get as far away from the target area as possible because people are upset, angry.

T: Sure.

H: That didn’t happen. So here I was, right back in the middle of it again. It’s now just thinking in terms of survival. I mean really survival. Now that it’s totally out of my hands. Nothing I can do about it. I think for just a short while I was in a state of shock. Only because it was hard for me to accept reality. And I know for the first couple of minutes I was almost talking to myself. I was saying, what are you going to do? What are you going to do? You gotta do something. What are you going to do? And no answers were coming. I finally said, well, I assume that whatever they’re going to do, I’ll just react to whatever they do, and whatever happens, happens. That was when the other constable... and this went on for... it’s hard for me to think in terms of how long it went on. From the time they picked me up until they got me back to the village, that took a little time. By the time—I don’t know if it was thirty, forty, fifty minutes or what—we got back to the village, it didn’t take long for a little mob to form.

T: This was not a big village.
H: Yes. Just a little small village. Twenty-five to thirty people was the size of the group. That apparently didn’t take long. They just saw me, or word got out. Or else they saw the airplane when I came off that target, that was smoking and whatnot. That probably alerted them, that one, he’s going to bail out something or else he’s going to crash. Plus it was clear that I was in trouble, and anyone sitting on the ground after the event would look up and see that airplane would know that that guy is either going to jump or he’s going to crash. So they knew something was going on. Later on, here comes a couple of constables with this strange looking guy. That must be the pilot. So you get a small mob of twenty-five to thirty people, magically appearing from out of nowhere. Then they start all the ranting and raving, arguing over how are we going to kill him? I assume that’s what they were doing from some of the symbols.

(1, B, 661)

T: Making like shooting motions at you?

H: I just came to the realization that something’s going to happen. Whatever happens, I’ll just respond to whatever they do. Whether I run or whatever. Let them shoot me or... I don’t know. I just didn’t know what I would do. It was out of my hands.

T: In a sense, you’re right, all you could do was react.

H: Yes.

T: From the way you describe it.

H: Yes.

T: At that first location, were you put in a holding cell or interrogated or talked to by anybody in English?

H: After the other constable rescued me from the mob.

T: Now one constable... you differentiate between these two...?

H: There were two of them that brought me in. There was a third one that came up and rescued me from the rest of them.

T: How did he rescue you?

H: The next thing I knew I saw the guy, and I heard him behind me and he was speaking in German, and I could hear him hit the bolt on his rifle, and that was very clear. There was this very rapid German discussion. It went on for a few seconds
and the other two guys, I saw them drop their guns and they backed off into the mob and he motioned to me: (hand motion) Come. And I got in behind him, and he and I walked back, back up into the village about, I’m only guessing, an eighth of a mile, a quarter of a mile. It was just a short distance. The crowd was following us and he held the gun on the crowd while we backed up.

T: He was in uniform, this guy, right?

H: Oh, yes. Well, the uniform was nothing but breeches, a pair of boots. They had jackets on. I don’t remember if there was a small badge or not. But they did have guns.

T: So this one, the way you describe it, this one official, literally, may have saved you from...

H: Oh, he did. Oh, yes (very emphatically). Oh, yes. Oh, there’s no question about... Yes, the guy saved my life.

T: How soon was it before you ended up out of this person’s care in a, what we might call, a regulation facility?

H: We backed up into this little pub and we barricaded ourselves in the pub. As night came on it was getting cold and the crowd began to disperse. I am assuming it was probably close to midnight when we left that pub. We went out the back end of it and we walked for, and I’m guessing again, roughly I would say three, four, five miles down the road.

T: That’s a good hike.

H: Yes. Because we walked for some time to get to the next small village. By the time I got into that village it was almost daybreak--the next day coming up. I assume that they called someone because it was, I would guess a couple hours after that, another couple of soldiers came up in a small vehicle. Then we drove to another village. It didn’t take that long to get there. I’m guessing again, oh, perhaps thirty, forty, forty-five minutes or so down the road a piece. Then when I went into that village they had several little cells in the village. The village that they took me in. They put me in one of the cells. I assume it was the local jailhouse or, you know, something.

(1, B, 696)

T: Had anyone talked to you in English up until now?

H: No.

T: And you didn’t speak or understand German, so it was all on actions and motions.
H: Yes. They... come... you know... the car... well...

T: Yes. It's pretty clear.

H: You know what to do even though you don't understand it. Get in the car!

T: When you were walking with that one constable at night, did he keep his gun trained on you or... You were really happy to be with him it sounds like.

H: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, we were immediately the best of friends. He saved my life. If he wanted to hurt me, all he had to do was just turn his back and let the mob do what they wanted to do.

T: That's right.

H: So, there's no question. I was the enemy, but I wasn't his enemy at the time.

T: What a scary situation the way you describe it.

H: Yes. It was weird. I sometimes think about it. It almost seems like a dream. That the thing never even happened that way at all. And particularly when I sit down and I think about it rationally and I reflect back and look at some of the events and some of the things that happened and how it happened. It almost seems unreal. And you tell the story... and I said, Harold, no one's going to believe this story. There were times when I thought to myself, who in the world is going to believe a real crazy story like this? It's almost unbelievable.

T: And your world changed from one hour to the next. One hour you were in a plane and then suddenly you were...

H: Literally upside down.

T: On the ground with a bunch of Germans ready to lynch you.

H: About ready to die.

T: How long was it before you did have someone question you, or interrogate you, or even speak English to you?

H: As a matter of fact, no one for the first three days as I sat in the little jail. I was there for three days in the little jail. All they would do was to come and they would speak in German. I didn't know what they were saying. They would give me a small portion of bread and something that looked like a very weak soup. They gave me that a couple of times a day. Other than that I was just there. And I think that was even perhaps as unsettling as anything. Because from minute to minute to minute,
you never knew. And it was this unknown factor that kept playing in. What’s going to happen next?

T: Because nobody told you and you couldn’t ask.

H: Yes. I had no idea. Nothing. You had no idea what in the world was going to happen to you. And every time a guard would come back to the gate, for whatever reason, I would tighten up. Oh, oh. Now what’s he coming back here for? Now what’s he want? Now what’s he going to do? Now what’s going to happen? There’s always that unknown second. What’s going to happen next?

T: So there was the fear of the unknown.

H: I think that was the biggest fear of all. Was just that: not knowing.

T: And on the heels of that incident in the village where you were almost lynched anyway.

H: Yes.

(1, B, 734)

T: So the first couple days, no one spoke to you in English or asked you questions. Did somebody, any military personnel, finally question you and get some information about who you were and all this kind of stuff?

H: After three days a mission flew over, and you could hear the heavy bombers going over. That night one of the crew had been shot down, and they had rounded up all eleven of the crew members and brought them into that same jail, and they came in all wild-eyed because they had just bailed out. They caught every one of them. They came in, and it was somewhat funny and it was a little humorous because I knew just how they felt, having just gone through it. They were half frightened and when they brought them in they were looking around very curiously. They saw me. Who in the world is this guy? I see all of the suspicions in their minds.

T: Because they didn’t know who you were.

H: Had no idea. But I was dressed just like them. And the more they looked, who are you anyway? I’m speaking English, you’re speaking it. I say, hey, I’m wearing the same uniform you are. My wings look just like your wings. Then, oh, oh! He must be... yes... I too was shot down. What happened? What are they going to do with us? Now here comes all the questions. What’s going on? What are they going to do to us? I don’t know. How long you been here? I’ve been here three days. Where are we going next? I have no idea, guys.
T: Because you had been there and they sort of expected you might have some information.

H: I didn't have no idea what's going on guys. I've been here for a few days and all the difference between you and me is I've been here for three days and you're a newcomer. That's the only difference.

T: This was a local facility. I'll bet you they weren't going to keep you here...

H: Yes.

T: Any longer than they had to.

H: That's right. As a matter of fact, the very next day we were out of there.

T: Were you picked up by military vehicle?

H: Yes. As I recall, they picked us up in a truck and... here's where it gets a little foggy because it's hard for me to remember where we went from that point on. That was the beginning of the trip to Nuremberg. When they picked us all up together. As I reflect back there are things...

**End of Tape 1. Tape 2, Side A begins at counter 000**

H: So I know this. It took approximately nine days or so, eight or nine days for us to get to Nuremberg.

T: And so, in the area of Linz, Austria, which is south of Munich on the Danube, to Nuremberg you were in a truck all this time?

H: Oh, no. Sometimes we were in a truck. There were other times when the truck would drop us off and we and the guards, we would get on a local bus and we would travel on a bus right along with the other civilians and we had two guards with us at all times. We were on a bus for a while.

T: Just you and this bomber crew.

H: Yes. There was twelve of us. Eleven man crew and myself was the twelfth one, and two guards. There were times we were riding on a bus. There were other times that we were on a train. As a matter of fact, on the train once we were strafed. Which was almost unbelievable.

T: Because it's your own people doing it.
H: Yes. Then I knew what it felt like to be on the other end of that stuff. Everyone on the train just got on the floor and then you could just hear the bullets go raking around the train...

T: It was a passenger train you were on.

H: Well, there were a couple of passenger cars on the train. There were other boxcars and things.

T: And you were in a boxcar?

H: No. No. We were in a regular train. It had seats on it. And this guy was going like crazy and he finally got into a tunnel and that's where he stopped. To get away from the strafing.

(2, A, 37)

T: What was that like to be on the receiving end of a strafing attack?

H: Oh my God. That was the most terrifying thing I have ever experienced. Particularly that first time. I mean, it was absolutely terrifying. You could hear the bullets. You could hear the airplane coming over. And there's no place to run. No place to hide. Nothing.

T: Because a .50 caliber shell could go right through that train, right?

H: Oh, my God, yes. And we were all on the floor. And I don't even know how long the train was. I don't know if it was an engine with ten cars, twelve cars, fifteen cars or what. But it felt like there was only one car and that was the car that you were in and all the bullets were being directed towards your one car. That was not the case. But that's what it felt like. That was the most terrifying thing up to that point that I've ever experienced. You were scared as hell.

T: And there was really nowhere to go.

H: Yes. No place to run. No place to hide. Nothing. You just out there with your bare behind hoping that you don't get hit with a bullet. And with those number of guns firing, oh God, it just sounds like... well, you can imagine.

T: Yes. Was anyone hit around you?

H: No one was hit. No one was hit. And like I said, I don't know how long that train was. But it certainly wasn't just aiming at that one little car. They were raking the whole doggoned train. Even though it felt as if they were just shooting our little car. The guy was fortunate, because it didn't take that long for him riding the train to get into that tunnel.
T: And the tunnel of course was safe.

H: Yes. Once you’re in the tunnel then you were all right. Yes. And then that was the big thing. Whenever they were hit they’d run for a tunnel. Because it’s very, very mountainous. A lot of tunnels.

T: Yes. What else do you recall about that long voyage from...

H: Well, I remember that incident. We finally got to the Aerodrome, Wels Aerodrome. It was a huge...

T: This is by Nuremberg?

H: Well, I used to know where Wels Airport was. I looked it up once on a map and now I can’t even tell you the city it was close to, but I can remember talking to Campbell, old Bill Campbell. I said, “Bill, you ever remember Wels?” He said, “Oh, yes. Everybody knows Wels. Big aerodrome.” I told him I was in the thing once. I said, “Bill, you ever remember Wels?” He said, “Oh, yes. Everybody knows Wels. Big aerodrome.” I told him I was in the thing once. I said, “Where in the world was it located?” And he even told me once where it was located, and right now I can’t even remember where that... It was a huge, huge airfield. And it was well known to everyone because... It must have had a couple hundred fighters at the Wels Aerodrome.

T: Now this wasn’t a POW facility though.

H: Whenever you were close to it, you could always expect planes to be launched off of Wels. To come up after you. And I can recall coming in to the field. All I saw was ME-262s.

(2, A, 98)

T: Jet fighters.

H: And I said, “Here’s where all the jet fighters are.” And I can remember saying that. And this is a beautiful airplane. They have one down at the air museum and I was down there the weekend before I came up here and I really looked at that. Even right today I said, “That’s a beautiful...”

T: It is really a beautiful plane.

H: It is. The two jet engines are hanging under the wing and there is a real sleek fuselage with these little two jet engines right under the wing. Oh. It is just neat. I came in... there were all these revetment areas. There were three or four airplanes in every revetment. You know, you’re kind of winding through the road and here’s a revetment and there’s a revetment, and there were times I was no more than from here to that window away from the revetment area where the little road went by.
I'm looking at all these things. This is really neat. And they had a little local jail on the airport.

T: And that's why they brought you there.

H: We stayed there for two days. But there was a real incident that occurred. We got to Wels Airport and we were only there a short while and in came a German captain. He had his breeches on, his boots. He was sharp. That guy was really dressed. And he came in and he spoke almost perfect English.

T: The first time you've heard English now, right?

H: No. It was the first time that I had any extended conversation. During the travels occasionally we would run into a person who could speak some English, broken English, and they didn't have any long conversation with us. A word or two. But this was the first guy that we really spoke. Extended conversation. He spoke perfect English. And he said, “Hi.” He says, “I'm Captain...” And I can't remember his last name. I have no idea what his last name was. So he said, “Are there any fighter pilots in the crowd?” I said yes. I'm a fighter pilot. He said, “You're a fighter pilot.” And then he called me a word that I've heard a number of times. But they had a name for Tuskegee airmen and that was black such-and-such-and-such. If I heard the word I would recognize it but I can't say it.

And he said, “Oh, yes.” And then he said, “Yes. I know about you guys. Yes. You're the black outfit...” Of course he had heard about the outfit. So we started chatting and he said, “Have you had any encounters with the German aircraft?” I said, yes, I had encountered 109s, with a Folk-Wulff 190 and I even chased an ME-262. He said, “An ME-262? How can you chase an ME-262?” I said well, we came in at about thirty thousand and peeled down on him, and I said, as long as he was going straight down we were staying with him. He said, “Well, yes, that's about right.” But he said, “What happened when you leveled off?” I said, there was the difference.

T: They were noticeably faster planes.

H: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oh, much, much faster. Like I said, Adolph [Hitler] made a horrible mistake by not... but it couldn't carry any bombs. So as far he was concerned, the airplane's useless if it can't carry any bombs. What a dumb, stupid boy. That would have changed the whole course of the war.

T: And it could have been in production much sooner.

H: At least it would have extended the war for some period of time if he had really mass-produced those things and was really throwing them up in the sky. It would have made a big difference. But nevertheless, we had a nice conversation. We didn't talk about much other than flying and whatnot. And he says, “Are you guys hungry?” We said yes. He said, “Just a minute.” He went out and he came back in with the sergeant carrying something. He sat down... and I can see this big bowl of jam. And
He had a couple loaves of bread and he had what looked like plain old baloney about this big around and a chunk about this big.

We looked at that food. So he says, “Take it right now. You are eating better than the soldiers. So I’m going to stay here, and you eat all you can eat because when I leave, they’re going to take it.” So he sat there a while and we cut up the bread as sandwiches and jam. That was the first time we really had a meal. I mean this was choice. When he left there was a small chunk of meat there, and I can recall as he walked out of there and this soldier said something in German. He came over and picked up that, picked up the jam, picked up what bread was left.

T: So it was gone like that.

(2, A, 181)

H: And just like he said, “When I walk out of here they’re going to take it.” And that’s exactly what they did. They took it.

T: That’s interesting. You mentioned having a conversation with this guy.

H: Yes.

T: Were you a little suspicious of him?

H: At that point no. Initially they said be very, very careful. Be careful what you say. But it was towards the end of the war. This guy... I don’t know if he came in planned, or if he came in accidentally, or he saw us coming in and walked in, or how or what reason all of a sudden he comes in the place. So from the questions and the conversation he was having, nothing was said that they didn’t already know. And at that stage it really was almost a trivial conversation. The same way if I had met you and we were both pilots. “Hey, how are you doing? What airplane did you fly?” I fly such and such. Hey, have you ever seen such and such and start talking about it.

T: I see. So there was no military...

H: No interrogation or anything. He had gone to Oxford.

T: Therefore the English.

H: And he said it was his hope he would go to... As a matter of fact, not only he said, but even the guy who interrogated me had gone to Oxford. He spoke perfect English. Both of them had the same ambition. They both talked about he either wanted to go to England or else he wanted to go to America. He stated it and also the major, my interrogator, said that exact same thing. That he wanted to go to England or he wanted to go to...

T: People talking about after the war, in other words.
T: Now, in your mind at this time, this is the middle of March now. Was the outcome of the war pretty much a foregone conclusion by this time?

H: We knew that the war was not going to last much longer. Now by [how] much longer, that wasn’t defined. Three months, six months, a year. I actually felt that I would probably get in a full seventy missions. And that the war would last at least that long. That I would get in a full seventy missions.

T: You’re a POW now and you talk to these Germans. Did you get the impression from them that for them the war was about over too? On the other end. That they knew they were going to lose?

H: As a matter of fact, they knew they were going to lose. The interrogator...

T: He was a major you say.

H: As much. As a matter of fact, he even said, now don’t do anything silly. Keep your nose clean. Don’t give a guard a reason to shoot you. And he said to survive the war all you have to do is just stay alive and you’ll survive the war. He knew that it was just a matter of time. Now the little captains didn’t say anything quite that definitive in terms of the war. But they never sat in the big fancy field with all the fancy chests and things. He probably just thought well, this war may just go on a little bit longer.

T: But the major was pretty clear in his...

H: Oh, yes. He knew for a fact. The interrogator. There wasn’t a doubt in his mind. He even said as much. Just don’t give the guards a reason to shoot you.

T: Now what kind of questions did the major ask? He was talking just to you one on one, right?

H: Just to me. One on one.

(2, A, 230)

T: What kind of things did he ask you?

H: I thought they were rather trivial questions. He asked me what altitude did we fly our missions at.

T: He would know that, wouldn’t he?
H: He would see airplanes fly over a hundred times and I thought was so trivial. Then he asked the question, he said, “From the altitude that you fly your missions at,” he said, “would you be able to distinguish red crosses on the roof of some of the houses?” I thought about it for a minute and I said, well, Old Pitts would say don’t get in extended conversation with these guys. Just name, rank and serial number. So I kept the old name, rank, serial number. He said all I’m doing is asking if you could see, if you would be able to distinguish a red cross.

And I thought well, from thirty thousand feet if I looked down I could hardly distinguish a little old building. I said to myself. He asked, does low level missions, if we were flying any of those. I didn’t respond to any of them. What else did this guy raise questions about? He asked me how I was treated by the civilians and I didn’t respond to any of it. I didn’t respond to anything. He asked me if I ran into any civilians. How did they treat me and such and such. So I wasn’t even in there that long. I was only in there for just a short while and finally he said, “Okay. I know the routine. Name, rank and serial number.” That’s when he threatened me. But he said, “We’re going to talk tomorrow.” And he said, “You’re going to respond to every question I ask you, or else I’m going to turn you over to the civilians.” That’s the end of it. That got my attention.

T: I bet it would.

H: Yes. I thought about that. Then it was after I left his office and they were taking me back to my holding cell that they brought in this kid who was in our outfit. As a matter of fact his name was Lincoln T. Hudson. Lincoln T. Hudson was in the class right behind me.

T: He’d been shot down too.

H: And he had been shot down, and he was a mess. Only the civilians, the civilians grabbed him. He had a couple of guards, and they just let the civilians have him. They were kicking him, stomping him. He said he just laid there and pretended as if he was half-dead and they finally got tired of it and left him and the two guards lifted him up. He could walk all right.

T: Did it occur to you at that point, that that could have happened to you?

H: Oh, absolutely it did. I thought about what the old major said and that kept me awake half the night.

T: That was a real threat, wasn’t it?

H: Serious. And then, to be quite honest, I was thinking, he already knows much of that stuff. I even thought, hmmm, if it comes to saying such and such or being thrown out there to the civilians, what are those things that I could say, but at the same time not say anything? And even those thoughts were going through my mind. But now I’m really thinking about my behind.
T: Sure.

H: And you do have those thoughts. But the next day when I came back in, he set me down. He says “Lieutenant, there’s nothing to tell me that I don’t already know.” That’s when we left his office and right around the corner he had all kinds of books. He said, “So you recognize those numbers?” There’s the 99th, 100th, 301st, 302nd, on each one of those great big binders.

T: Those are your squadrons.

H: Yes. The binders were very light blue and the coloring was in white. 99th. So I looked at him. He said, “Do you recognize that?” No. He said, “Oh, come on. The 99th, the 100th. Those are the squadrons. Come on now. Let’s stop playing games. I’m not playing any games with you. Don’t play any games with me. You know perfectly well that those are the squadrons.” That was probably one of the few times that I kind of smirked. He said, “Yes. You know” Of course I know. He says, “I even know that you were in the 99th.” And he says, “I know it from your tail number. You were shot down in A-32 and only the 99th squadron has the A suffix.” So I was just looking at him. He said, “I’m right on the head, aren’t I? I know it.” So he starts thumbing through and showing me cutouts of articles in papers and things. There was Hall, Charles Hall, who had gotten his fourth victory...

(2, A, 299)

T: English language newspapers.

H: Oh, yes. Now I had heard that somehow or other they were subscribing to newspapers, or somehow or other they were getting newspapers regularly, and that out of the newspapers they were getting all kinds of information, but everyone else was getting the information. It was public. So even though they knew it... But in that situation, setting up in Germany, for him to pull out all the stuff and show it to you was very impressive.

T: No kidding.

H: And then he even said, “Hey, Captain Pitts, you know the one who taught you to say name, rank and serial number? You don’t know it, but he just made major since you were shot down.”

T: He had the news before you did.

H: And he had made major. I found out after I went back. Captain Pitts made Major Pitts. He knew all about it. But it is just interesting...

T: How much they knew about your unit.
H: Yes.

T: From Wels, did they actually send you to what we might call a POW camp or did they...

H: No. From Wels I still had some time to go. From Wels we went someplace, and I can't remember the someplace, and stayed a while. Then they took us up into a town and I cannot remember the name of that town. And here's where I don't know. For whatever reason I just have a lot of trouble recalling some of those things. But there's where we got another big scare of our lives. We were there in a little small train station, rubble all around us and we were waiting to get on a train, and that train was going to take us into Nuremberg. So we weren't that far from Nuremberg at this time. We're standing there, and up comes an SS officer.

T: You're sitting in this train station with how many guys?

H: We were just standing there waiting on the train station with the guards.

T: You and these other eleven guys still? The same group of you?

H: Yes. The same group of us. Yes. We looked up and one of the guys said, “Oh, my God! This guy's SS.” And he had on his lapels, the lightning strike. That little symbol [of the SS]. He was an officer. Sharp as a tack. He walked up and he said something to the guards, and they popped to attention and they were responding and he was talking about the prisoners. He was pointing to us and speaking German. So something being dealt with. So apparently he was asking questions. Who are these people that you have here? Who are they? And the guards, I assume was responding that we were airmen that were shot down. I'm assuming that's the way the conversation went. After he stopped talking to the [guards] he walked over to us, and we were standing there. No one was saying a word. He walked around us. Then one of the guys, he looks up and just spit in his face.

T: Did he really?

H: Right in his face, and no one said one damn word. I just knew he was going to do it to me. I said, he can spit all he wants but he'll get no response from me. He was murmuring things under his breath. And from the tone of his voice, the expression on his face, the words and what he was saying were ugly words and they were all directed at us, which we couldn’t understand. After he walked around us, he said a few words to the guards and then he walked off. But you look at something like that. There's nothing in the world to prevent that guy from pulling out his gun and just shooting someone. And no one would have said a word. The guards would not have stopped it. If the civilians had seen it, most of them probably would have said, good, good. It would have been the end of the ropes. Whoever he shot. He could have easily done that.
But while that little event is going on, you know, you still have all these thoughts. You've heard about the Gestapo, the SS. What mean people they were, and you think, jiminy, am I now going to have to face this guy and have this yo yo get angry and pissed and for no reason whatsoever pull out his gun and blow my head off? Because again, that old unknown factor. You don’t know what the hell is going on.

(2, A, 355)

T: Here you hear words, but you don't know what they’re saying.

H: Same old thing. And that thing was constantly there. That whole unknown factor. But after that, we got on the train and we went into Nuremberg. I was there at the interrogation center for two days. I talked to the major. I saw Lincoln T. Hudson, and then they put us on a truck and they took us down to the POW camp. A huge camp. Barbed wire all around it. But the camp was broken up into small compounds. And each compound had wire around it.

T: Was this in, or close to, the city of Nuremberg?

H: Oh, no. No. This was outside of Nuremberg. I would guess that it was about seven or eight miles.

T: So you came into the city and then...

H: Put us on trucks from the train station and then hauled us the seven or eight miles. Down to the POW camp.

T: This was the camp, looking at the map, this was from the numbers, it was probably Camp 13, Stalag 13.

H: It is whatever was close to Nuremberg.

T: That’s Stalag 13.

H: And you said that was... (pause in interview)

T: Back on the record now, when you got to this camp by Nuremberg, which is number 13 on the map, what can you say about the conditions at that camp? What did you see when you got there?

H: They were typical camps the way you see them in movies. A great big barbed wire all the way around the camp. Then inside the camp you had individual areas. They call them compounds. They held about two hundred men. Little small pathways. You had a compound, a compound, a compound. Pathways. Little small
roads. All across it. There again, some ten thousand prisoners were in that camp. So it took a whole lot of compounds. You’re talking about a good piece of real estate.

T: Yes. This was an expansive area.

H: Yes. But it was almost exactly the way would see it in those old movies about Colonel Klink…

T: *Hogan’s Heroes [TV program]?*

H: Yes. That’s it. It was almost identical. That’s just the way it was.

T: So the barracks and the whole…

H: Yes.

T: The barbed wire compound.

H: That’s it exactly.

T: Now you were there when things were very much in flux, at the end of March.

H: Yes. A lot of activity.

T: Was there a daily routine that you even had a chance to get into at this point in the war?

H: The daily routine was nothing more that we were --

**End of Tape 2, Side A. Side B begins at counter 385.**

T: So they got you up in the morning…

H: Yes. We would get up in the morning and they would have a head count. Shortly after the head count, an hour or so after, they would bring in food. And the food was always the same. A loaf of bread and this so-called soup. That was it. They didn’t work you. No slave labor. None of that stuff. You were just there.

T: Were you there only with officers?

H: No. Most of us were officers, but there were also some airmen, crew members that was on there. Now in our compound, I would guess there was probably about half and half. We were all in the same compound. You could walk out of the building. Walk around the building within your little barbed wire fence. They had stalls where guys could get up and you could at least get water on your face. That
was it. No bathing. No nothing. There was no way that you could do it. You wore the same clothes. The whole time I had the same clothes.

T: That you were captured in, right?

H: Yes. And my friend, George Isles, it just so happened that as I came in that compound he was out on the fence looking, and when I said George, he was the guy two weeks earlier was shot down. We thought he had made it to Switzerland, but he crash landed right almost at the border and the Swiss were screaming at him run, run in their direction. The Germans fired a couple shots over his head and so he stopped.

T: Pretty wisely.

H: But Harold, he said, I came that close. I could have spent the entire war in Switzerland in a beautiful hotel eating good food, living the good life. Of course they wouldn’t let him leave Switzerland.

T: Right. He’d be interned.

H: Obviously they lived quite nicely.

T: There were worse places to spend the war than in Switzerland, isn’t there?

H: But they caught him. And of all the luck, you know, my classmate, one of my dearest friends, and there he was. As luck would have it. So we were together throughout the war. From that point on.

T: What was the most difficult thing for you? Now you’ve been through a number of stops along the way. Now you’re at this camp. What did you find most difficult personally?

H: It’s interesting. When you’re shot down, the most dangerous period of all is to get from where you’re shot down to a prison camp. And if anything was going to happen, it was going to happen over that period of time. Once you got into a prison camp you’re now safe. Yes, you’re locked up, you don’t eat regularly, but at least you’re safe. No one’s going to walk in and shoot you. Prison camps were not concentration camps.

T: Right.

H: Yes. Sure if you try to escape, sure they shoot you. But at least you’re there. It isn’t the most pleasant conditions, but at least you can survive within a prison camp.

(2, B, 455)
T: Did you feel then that you were safe, in a sense, once you got in there?

H: Oh, yes. Once I got into the prison camp I knew it was just a matter of survival. As the interrogator said, don’t do anything stupid to give those guards an excuse to shoot you. I knew it was just a matter of time. You knew you were going to go hungry. You put up with that the best that you can.

Speaking of hungry, I can remember one day they brought in the food. Everyone was so happy because there were beans in the soup. Boy, the guys lined up and the minute they started scooping out--the beans were with grain [and it] was loaded with weevils. Just tons of weevils. The guys were in it and the guys were looking at it. I looked at Isles, and I can remember that to this day. I said, “Isles, are you going to eat it?” He said, “Golly, Harold, I don’t want to, but damn it I’m hungry as heck.” “I am too.” He said, “Shit. A little protein.” He said, “It’s just a little protein. All we gotta do is to just forget what we’re eating. A damn weevil isn’t going to hurt you. It’s just a little protein. The damn thing’s been cooked.” And that was our little protein. We got our bowl of soup. And a number of guys did get soup. They were trying to separate out the weevils from the little grain of corn, or whatever it was. It got so difficult to separate it out, you were just eating. This occurred to us after we were on the march. Not within the compound.

We were on the march when this happened. They put us on a big chunk of land. A couple hundred, a couple hundred and so forth. A couple guards around you. They would bring in the truck or something with these great big kettles of this so-called soup. Everyone in that compound became sick with diarrhea from that day’s eating except Isles and Brown. We had cast iron stomachs. I have thought about that a thousand times. I said “Isles, do you remember? Everyone got sick except you and I. We had cast iron stomachs. How in the hell is that?” He said, “It beats the hell out of me, Harold. I have thought about that. Everyone got sick.” And I mean it was so funny, because all over the hillside you could see little dots of tissue paper. It was just loaded.

T: So diarrhea or dysentery.

H: Yes. Oh, yes. All over the hillside. That’s the way we left it when we started walking again. But I can recall that to this day. And not only did we have one bowl, we went back and got a second bowl. I don’t know. Just cast iron stomachs. We just survived it.

T: Now your camp, pretty soon after you got there, was evacuated. You mentioned 1 April 1945.

H: Yes. I’m certain I wasn’t there more than a week or so. A short period of time that I was there.

T: The march itself, the forced march, was the longest piece of your POW experience, wasn’t it?
H: Yes. It really... well, let me see. It took us almost, as I recall, it was close to two
weeks. I'm trying to think of what I had in my diary. Ten days to two weeks.
Something like that. On the forced march. Because we got to the camp and I am
certain I was in that camp probably twenty-some days. Because we were liberated
on the fourth or the fifth of March.

T: May.

H: I'm sorry. May. I know I was in that camp a good twenty-some days.

T: The actual prison camp.

H: Yes. This was at Moosburg.

T: This is after the march.

H: Yes. After the march.

T: Let's talk about the march then: how long did you actually march? Because you
didn't march, comparatively, all that far.

H: We would walk from daylight, and they would get you to wherever they were
going, before it was dark. Set you up. And by setting you up, it was just telling you
here. And you squat. And that's where you've got to sleep that night. And there is
where we would sleep. When we left the camp we all had a blanket. We just took
the blanket along with us. I can remember Isles giving me... Isles had two or three
changes of socks that he had scrounged around from someplace. So he gave me a
pair of wool socks. He said at least you can change your socks.

(2, B, 541)

T: Because you had just what you were wearing when you were shot down.

H: I had what I was wearing. Yes. Actually it was really quite nice being out on the
road walking. At least it gave you something to do. You were walking. You would
walk a while and you would stop for ten minutes. They had periodic times in which
you would halt. And you would sit. If there was nothing to sit on, you would sit on
the ground or whatever. Then all right. “Raus! Raus!” We'd get up and start
walking again.

T: You hadn't been a POW all that long, so physically were you still in pretty good
shape?

H: I lost a lot of weight. I could count my ribs by the end of that. It was just about
sixty days. I don't know how many pounds I had lost. But I was pretty thin. Red
Cross parcels. They were getting Red Cross parcels into those camps.
T: At Nuremberg and at Moosburg you saw parcels?

H: Yes. At all the places we were getting parcels. And some places they were trying to get in the food parcels once a week. Sometimes it was ten days you might go without a food parcel. If you were very, very careful and if you could pal up with someone and kind of share things, you could stretch those food parcels. Because there’s only so much that they’re going to get into this little packet. There’s probably enough food in there maybe for a couple of days or so. And you could wipe it out very easily. But you and your partner, instead of he opening up a tin and you opened up a tin, you opened up one tin and shared it.

T: That could supplement the little bit the Germans gave you.

H: Yes.

T: So you lost weight, but you weren’t starving, I guess we would say.

H: No. No. I was just hungry. I was almost perpetually hungry.

T: So enough food to keep you going but not enough to feel satisfied.

H: No.

T: When you were walking on this march from Nuremberg to Moosburg, almost directly south, did you pass through villages where you actually came into contact with local civilians?

H: Oh, yes. We passed those. One time it started raining and we went in this one little village and we went into a church. It was a good size church. We spent the night in the church. That day they went to a number of the municipal buildings. I can’t remember what town that was, but there was a good size church. There were several other good size buildings there and they were just laying on the floors. The neat thing about being out on the road is that we, when we went to a little farm, you could then trade cigarettes and stuff for food. I think I told you the instance about the little old woman.

T: Yes. And if you could tell us on tape now. You did have contact with an older German woman.

H: This was one place, one big farm that they put us on. I was normally the trader. I looked like a baby then. I would take cigarettes and go up to the farm door. The guard let you walk up to the farm door and knock on the door. This little old woman—she had to be in her eighties, came to the door and just sweet as she could be.
T: You spoke no German and she spoke no English.

H: Yes. All I knew was one thing, “Haben Sie Brot fur cigarettes?” “Haben Sie Brot?” “Haben Sie...” whatever food you were begging for.

T: Haben Sie... do you have. Right.

(2, B, 599)

H: Yes. And she came up to me, and the first thing, she looked at me so strangely. That’s when she touched me. Touched my face. Just as gently... and my hand. She was speaking and she was saying words in German. Speaking. I didn’t know what she was saying.

T: I think you mentioned yesterday when we talked about this, her demeanor or body language was very non-threatening though.

H: Oh, absolutely. No question about it. She was as friendly as you could be. I’m certain the questions that she was asking were things about me personally. Who are you? What are you? Where are you from? I’m probably the first person of color that she had seen in her life.

T: You probably were.

H: Yes. And she probably looked at me very curiously and said, “Is that a color or is that dirt? Will it wipe off?” As she touched my face she was probably saying these words. Just as friendly, just as sweet as she could be. After that went on for a while and I was asking for food, I would show the cigarettes, “Zigaretten,” she was saying “Nein, nein.” Then she told me to wait... by motion you know... and she walked off and it was clear from the motion: I’m going to get something. Don’t go. And she came back with a small little sack and she had a number of potatoes in it, a couple of onions, and a little small piece of pork in it. I was telling her, please, please. I didn’t know the German word for please. She “nein, nein, nein...” And that’s how we left.

T: What a positive interaction.

H: Yes. Absolutely.

T: You mentioned being a person of color. You made a number of stops. At what time, if any, did you feel that being a person of color was an advantage or a disadvantage to you?

H: I don’t know. That’s a good question. I don’t suppose I ever even thought of it in those terms. I know myself and George Isles used to joke and said, “Hey, we’re finally integrated, and we had to get shot down to become integrated.” Because they treated everyone the same.
T: The Germans did.

H: Put you right in the same damn compound without regard to who you were. You were a flyer, a pilot, and everyone in those compounds were air crewmen.

T: Integration the hard way.

H: Yes.

T: He had a good sense of humor. So you didn’t feel that the Germans treated you any differently one way or the other.

H: I couldn’t detect any difference in the treatment. We were all Allied forces. You had Englishmen and New Zealanders. The Englishmen spoke the way they spoke. The New Zealanders, some of them, had a different brogue. Their speech sounded a little different. Had Americans in there. You had any number of people in there with all these various accents and whatnot. I just could not detect any difference.

T: How about from the people you were imprisoned with? This could be other Americans or these other nationalities you mentioned. Did you detect that they ever treated you differently or ostracized you in any way?

H: Interestingly enough in our compound we didn’t have... we had some Americans, but we had a lot of Englishmen. We had a lot of New Zealanders. We even had a few Canadians in there. Americans were certainly not in the majority.

T: No kidding.

H: At least in our compound that was not the case. We became very, very friendly with a number of the guys in there. All in the same damn boat.

T: Yes.

H: All suffering the same way, day in and day out.

(2, B, 654)

T: Did guys talk... was how you were captured or how you were shot down, since you were all fliers, was that a topic of conversation? When you first got to meet someone, did you ask, so how did you get it, or was that something that nobody really cared about?

H: Well, no. When you first came in, the thing was where were you shot down at? What happened? What mission were you on? So I went through the whole routine. Much of what I told you. There was a group of guys standing around. They said,
you’re lucky as hell weren’t you? Man alive! I was just saying... He said you could have just as easily... I said yes. I could have been... Well, you were a lucky one. Those kind of comments. The first thing they did when a new guy came in, it was first, where were you shot down? Who were you bombing? What outfit were you in? Or else the guys would ask them, hey, is anybody, or a group of prisoners would come to the guy and shout, is anybody from the 56th Fighter Group? Anybody from the 88th Bomb Wing? Holler it out at the prisoners. As they brought them in the guys were shouting. Is anybody... Yes. I’m from the 88th. You are such and such. I’m from the...

T: Almost like a family network.

H: It was almost like a big reunion and you’re trying to find out what were you... a part of the same frat that I was in. Which outfit were you in?

T: No kidding.

H: That was always a big day. The prisoners coming in. Everybody goes to the fences of your own compound as you saw the prisoners being marched in. The guys were all hollering. What outfit were you with?

T: Now was that a way that you kind of formed friendships or made acquaintances in the camp, or were there other ways you gravitated towards people?

H: This was initially as they’re walking down the road. Some of the guys that you were hollering at didn’t even wind up in your compound. They would put them in another compound as they walked by.

T: How did you make...

H: But once the guy came into the compound, the guys were kind of standing around. Hey, what outfit were you in? What were you flying? Where did you get shot down at? You would get a small group. There was another group that probably wasn’t interested. You know. Out of the two hundred or so. But you’d get a small group of ten or twelve. In the case of Isles, I said, “Hey, Isles, you’re now a first lieutenant. The orders came out after you were shot down.” I said, “You were on the same orders that I was on. You were promoted the same time that I was promoted.” He said, “I am? Well, that’s nice.” So he said, “All I have to do now is to find some silver bars and get rid of these gold ones.”

T: There you go.

H: Small groups. I think after you’re around there for a while, like any strangers, if you’re around them a while, you slowly started conversations with them and Isles, having been there a few weeks longer than I was, he had already become associated with a small group. Then he was introducing me. “Hey, this is my classmate.” They
thought that was unique. He said, “We were in the same outfit, the 99th, flying together. And I was shot down two weeks before he was.” We were the only ones in there from the same outfit. Flew together. Trained together. Went overseas together.

T: He was on the march and at Moosburg with you then too?

H: We were in the same compound. We marched together. We were in Moosburg together. We were in the same compound at Moosburg. And we were together as a group, that same group, after the war was over. He and I were right there together. Now what happened at Moosburg, there were pilots at Moosburg. We now saw a number of the other guys, Tuskegee airmen.

T: So now there was a bunch of you there.

(2, B, 701)

H: There was a bunch of them there. Then there were even some there that I didn’t know were there. I didn’t find out until they came in and knocked the fences down. You were milling around seeing other people. I found a number of the guys that I knew. “I didn’t know you were in the camp here.”

T: Moosburg was a big place too, right?

H: Yes. They had twenty-five thousand prisoners there.

T: That place must have been bursting at the seams.

H: We came with ten thousand from Nuremberg and they already had fifteen there. There was twenty-five thousand prisoners right there. That’s a lot of prisoners.

T: That sounds like it was overcrowded.

H: Yes. It was. After they knocked the fence down it was so funny. It finally dawned on somebody that said, my god, what have we done? We knocked the fences down and there are twenty-five thousand POWs that are now milling around the countryside. So then they went around finding the guys and rounding them up and bringing them back to the prison camp and saying, hey, you guys gotta stay here. If you don’t stay here we’re going to put the fence back up. We don’t want you wandering around. We’re organizing this thing. We gotta get you out of this thing into France. They had set up processing stations.

T: Camp Lucky Strike was one of the big ones at Le Havre.

H: Yes. I was at Camp Lucky Strike. Yes.
T: That's where many other guys were.

H: A number of them were processed through Camp Lucky Strike.

T: They were. You encountered Germans a number of places and you mentioned a couple interrogation encounters. You also had them at the camp at Nuremberg, on the march and at Moosberg. I'm wondering if you could talk about how those Germans impressed you. What kind of people were they? These guards.

H: There are several kinds of Germans. You have the SS. Everyone was afraid of the SS. You had the Wehrmacht, the regular army. They acted like regular army. A little stricter. Then you had those guys who were part of the Air Force. I'll be damned if they weren't all the goof offs. The same way in the [US] Air Force. In the Air Force you have a very loose military structure. These guys were all skilled mechanics. They were communications people. Armament people. Great people at their job. But they weren't great soldiers. They never did a lot of marching and whatnot the way the regular army did. That just wasn't a part of it. They went to work. They'd go to the flight line. They'd do their job. They'd work on the airplanes half the night to keep them flying. The guns, the communications. They just lived a different life. The doggoned Air Force, the German Air Force, was the exact same way. So when it comes to strict military, the Air Force, and we had a lot of Air Force guards, as a matter of fact, most of the guards that were guarding the camps were Air Force, and they were loose. You could talk to them. You could BS with them.

T: So there was this threatening image of the German, but this was not the person you're describing.

H: No. Not at all. Not at all. Oh, a few of them. Yes. They were much more militaristic than the others, but so many of them were just goof offs. We almost used to laugh at it. Is this characteristic of all air forces? They get all these guys that are anything but military people.

T: Yes. Now that sounds like it was a non-threatening situation.

H: It was.

T: When you were marching, were there times that you came into contact with German civilians that you did feel a little bit uneasy or...

H: No. There was such large groups of us. We were ten thousand men in groups of two hundred and with a small gap in between. The first group is up there. The next group is as far as you can see behind you. And you would get a lot of curious people standing by on the streets as you came by. Look at all those prisoners. And the guards. Never an incident. Nothing. The only bad incident we ran into was when we got strafed and they killed twenty-one people.
T: You didn’t mention that yet. Can you talk about that?

(2, B, 749)

H: Yes. We’re kind of ranting and raving. I kind of think of things.

T: That’s okay.

H: But we were about half ways through the march and we were by a little marshalling yard and there was a lot of railroad traffic down in this yard. Up comes a flight of P-47s and we looked up, “Hey –47s!” “Yes. They’re probably going to hit that marshalling yard.” So the marshalling yard is just over there. And by the time we saw them peel off, and here they come in and that 47 ... we looked and everyone said, “Oh, no!” and everyone just started running. Of course they were stretched out both beyond the town and those that hadn’t even entered the little village yet. But those in the village just started running. You talk about panic. The guards dropped their rifles, dropped their packs. We dropped everything and we were just running. We didn’t know where we were running to. We were just running. And there was a small company, and Isles and I got in behind this big woodpile. A couple of German guards, a couple of them did that. There were about six, seven or eight of us all huddled together, including the two guards. They finally broke their path off. Later on we learned they were being briefed that if you see long strings of people, be very careful because they may be POWs because we know there’s a lot of movement going on. But this one, the first or second plane, they had fired and ricochets ... twenty-one of them were killed.

T: Twenty-one guys were killed.

H: Twenty-one guys were killed. And we thought, what a meatball rap. Those kinds of deals, we called them a meatball rap. But it happened. Now that one was as terrifying as that time that I was on the train and I was strafed. This was even more terrifying.

End of Tape 2. Tape 3, Side A begins at counter 000.

T: You said at least the train had been moving.

H: Yes. It was. Moving toward the tunnel. We knew precisely what was going on. This guy’s trying to get to the tunnel. I was hoping he could hurry it up. And that was a very short distance. There you just ran. You got out by the woodpile and boom and there you were. You’re still reasonably exposed. Only you weren’t moving towards a tunnel. I guess I was exposed just as much on that train. The only thing is that if they could just keep running for a couple of minutes and you would be safe.
T: The strafing attack, you said they broke it off. The way you describe it, there’s nothing you can do about it. You just have to...

H: Yes. Then after they broke it off, there was panic. The guys were saying, “Is anybody hit?” There’s all this wild panic. “Is anyone hurt?” This is going around. People are looking at each other. “I’m okay.” “I’m fine.” “Are you guys okay over there?” “Yes, we’re okay.” And somebody says, “Oh, oh. Somebody was hit!” “Down here!” Then you got word back. Six or seven guys down here were actually hit and they’re dead. Then someone said this group was hit. That slowly came filtering back. But it was a sheer panic among several hundred people. They were just hollering and checking who was hit, who wasn’t hit. Trying to find out just how much damage was done.

T: What do you do? What did they do with the wounded guys? There’s no medical battalion with you.

H: You know what? There were a number that were wounded. All they did was try to take care of the wounded as best they could there. They were in a village. They did immediately say, hey, is there any medical help here? I’m assuming they were fortunate to find someone within that village, that little small town that we were in. But it’s interesting. What they did is that they wasted very little time. Everyone who isn’t hurt, who was okay let’s start marching. They immediately marched us out of the place, right back on the road again.

T: Leaving behind those who were either killed or wounded.

(3, A, 52)

H: Yes. I had no idea how they were taken care of or what, but we assumed something like that happened to them. There were a number that were wounded. That was probably the worst. That was the worst thing that I...

T: And your own guys up there too. This march. It sounds like it would have been easy to escape or try to. Did it ever cross your mind to try to get away?

H: No. The camp was well organized and they used senior American officers to organize it. We knew we were going to go on the march, so they organized the march by compound. They had one guy who was in the compound, the senior officer. He was the senior man in charge of those two hundred men. Before the march ever occurred we took all of our food parcels, we took the chocolate and some other stuff and put it all together and they made a bowl of stuff that had a lot of nutrients in it. I can’t even remember what some of the stuff was. It all wrapped up. They chopped and stuff and they melted it down. Then add to that you know. It all hardened together. Then after they did it, they passed those out amongst the guys and said this will help on the march. Not only that, but they made it last longer because we didn’t know when we were going to get another food parcel.
T: Right.

H: But during the march we did get one food parcel. It was interesting because rumors would come along. When we get to the next town we’re going to be met by the Red Cross and they’re going to give out food parcels. We’d get to that town. Nothing. So that went on several days. Finally it came true. Hey, we’re going to get parcels and the parcels were there. Oh, great.

T: On the march you got a parcel too that you remember.

H: Yes. We got a parcel. Of course we had these little food balls, for lack of a better word, that we made up. So the thing was very well organized.

One of the things that they stressed, say look at, this war’s going to end soon. Don’t go crazy and try to escape. Because where are you going to escape to? Where are you going to run to? You could possibly get back, but don’t take the chance. And the senior officers they said no, no escape. It you’re thinking about it, forget it.

T: They really told you not to bother.

H: Oh, yes. They said no way. It’s too close to being over with. Don’t blow it now.

T: That does make sense.

H: Oh, yes. You had a guy there, a major, a lieutenant colonel, he’s still a colonel in the Air Force. Don’t do it. So you don’t do it.

T: He’s your superior officer after all.

H: Yes. So there was no effort. No one was trying to escape. Now whether or not out of that ten thousand someone actually did, I don’t know.

T: But the way you describe it, it wouldn’t have made sense.

H: Oh, yes. It made a lot of sense.

T: Dr. Brown, you said on the fourth of May it was that you were finally liberated by the Americans...

H: Yes. Fourth or fifth. I get those dates mixed up.

T: What was your initial reaction at the time when the Americans arrived?

H: Happiness. Great! We’re liberated. The war is over! Oh, you know. When you have twenty-five thousand guys that are hollering and screaming. The war is over with.
T: Had the German guards already departed or were they still there?

H: They left early that morning. As a matter of fact, we could hear the guns and the tanks rumbling. We first heard them way off in the distance and they kept getting closer and closer. We said, oh, man, they’re coming. Then that night we could hear tanks rumbling. Now the actual tank itself moving around. Early that morning the guards all pulled out. We could see a number of them leaving. They got in their little groups, the little formations, and the guys even waved at a number of them. We almost got friendly with them. I said, “See you. Hey, goodbye.” And they went marching off.

T: So it was almost...

H: Jubilation. Celebration. Big time.

T: What’s the first thing that happened for you when the Americans arrived?

H: Nothing. Really. We were liberated. The fence came down. Now what? We had a good meal because once we were liberated, here comes the kitchen. All those great big things of, was it C-rations that had all the big cans of stuff?

Lawrence Brown: B-rations. Those are B-rations.

H: Those Bs. Because I can remember this one that had ham and eggs or something. A great big can of it. Well, right after they left Patton said, well, the kitchen’s right behind us and you’re going to get a good meal. Those guys came in. They had those mobile kitchens set up. It’s amazing how fast they could set up those mobile kitchens and they were popping those cans open and guys were cooking. We had a good meal that evening.

T: So right away.

H: Yes. They liberated us that morning and that evening we had a good meal. I can’t even tell you what was in the meal. Now you would think I would have been so impressed I could tell you in detail precisely what it was. I have no idea. All I knew is that we had a good meal.

T: How long did you stay at the camp before you were moved out of it?

H: We stayed there about three or four days. Here you had all these prisoners. A lot of guys started leaving the camp. Walking around the countryside. There was still a war going on.
T: Really. It wasn’t over yet.

H: It wasn’t really over. The bad thing that happened was this. There were a number of incidents where guys were walking around and, of course, you get more and more military. You know the regular military was coming in. They brought in a number of MPs and things and now they’re all mixing in. They were still finding little spots of SS men. Unfortunately there isn’t any nice way to say it other than the fact that some of them were not taking prisoners. They just shot them. Officially none of that stuff happened. But I know for a fact that it did happen. I can recall that Isles and I were out just walking around an old dirt road...

T: Just the two of you?

H: Just happy to be free and there was a little platoon of soldiers. They came up and they looked at us and they said, “You must be some of those old raggedy POWs.” We were raggedy as hell. We hadn’t even gotten anything yet. They hadn’t cleaned us up yet. They said, “Another platoon up here has just caught four SS men.” He said, “Do you want to shoot them?”

T: Really? He asked you that point blank?

H: Absolutely. They said, “Do you want to shoot them? These are lousy sons of bitches. They aren’t worth a goddamn. We’ll shoot…” Oh, you know. “They probably would have shot you.” And they would have. Probably. I’ll tell you the one incident with the one SS guy that scared the hell out of me...

T: Yes. At the railway station. Yes.

(3, A, 180)

H: Yes. So we said no, no. They said well, you can if you want. No, no, no, no. So we left them and as we left they left. We heard some shots. I said, “Let’s just keep walking. I don’t even want to know what’s going on.” I don’t even want to know. So I don’t have to tell a lie.

T: You can put two and two together though.

H: I assumed that unless they were shooting at rabbits or something. But I doubt that.

T: That’s one of those things that is very much not in the accounts of World War II. We’ve heard in interviews time and time agai of Americans shooting captured Germans.

H: It happened I think more often than has ever been recorded.
T: I think so too.

H: When we came back it was never mentioned. It was never mentioned. I don’t know if I even told... I don’t know... I may have mentioned the story to you. It’s the same story I’m talking about now, about the SS guys. I never even mentioned that to anyone. When we came back we weren’t interrogated or... the war was about over. All they did was when we got back... we went to a little station before we got to Camp Lucky Strike. It was portable, mobile. We went in and they deloused us. Took our clothes. Same clothes we had all the time.

T: That’s right. And for you it was only two months.

H: Yes. They took all of our clothes. You undress. Threw all that crap in a pile. You went in. Had a hot shower. First hot shower that I’d had since I was shot down. Soaped up and I can remember being in the hot water and saying, “Damn this feels good!” A shower and they were going to give us some clean clothes. They did. What size are you? I was a 32. I’m a little thinner. Yes, this will fit you. And it fit. Reasonably well. I wasn’t quibbling. Gave us some clean clothes. Then we hung around a bit. Then we went into Camp Lucky Strike.

T: Did they fly you there? To Camp Lucky Strike?

H: They did. Yes. Took us to an airfield. They had umpteen transports out there. We flew into Lucky Strike. They had one landing strip there. Then they started the real processing. They gave you X amount of money and you signed for getting so much money. Then they even gave you additional clothes. They even gave us a big, what do you call the packs you carry--had the strap on it?

Lawrence Brown: Duffel bag?

H: Duffel bag.

Lawrence Brown: B-4 bag.

H: They didn’t have any doggoned B-4 bags. Navy guys got the... we didn’t have any B-4 bags. They gave us a duffel bag at that time. Later on we did get B-4 bags. That was just like a big old battle pack. Bag. Fold it up.

T: When you were at Camp Lucky Strike or even in those few days before you got there, was there any kind of debriefing that you went through with American officials?

H: They did, but it was so brief, so minor. Right now I can’t even tell you what... they got our name, rank, what outfit were you in. All that basic stuff. Basic information.

T: Didn’t make a real impression on you.
H: No. Although they might have asked a couple other questions. How were you treated? Did you sustain any injuries? Some of them did. Those guys got Purple Hearts. It was interesting. I got back to the States. Got out to Fort Snelling. The guy lined us up and said, “We’re going to give you all Purple Hearts.” Oh, shoot. I wasn’t wounded or anything. The few scratches I got getting out of the airplane and landing... I didn’t mind that. There were eight of them. He said, “Line up here. All you guys.” There was laughing and giggling. The guy comes down. Gives us a little Purple Heart and we had to sign a document. They said a copy of your orders will catch up with you. Right to this day here I’m sitting here with a Purple Heart. The thing never, never caught up with me.

T: No kidding.

H: I have no orders for it. No nothing. A couple of occasions... I actually set it aside. I didn’t make any big deal. I didn’t even try to get anything. But I did write back to Fort Snelling on one occasion and said, “Do you guys have archives there?” Because I processed through there when I came home. Told them what had happened and said, “There ought to be a record of that someplace.” They said yes. Someplace up here there’s a record. And I didn’t follow up with it. I just kind of forgot about it. On more than one occasion when I came up here I said, “I ought to go out to Fort Snelling and say, where are all your records at?”

T: It’s hidden somewhere.

(3, A, 251)

H: And wherever that someplace is, I ought to go through and look in those records and I would probably find a set of orders.

Lawrence Brown: I sent you the Purple Heart. At my folk’s house.

H: Yes. But I don’t have any orders awarded to me. It doesn’t mean anything.

Lawrence Brown: Remember I sent it to you five, ten years ago.

H: Yes.

Lawrence Brown: When I left my folk’s place.

H: I just... forgot about it.

T: When you were freed from the POW camp, was there any thought in your mind that you’d be headed to the Pacific?

H: What?
T: That you’d be going to the Pacific war, which was still on at that time in May.

H: I didn’t even give it a second thought. Then keep in mind that everything was segregated. They weren’t sending the whole unit. If they didn’t send the whole unit, then I wasn’t going.

T: That’s right.

H: Because I would never go as a replacement.

T: That’s right. It had to be with an all-black unit or you wouldn’t go at all.

H: Or else I wouldn’t go.

T: That’s right. Did they give you, at Camp Lucky Strike or when you got back to the States, any kind of psychological treatment? Did they ask you about what kind of psychological effects you might have had through your POW experience, anything like that?

H: No. It could have occurred as all part of the process, because they did have medical people look at you. They were looking at you more from a physical point of view. Okay, you lost a few pounds but physically--I can remember the guy, they weren’t flyers, but they were Army guys--you’re fine.

T: Kind of poking around and you look like you’re in one piece.

H: You’re okay. I said I feel fine. I’m just a little hungry. And now I’m no longer hungry. They said, yes, you’re okay. Next guy. It’s one of those things. But it wouldn’t surprise me if guys who have been down for, let’s say, guys that have been there a year, a year and a half, two years, they might have taken those guys and they might have said we want to look at you a little more closely. They may very well have done that.

T: Because your period of imprisonment was much...

H: Mine was just... I had the war made. It was more of an inconvenience than anything.

T: That’s an interesting way to put it.

(3, A, 281)

H: It was an inconvenience. That’s all that it was.

T: For the two months you were there.
T: You stayed in the service. This is the last couple questions I have. You stayed in the service, but you saw your family and friends. How much did you talk about your POW experience to people?

H: At that time I don’t remember talking about anything. It’s interesting. Last time I saw him he was in the hospital.

T: Your brother. Yes. In Italy. That’s right.

H: I came home only to learn that... the folks showed me a couple of telegrams. One telegram they got talking about him being hurt. Then within two weeks of that, or whatever it was, they get another telegram: “We’re sorry to inform you that your son Lt. Harold H. Brown is missing in action.” Period.

T: Your folks got two pretty nasty telegrams in a short time.

Lawrence Brown: Within a two week period.

H: Yes. Within a couple week period they got two of them. It’s interesting because on my records there was nothing about POWs. So I said, there ought to be a record someplace. So I wrote out to Kansas or East St. Louis. They have a big archive out there. So I wrote. Gave them name, rank, serial number. I said can you send me anything, because I don’t have anything to document it. When the last Tuskegee guy dies--they knew I was there--and when that last one dies, if I happen to still be living, I can’t even prove that I was a POW. Really. So they sent me a copy of... no. They sent me the original and a copy of the telegram that they sent to my ma. I got a copy of that thing right now and I made a few copies of it. It states it so simply. “We are sorry to inform you that your son Harold H. Brown is missing in action.” Period.

Lawrence Brown: That’s it.

H: That’s it. Don’t say go to hell. Don’t say, do this. Don’t say you’ll hear from us later. We’ll keep you... nothing. Period.

T: Did your folks ever get a telegram saying that you were a prisoner of war?

H: No.

T: Missing in action. That was it.

H: Missing in action.
T: Then did you contact your folks? Were you able to send them a telegram later that said I'm okay?

H: I sent them a telegram. I don’t know if they even got it.

Lawrence Brown: Because I was home at the time.

H: I can’t even remember if I was in France or after I got in Lucky Strike. Because there’s where it would have been. And it seemed to me that they had a deal set up, a way of informing people back home. Because I can remember a bunch of guys lined up sending telegrams.

T: Central facility...

H: Now that was at Camp Lucky Strike.

T: Repatriation.

H: Yes. Where we did it.

T: They might have done that. So there was some time that your folks didn't have any word about what happened to you.

H: Didn’t know if I was alive, dead or what.

Lawrence Brown: From either of us. I wasn't coming home a cripple, so I didn’t contact them. So they didn't know nothing. Finally I came home. We forced the doctor to let us come home. I remember so vividly. Brigham City, Utah. At an Army hospital there. This kid from West Virginia said, “You want to go home as badly as I do?” I said, yes, I think I want to go home now. So about four of us got together and he a guitar and we learned a song. I can’t sing it but I... he said we’re going to go up and we’re going to sing this song to Captain Booth and he’s going to let us go home.

So we went up there and he wouldn’t see us. We went to his office. We got outside and we told his girl to open the door and we got out there and the four of us, the guy was playing the guitar and we said we want to go home, but it ain’t no use. Old Captain Booth won’t turn us loose. We got those (*** ) blues. It had a couple more things in there. The guy came out and said, “You dummies want to go home that badly? Let them go home.”

T: That’s how you got out.

Lawrence Brown: That’s how I got home for the first time. Then when I was home they got the letter about you're being safe.

T: When you got back to the States were you also in hospitals here, or did they pretty much just release you right away?
H: No. I left Le Havre, France, on 12 June. It took us eight days to cross the ocean. We landed in Newport down around Camp Patrick Henry. There was a big base down there. Newport or something like that.

Lawrence Brown: Newport News?

H: Yes. Virginia. We came in there on the twentieth. They processed us immediately and I was on a train within twelve, twenty-four hours after getting off that ship. They processed me, gave me a ticket, money. I got a few more clothes and I was on my way. I got into Fort Snelling on 22 June.

T: That's really fast.

(3, A, 344)

H: Yes. Oh, yes. They processed you and got you out. I was up here on 22 June and I can remember... I came in, eight of us. We all went to Fort Snelling and we traveled together. Train. Here. We got to Chicago. I can remember I was on that doggoned Hiawatha out of Chicago. They had two trains. One was the Northwestern Four Hundred. It took four hundred minutes.

T: From Chicago to the Twin Cities?

H: Yes. From Chicago to Minneapolis. Took that train four hundred minutes. Then the other train station was the Milwaukee Depot which is now torn down, over on Washington Avenue.

Lawrence Brown: It's not torn down. They've refurbished it though. It's not a railway station anymore. It's a hotel now.

H: That was the Hiawatha. Going to have this streamlined train there. The Hiawatha. It was a sharp train. It also went. So I came in on the Hiawatha. But it was interesting. I came in on that train. I'm trying to figure out how in the hell... they took me out to Fort Snelling. I was in Minneapolis and I don't know how I got out there. But I wound up out at Fort Snelling. But either a truck or something met us at the train. They took us into Fort Snelling. They said we have no more than an hour or so of processing, then we'll let you go. We went into Fort Snelling and we did a few things and they gave us the Purple Heart and a bunch of stuff. Then they said, okay, you're now on your own. I called and I got a cab. I took a cab from Fort Snelling to the north side of Minneapolis. That was it.

T: So you got to see your folks pretty soon after you got here.

H: Yes.
T: How much did your folks want to know about the POW experience?

H: They never asked and I never told them.

T: Did they not ask because they didn’t care or did they not ask for some other reason?

H: Oh, no. Why didn’t they raise those kinds of questions? I just don’t know.

Lawrence Brown: They never asked me anything about what happened to me.

H: They never asked what happened to me. You were home and they were so happy that you were home. They didn’t even raise the question. I don’t know if they didn’t raise it because perhaps he doesn’t want to talk about it, and if he wants to tell us about it, then he’ll tell us when he feels like telling us about it. We aren’t going to intrude. I suppose if I was going to give an answer, that would probably be the best answer. Our parents really didn’t intrude into our personal lives.

Lawrence Brown: No.

H: No part of it. Even when I became a pilot. Dad never sat down and said, hey, Harold, how is flying?

T: So them not asking wasn’t out of character.

Lawrence Brown: Oh no, no.

H: Oh, no. No. For them to have asked me would have been out of character.

T: I see.

H: Completely out of character to probe.

T: And did you feel a desire or an interest to share with them what had happened to you?

H: No.

Lawrence Brown: We weren’t a very vocal family. Our dad was the quietest guy in the world. We never got spanked.

T: Did you have friends in the area or other people that you did talk about this with or who did want to know?

H: Not really.
Lawrence Brown: We didn't even talk to each other about it.

H: As a matter of fact, it was years and years before we even talked about it here in just lowly little bits and pieces. They still haven't heard the full story. But little bits and pieces have come out. Sitting here and yakking. I'll tell them a story or something. A little--

**End of Side A. Tape 3, Side B begins at counter 386.**

T: It was something that you gradually felt more comfortable talking about over the years.

H: It isn't that it caused me any pain or discomfort at all. I just didn't do it. I just saw no reason to do it.

T: Now you stayed in the service. You're a career military man. Was being a POW something that was a stigma that you had, or something that people were curious about, or just of no value at all?

H: Guys in the military raised a few questions. They shot you to hell? I've been over there. So we'd BS.

T: That's kind of a superficial conversation. On the surface.

H: That was primarily military people. I shared a number of things with my brother. I shared a few things maybe with a few people. Not all of the details, but bits and pieces. Later on, even with the kids. Occasionally I say a few things.

T: Were they curious to know?

H: Well, yes. You know, to some extent. Jackson--he's the oldest guy. He'll come up once in a while. Hey, did you do such and such. He'd ask a question about it. You were in the war, weren't you? Yes. What did you do? Those kinds of nice, simple basic questions.

T: And you could answer those as you saw fit.

H: Yes.

**(3, B, 422)**

T: Not real specific things.

H: No. Sometimes if the parents were around, I might expand on a story. Then... I didn't know that, Harold. Did you such and such? You haven't said that before. Oh, well, there's a whole lot of things I haven't said before. Or else, Tom... Hey what
happened such and such. Now Tom's a little more curious. He's the lawyer and he would be.

T: So people would push you occasionally.

H: Yes. And Kevin, the doctor. He might.

T: Do you still feel--now it's been fifty Some, almost sixty years ago.

H: I've already forgotten most of it (laughs).

T: Are there still parts of it that you feel are memories that you don't let out?

H: That early part is almost dreamlike. As if it isn't very real.

T: That's a good way you described that.

H: So I don't talk about that much. I talked a little bit about it there at the presentation.

T: At the Osmun Library.

H: You know, the other day. I talked a little bit about it. Not that it bothers me. It's just that the thing is just so crazy people might have a hard time believing it. Might say it's one thing to tell a story but you don't have to embellish it that much, do you? That's the way it may very well look like.

Lawrence Brown: I think I can add a bit to it. Being in the Army hospital you didn't talk to anyone about an injury.

T: Even if it was somebody else in a hospital bed there.

Lawrence Brown: Right. You never questioned a guy about injuries. For instance, we came back--I flew back from overseas. 1945. I flew back. They flew the wounded guys back. We supposedly landed in Miami at McDill [Air Force Base]. The pilot had a girlfriend up in Bangor, Maine, so we went that way. Went to the Azores and went to Maine. Now we gonna fly back to Grand Island, Nebraska, where they were kind of dispersing... segregate you according to your injuries. We got to Grand Island, Nebraska, and they finally got these guys separated. They got the amputees and the guys with the head injuries and the guys with the paralysis and all this stuff, and I got in with the guys with the paralysis and eye injuries and stuff. A big old nurse came around and she said, "Can you get up?" And I said, "No, I can't get up but if you help me I can get up." I said, "What are you talking about?" She said, "I want somebody to help me feed these guys." So fine. So she helped me up and I went over and I fed a kid. He had a big bandage around his head. Never asked anything.
T: You didn’t? Why didn’t you ask?

Lawrence Brown: Because you don’t ask.

T: How do you explain that?

Lawrence Brown: I think one of the things is that the guys that most of us considered heroes were dead. They were still back there and those were the guys that gave up the big sacrifice. This guy I was helping, I was telling him what to do and helping him feed himself and we got to the cake. We were kidding him. Humor is a big thing in the service. He was saying this is angel food cake. I said, nobody would feed you angel food cake. This is devil’s food cake. We laughed about it. So now get all through and he goes--they put him somewhere. The nurse puts me back in the bed and I said, what’s wrong with the kid? She said he caught a grenade blast and he’s blind. Boy, you talk about a guy not bitching about anything after that. Now you realize that whatever’s wrong with you is nothing compared to what this kid...

T: I see.

Lawrence Brown: So I guess that kind of explains it. That explained it to me. I can’t explain what he does, but I don’t know of a guy that was in the hospital with me that talked about his injuries.

T: And so from your perspective, you wouldn’t necessarily want to... you don’t talk about the POW...

H: And probably not for the same reason. Reasons that he described. You only get [to be] a POW for one reason, you’re either shot down or something. Because you were over there doing something and something happened and you were... the reasons why you were a POW--there was only one of a few reasons. The airplane stopped flying so you couldn’t get home. And it stopped flying for some reason. The engines quit, someone shot them up. You bail out or what have you. So you already know that one of those things put the guy there. So he’s winding up a POW and to that extent everyone was the same.

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T: You know the story before you ask it.

H: The exact same unique experience and you knew precisely how he got there, why he was there. There was nothing new that he could say.

T: That’s almost banal, but you’re right.
H: Yes.

T: The only differences would be when and where.

H: Yes. Now his case, going to a hospital, you can have ten thousand different answers. I don’t know. I assume they segregated them because maybe they were treating these kinds of cases in one hospital, people with other injuries went to another place in the country. They have the specialists for this, so they sent them out of the country. Then they had all their own special injuries. But I don’t know. I would think that if I ran into a guy I wouldn’t dream of asking him: what happened to you? It would just be too personal. And unless he volunteered, I didn’t run into it, so I can’t ever imagine myself asking, hey, what happened to you fella?

Lawrence Brown: No. No, no. I would never ask that.

T: At the same time, as years have gone by, you do make presentations now where you do volunteer information and share your own experiences.

H: Now if he wants to volunteer and say some things fine, but I’m not going to ask. Now if someone asks, hey, Harold, do you want to speak to one of us, sure. Yes. I’ll share a lot of things.

T: If someone asks you.

H: Yes. If someone asks a question. Just like this. I wouldn’t be talking to you if you weren’t asking questions.

T: That’s the last question I had today, Dr. Brown. So on the record, I’ll thank you again for your time today and for your hospitality as well today.

Lawrence Brown: I want to thank you for doing what you’re doing. I’m kind of envious because the story should have been told long, long, long time ago. For some reason, maybe because we are the way we are, the story hasn’t been told.

T: End of interview with Dr. Harold Brown.

END OF INTERVIEW