Lloyd W. Dull was born on 20 February 1922 on a farm in East Lampeter Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. One of eleven children, he attended one-room schools through the eighth grade, then quit school to work on the family farm. During 1942-43 Lloyd had a farm deferment, but when his parents sold the farm in mid-1943 the deferment ended and in December he was drafted into the Army.

After Basic Training as a rifleman, Lloyd was assigned to the 134th Regiment, 35th Infantry Division. This unit arrived in Normandy in June 1944; Lloyd landed some days after the D-Day invasion. Lloyd suffered a shrapnel wound to his arm in July, and spent until September recovering; he returned to his unit in October and was in action until being captured in early December during an attempted river crossing near the Belgian-German border.

As a POW, Lloyd was briefly at Stalag XII-A, Limburg, having been marched from the point of capture, but the majority of his POW experience was at Stalag IV-B, near Mühlberg. Here, malnutrition and overcrowding were the main problems from Lloyd’s perspective. Stalag IV-B was liberated by advancing Red Army units in late April 1945, but the American and British prisoners remained in the Soviet zone until the end of May before being returned to American control. After some weeks at Camp Lucky Strike in Le Havre, France, Lloyd was rotated back to the United States and, in December 1945, discharged.

Again a civilian, Lloyd used GI Bill benefits to attend Lancaster Business College and, later, a hairdressing school. He owned and operated a hairdressing business in Lancaster until retiring in 1986.

Lloyd and his wife Mary (married 1950) remained in Lancaster, where this interview was conducted in July 2003.
Interview Key:
T = Thomas Saylor
L = Lloyd Dull
[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 the first day of August 2003, and this is an interview with Mr. Lloyd W. Dull here at his house in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. First, Mr. Dull, on the record, thanks very much for taking time today to speak with me.

L: You're welcome.

T: In our conversation so far, here’s what I’ve learned. You were born on 20 February 1922, on a farm I think you said, in Lampeter in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

L: Yes.

T: You were one of eleven children. You had five brothers and five sisters. You attended one-room schools, a number of one-room schools, in Lancaster County. When you finished attending school and before you got into the service, what did you do with yourself? Were you working before you went in the service?

L: Oh, yes. Yes. Of course, we lived off the farm and then, as I said, I was inducted in October and I didn’t go until December, so there was a period in there that... My brother-in-law worked for (***) Supply store here in Lancaster. He worked in the tire department for the retread tires and vulcanize tires, and during that time that was a great business because you couldn’t get any new tires or anything like that unless you had stamps for it. So he said, why don’t you come in and help me? So I went in and I worked there until I was finally called. I ran the vulcanizer there in the factory. Mr. A. (***) came in the one day and he said, “You know, you’re so good at this,” he said. “We need this.” He said, “During the war effort I think I’ll have to get you a deferment.” I said no way.

T: So he offered you a deferment?

L: I already had two automatic deferments from the farm. I had gone to the Draft Board and told them that my father was no longer on the farm anymore and I would be unemployed.
T: So your folks were on the farm for a number of years after you were in school, and the deferments, were those automatic deferments or was that something that your father applied for, for the farm?

L: You had to apply for them, but it was called automatic then. Of course, the second deferment was kind of automatic. I think they were six months. I had two six month deferments before I wanted to go to the service.

T: How did you feel about the deferments? At that time you were nineteen years of age. We were at war. Nineteen, twenty years old. How did you feel about being deferred for farm work?

L: I realized it was essential but I still...you know you’re young then, and my friends going. I had two brothers in and later on, another one. So I felt that I really wanted to go.

T: Did you feel there was, from people your own age, a sense of pressure that this is what my friends are doing, what I should be doing, or did you feel attracted to this in some other way?

L: I guess I felt that this is what I should do. And I was really attracted to the service. I never traveled outside of Pennsylvania. I don’t think I ever rode on a train. I very seldom ate in a restaurant. Yes. It was something that I thought I wanted to do.

T: It certainly represented a very different existence than being on a farm in eastern Pennsylvania. Going new places and experiencing new things.

L: Yes. And of course, I was with guys that had college educations. They made no difference. You were there to take Basic Training. And sometimes I would be very quiet. I would listen. I listened a lot because I didn’t want to be labeled as a dumb farmer. I learned a lot from just watching, listening.

T: When you were working for the tire vulcanizing, was that in the city of Lancaster here too?

(1, A, 89)

L: Yes.

T: When again you had this, it sounds like, an opportunity for a deferment, did that, was that intriguing, or at that point had you sort of made of your mind to allow yourself to be drafted?

L: I had made up my mind. I think I had thought it over a long time and I just felt that this was something that I should do.
T: You were inducted December ’43 and you served in Europe with the 35th Infantry Division 134th Regiment. You were a prisoner of war, which we’ll get to in a moment. You were discharged December of 1945 and returned to Lancaster County. You mentioned you used GI Bill benefits to attend Lancaster Business College at that time. You later attended a hairdressing school, also in Lancaster here?

L: Yes. Hollywood School of Beauty Culture. There I got my operator’s license and I went for teachers. I hold a Teachers License of Cosmetology in Pennsylvania. I also went to New York to advanced hairdressing school (***) Studio of Hair Design.

T: So you had a number of different steps in your own training before you opened your own business here.

L: Yes.

T: And you owned a hairdressing business here in the city of Lancaster for, gosh, about forty years was it?

L: I got my license in 1948.

T: And you retired in, was it 1986?

L: And I was sixty-four when I retired.

T: That would be 1986.

L: Yes.

T: So close to forty years you owned your own business here and you were, again completing this, you were married in 1950 and your wife’s name is Mary.

L: (nods yes)

T: Let me go back to your time as an infantryman with the 134th Regiment 35th Infantry Division. You first arrived in France pretty soon after the D Day Invasion in June of 1944. You were wounded sometime in July and then spent a number of months in hospital in England before you were returned to the same regiment, same division. I guess same country, but a little different location in France.

L: It was 192nd General Hospital in England. Sarenchester was the name of the little town. That’s where I met my brother.

T: In the hospital?
L: I knew he was stationed in England in the Air Corps. He was over there a year or two. He was drafted. One of the first ones to be drafted. He was just in that age. He wasn’t in defense work or anything, and so he was taken and I knew he was in England. But you only had APO numbers and you could not tell where you were. But I wrote to him and I could tell him I was in England in hospital. That’s all. I wrote to him and I said, “George, I’m in England in the hospital. I’ve been wounded,” and if he’d could at all find out where I am, please do. So he went to intelligence and of course, he told them what was what and they said, “Soldier, you know we cannot tell you that information. We cannot give you that information.”

But this young lieutenant, he said, kept talking to him and kept talking to him. He mentioned an English town just in a manner of conversation, and after a bit he mentioned another English town in a manner of conversation. Then my brother picked it up. He thought, “He’s trying to tell me something.” So my brother picked Sarenchester first and that’s where I was.

T: So he put two and two together.

L: Yes. And he came there to the hospital. Of course, I was in a tent, a tent hospital. Of course, he went up to the Charge of Quarters and asked if I was a patient there and they said yes. The Charge of Quarters brought him down. Of course, it was night and it was blackout. No lights. We had no lights. Someone looked in the tent and mentioned my name. “Private Dull in there?” I said yes. He said, “Here’s your brother.”

(1, A, 159)

T: So you were completely out of the blue...out of the black, in this case. Here he comes.

L: Yes. And there he was in his Air Force uniform. He came in and of course, he sat down. They were Red Cross cots. No mattresses or anything. So he sat down on the empty cot next to me. Of course, I hadn’t seen him for, I guess, two years. He hadn’t seen me. We had a lot to talk about to get caught up. He was in Washington, the State of Washington. He was stationed out there and he had married a girl there before he left for overseas. So we had a lot to...

T: Two years of living.

L: Yes. He asked me how it was over there. I’m the younger brother to him. He’s six years older. I kind of cried to him, I guess. He said, “They can’t send you back. They’ll never send you back. They can’t send you back.” And I often thought about that when I was back there.

T: Because they did. They could, and they did.

L: Yes.
T: Did he come back pretty soon after this or was he over there a bit longer?

L: He was over...let me see...he was over longer than I was because he had to stay.

T: As a POW you got preference to come back.

L: Yes. Yes. Right.

T: You were in action in France then, after returning from England, until December of 1944 when during the German Ardennes Offensive you were captured and spent pretty much the remainder of the war as a prisoner of war. Let me start. The first basic theme is: I want to have you describe the circumstances at the time when you were captured. How was it the Germans actually captured you?

L: We knew that they were over there. We were on, I think it was called the Bleis River, a narrow river but very deep and swift. We were over on the bank and Axis Sally [English speaking German radio propaganda voice], all that day she was interfering with our radio. Telling us to come over to Germany, beautiful, beautiful Germany, if our artillery doesn’t get you before you get here.

T: So you could hear these radio broadcasts or you were aware of these?

L: Oh, yes. She would play “White Christmas” and “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” and all those songs, because it was close to Christmas. Make us feel real sad. So finally the engineers got this rope across and we went over on these boats. I was either the first or second to make it. The rest didn’t make it. They shot down the river with machine guns and that was the end of some of them. So we hung on the bank until dark, keeping under cover.

T: How many of you all together are we talking about?

L: There may have been ten, twelve. There may have been six in each boat. The boats weren’t very big. We crawled to this house which was bombed down on the top. We got into the basement and set up the Browning automatic and we were in there until dark. After a bit, the Germans came and they threw in a phosphorus grenade, down on us, and said come out, come out! They asked to see the highest ranking officer.

And it happened our captain was with us. He was in one of the first boats. Captain Griffith was his name. They wanted to talk to the highest ranking officer. Captain Griffith went out and talked to the German highest ranking officer. He came down and he said, “We’re going to surrender. They told us it’s certain death holding up here in this basement.”

T: Had anyone been wounded by this phosphorus grenade?

Oral History Project: World War II Years, 1941-1946 - Lloyd Dull
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L: No. It just happened that we were all back from the opening where they threw it in, so it didn’t...[just] scared us. And it seems to me...no. I might be wrong. It seems to me they were wounded. It was a couple that was wounded. But the Germans left them there. They didn’t want to bother with the wounded. They left them there for our forces to pick up later and so they took the rest of us out.

(1, A, 223)

T: What was going through your mind at that time when you saw these Germans face to face?

L: It just...when they took our guns, rifles, they took our helmets and they took everything. You just feel utterly stripped. Of course, that rifle, which was either hanging on your shoulder or you carried all that time, was your constant companion; and you slept with your helmet on in the foxholes... They also took our overshoes. Anything they could use. Gloves. I had a pair of gloves and they took all those things. It's a terrible feeling. Those first days are just devastating. You don't know what they're going to do with you. As long as the front line troops have you and you're not registered, you know, they can do most anything with you. So you are...

T: Is that a real fear, that until you got into a camp that you really had to worry about what was going to happen?

L: Yes. Very much so. We found out that the young kids—they had some up there were thirteen, fourteen years old, they were very, very nasty. The older men, after we got back in the camps, they were more lenient with you. I think they were tired like the rest of us and wanted the war to be over. And of course, the SS troopers were...really...you know.

T: Did you come into contact with some of the SS troopers?

L: Only one time, and that's when we got off of the boxcar and there was snow on the ground and we were so thirsty and we would be grabbing snow to eat and they would be hitting us and tramping on our hands and things like that so we wouldn’t get the snow.

T: The initial point of capture, those first few days, you didn’t run into any of the SS.

L: No. It was usually the troops. On the front lines and then rear echelon.

T: Was there any initial questioning or interrogation of you or the men around you when you were first captured?

L: Really, not until we got back. Then I was interrogated by this German officer. He let me keep my Testament, and my picture, and my address book.
T: Was this before you arrived at Camp 12A at Limburg?

L: Yes. I think it was. Yes. I think...because I was in several small...which I don’t know the names of...

T: Holding facilities?

L: Warehouses and any place that they could use. Public buildings. That they could use. They just took over.

T: How many men...you had this initial group that you were captured with. Did you join a larger group of POWs then?

L: Yes. As you went back. Yes. You gathered more. Then they would march us. I forget how many. It was quite a while before we really got to a permanent camp. They would march us up and down the streets in these small towns, and of course, the civilians shooting at us and punching us with sticks and throwing stones. That again was very degrading. When I think of it now I still grit my teeth. You had to...

T: So the civilians as you marched through these small towns, the civilians were on the sidewalk or out right next to you.

L: Yes. Yes. They did this to boost the morale of the civilians. But there again, I have friends who were in the Air Corps and their planes were shot down and they parachuted out and they were captured. They were, I think, treated worse than we were. They were labeled as baby killers and... See we fought...combat with front line troops. We didn't kill women and children like the bombs did. So I think we were treated with somewhat more respect than what the Air Corps—I always called them flyboys.

(1, A, 278)

T: That matches what we've heard from other airmen too, who really feared for their lives once they were shot down. The first permanent camp that you were in was 12-A, which was Limburg.

L: Yes.

T: It’s in western Germany. How long was it, if you can estimate, between when you were first captured and you arrived at Limburg? How many days would you estimate that was?

L: I would say it was a week or two. Really. Because I was captured the eighteenth, around the eighteenth. Maybe before. I’m not sure. And I was there Christmas Eve, in Stalag 12A.
T: So there’s at least a week or close to a week. You were in Limburg by the time of Christmas Eve 1944.

L: It seems to me I may have been captured 14 or 15 December, as I think back now, because the Bulge had not started, and when we went back, I remember seeing all these big Tiger tanks. So I think the Bulge started the sixteenth.

T: It did.

L: So it must have been closer to the beginning of December when I was captured.

T: So you, in a sense, you were part of this little give and take that was going on before the actual German offensive started.

L: Right.

T: You describe seeing the tanks that they used for this offensive as you moved back.

L: Because we thought oh, they say the Germans don’t have anything and here, look at all this. But that there was their last stand. That was it. They put everything in that they had and then, of course, they had planned to get our gas, and they didn’t make it. If they would have made it there, I’m afraid they may have pushed us back to the sea again.

T: Yes. They didn’t make it. Thank goodness. Let’s talk about Limburg. You were there by the time of Christmas. How were you transported to Limburg? You’ve mentioned some marching here. Was there a train or truck transportation?

L: We were marched there.

T: All the way to Limburg?

L: Yes.

T: When you got there, what do you remember about the conditions of the camp, specifically the barracks that you were housed in?

L: You saw that picture there, the stable. It was just deplorable. Then of course, after the bombing on the twenty-third, then it was worse yet, because the windows fell out. As you can see in the picture, the window’s open and there’s no glass in it.

T: Limburg was bombed. That’s right.

L: Yes. They got a direct hit on the officers’ barracks. Of course, Captain Griffith...see, they kept all the enlisted men and all the officers separate from the
other men. So he was killed in that bombing because all of them were killed but one.
I had thought when I read that article, the first article, I said that they were all killed,
but I got many letters from guys that were in 12A at that time and one man said, “Do
you know one of those officers survived?” He said, “He’s living today.” I doubt
whether he is now, but he was. He said he went outside to relieve himself when the
bomb hit and he said he was injured very badly but he did survive. So he said your
article is true up until then. He said one survived.

T: So the bombs dropped by American or British planes actually...

L: They were dropped by the RAF. The Royal Air Force. See the Royal Air Force
bombed during the night. Americans in the daytime. Now, it’s more dangerous to
bomb in the daytime than it is at night.

(1, A, 322)

T: Sure. So this bomb hit at night. Hit the officers’ quarters. Didn’t hit the quarters
where you were staying.

L: Didn’t hit our quarters. But it did hit some of the camp. In fact, we had to go on
detail...the one was a dud. I forget how far down in the ground. I was on that detail
to dig and boy, I thought oh, my gosh. What if my shovels hits and it goes off. But
we dug so far, and then made a ledge and we saw it but...the day I was on it we
didn’t get it out yet.

The next day I wasn’t picked on that detail, so I don’t know when they got it
out. First we had to clean up the bodies of the officers. I wrote a play which is in,
Leslie Goodwin says accepted in Hollywood. It’s in what they call the producer’s
showcase out there. Maybe sometime when they want something about World War
II POWs. It’s entitled, “Missing.” They might pick it and put it on. It’s a ninety
minute TV play. There I tell...some of it is true. Some of it I made up myself, because
my buddy found this telegram in this officer’s jacket pocket telling him about his
baby daughter.

T: That must have been....what was that work like to, really, to have to take care of
these bodies?

L: They really were pieces. They were all blown apart. That was devastating too.
My buddy said, “I’m going to keep this telegram.” He said, “If the Germans find it,
they’ll take it from me.” So he took and took his inner sole out and put it in his shoe.
And he said, “When I get back to the States, I’m going to look up this girl and tell her
that her husband did know that they had the baby.”

T: That’s a tough personal thing.

L: So from then on it’s fictitious, but I wrote what I thought happened when he came
back and met this woman. We dug a trench up in the hill and just laid the
bodies...pieces in there. Then covered them over with pine boughs. Perhaps those bodies are taken up. I don’t know whether they’ve ever been taken up or not.

T: You didn’t stay in Limburg all that long yourself, is that right?

L: I have no idea how long I stayed there. That’s when we took the four day and four night boxcar ride to 4B.

T: Can you identify, were you at Limburg for New Year’s 1945, or had you moved out already?

L: I was probably in Limburg at New Year’s. There was no calendar. They took our watches. When I got the Purple Heart in England my watch—it was a strap band. I still have it. It still runs. It tore and I just carried it in my pocket. I thought, “I’m going to send this home in my Purple Heart box to my mother because...” You couldn’t see it at night. You didn’t care what time it was during the day. You ate when you were hungry if you had anything to eat and so I sent it home. Otherwise I wouldn’t have it.

T: So you still have it for that reason.

L: Yes. Sometimes they would let you keep your wedding band. Of course, I wasn’t married and I didn’t have any rings. But some of the guys, a ring like that, they would take. But sometimes they would let you have the wedding band.

T: And other guys I know, I’ve heard accounts, they lost all jewelry and all rings and watches and things like this.

L: If they didn’t take it...my buddy traded his ruby ring on three loaves of bread.

T: So it had food value.

L: And I have a friend whose grandfather gave him a fountain pen. You know, at that time you didn’t have the ballpoints. It was fountain pens. A nice, expensive fountain pen when he went, and he traded for, I don’t know how many loaves of bread. That worried him for years. At our support group up a Lebanon, that was one of the things that he told to the psychiatrist that he sees, and she wanted him to bring this up in front of the group to see what we would say. So we all said your grandfather, if he had known that, would have given you ten fountain pens.

(1, A, 376)

T: So he could buy more bread. So this has bothered him ever since, that he parted with the pen.
L: Yes. Just small things like that. Then of course, I have another friend. He has passed away since. He lived in Wilksbury and he was in 12A, and I said, “Steve,”...as I said, I think I told you, I always ask people...“What stands out about that camp to you?” Usually it’s all different because your space was so small. I said to Steve, “What stands out about 12A?” He said, “It was my birthday and my mother sent me a cake.” But he said, “The guards came down and they said I was to come up to this building.”

So I went in and he said, “There was this cake on the table and these officers, German officers, sitting around.” And he said, “You know what they did?” They cut the cake and ate the cake right in front of him and never gave him a piece. See the Germans, they could get you mentally. They knew how to really get at you mentally. I think the Japanese were more physical.

T: The stories of treatment are very different.

L: Yes.

End of Tape 1, Side A. Side B begins at counter 388.

T: Let me ask you about the train journey that took you to 4B at Muhlberg, because you mentioned earlier that was trip of some four days and four nights.

L: Yes.

T: Can you describe the conditions inside the boxcar?

L: It was deplorable, and we weren’t out that whole time. We had a five gallon bucket there. There was a piece of wood on the top to keep it from sloshing too much, but it... Of course, the tracks would be bombed out and that’s why it took us so long. On the map there you can see it’s not all that far, but it still took four days and four nights. They would bomb the tracks out in front of us and then we would have to wait until they fixed the tracks. I’m trying to think what city it was...Frankfurt. They worked on the tracks outside of Frankfurt, and these Polish slave labor girls were working on the tracks. We had a German guy whose parents were still living in Germany.

T: In your boxcar?

L: Yes. Bertich his name was. And of course he could speak, and he spoke to these Polish girls. We had one window with barbed wire on it. It wasn’t big enough to crawl out, but it was big enough to get something through. So he talked to them and he said we were so thirsty. Can you bring us water? They went and got a bucket of water and a dipper and they were lifting it up, and just as they got up to the window the guard shot at them and they ran down the tracks. Of course, the water fell down. You can imagine. You’re so thirsty and to see this water disappearing.
T: Was thirst the biggest problem on the train?

L: Yes. Oh, yes. It was wintertime and I think that’s the only thing that saved us because I think that’s just about the limit. The knobs on the boxcar would frost and this one little Italian guy... It’s funny now, but it was kind of pathetic at that time. He kept saying, “I am so thirsty. I am so thirsty. I swear I’m going to go up there and lick those knobs.”

T: Get the frost off there.

L: Yes.

T: So really, you’re describing a maddening sense of thirst.

L: Yes. Then we had no food for days. Finally they brought some—now, this was after we were out of the car. I think we were in some kind of a shed or something...barn. They did bring—talk about mental torment—this is another thing. They threw a couple loaves of bread at us. Of course, the guys being hungry, they grabbed and clawed and... One of the guys said, “Hey, listen! Stop it! Stop it!” He said, “We’re not animals yet. Let’s do this in an orderly fashion. Don’t act like animals.”

(1, B, 449)

T: Was that successful or did that sort of stop the sense of frenzy that you described?

L: Yes. Yes. It did. I think he...with such authority...he...I think sometimes you...all reason is gone and you just...

T: In a stressful situation like that, were some people less able to handle the stress than others?

L: Yes. Some died. Some died not because they had a disease or were sick. It was just they had no will to live anymore. When we got to 4B and two of us had to sleep in one bunk. You had to say to the other guy, I want to turn. In the next bunk to me—we were about five high, I guess. You only had about that much room between. This little Italian guy. Now he was seventeen and I was twenty-one.

Every day he would say, “Oh, Lloyd, we’re not going to make it. We’re not going to make it. We’re going to be slave labor for life.” I would try to encourage him and say, “Oh, yes we will. We’ll get (***) from Germantown. We’ll get back to Pennsylvania.” He was a paratrooper and so was his buddy. They dropped down. So he wrote my mother. I often wish I would have kept the letter.

He wrote my mother a beautiful letter saying she must have been a wonderful woman. This is boasting about myself, but he said to have a son like Lloyd. Because he said I don’t think I would have made it if he wouldn’t have...each day said...he was Catholic and I had my Testament. It was all I had to read, and I
read that cover to cover. He saw this and finally the one day we were talking about religion and he said, “I prayed for you today.” And I said, “I did too.” And he said, “How do you pray?” I said, “I'm Protestant. I intercede to Christ.” He said he intercedes to the Virgin Mary and then he was quiet. Then he said, “Don't you think they both heard?”

T: Good story.

L: I said yes. What happened we felt our prayers were answered because the Danes that were interned there, and of course, the war was getting close to being over, and they were Danish soldiers. They were getting parcels from home. They were getting bread. We got the black bread. I have a black bread recipe here too...which is partly sawdust. Anyhow, the Danes got a finer brown bread from home and cheese. We got synthetic cheese which was made partly from coal tar. So when they knew that they were going home, they handed us this bread and cheese. Now, it wasn't very much. We each got a little bit but we felt our prayers were answered.

T: You got a little something and without having much food, a little something was helpful.

L: Yes.

T: Before I forget. About the train journey...what was the most...you mentioned the thirst. Was your train attacked by aircraft at all and strafed or bombed?

L: No. It wasn't. But the tracks sometimes—like I was saying a while ago—the tracks had been bombed out ahead of us. Then we couldn't go until the tracks were repaired.

T: So it sat.

L: So we sat.

T: How did you pass or how did others around you pass the time in those trains?

L: Everybody looked so forlorn and your eyes were lackluster. It was 224 days without a bath or change of clothing. I wore the same clothes for 224 days.

T: Holy cow!

L: So it was really hard to keep your spirits up. Then of course, the Germans would never tell us how the war was going. But when President Roosevelt died, they told us that.

T: You were still in 4B when that happened?
L: Yes.

T: That’s April 12. Let’s talk about 4B. That is the place at Muhlberg that you spent the majority of your time. You talked about the sleeping quarters, sleeping arrangements, being very overcrowded.

(1, B, 527)

L: They put us in with an English camp. They put, I think, it was three hundred Americans in with these (***), English. See the English, some of them, were prisoners for quite a few years and they were getting parcels from home. They had pretty good clothing yet and all that. We went in there with our dirty clothes. Like I said, no baths, no change of clothes. We had come from 12A where there were no showers or hot water or anything there. You were lucky to get water to drink. So they treated us very cruel. The English...

T: The English did?

L: Yes.

T: No kidding.

L: The treated us very poor. There was one older English man. He befriended me. He worked in the cookhouse and he saw my stockings [had] holes in them. I tried to wrap them over in my shoe and one day he said, “I have a needle.” He said, “Pull some threads out of your blanket and I will show you how to knit, darn.” So he showed me how to darn my stockings. There’s a way. You weave. I would have just took the thread and sewed the hole shut but he showed me how to weave there.

Then I made friends with another of them. Tommy Fletcher. I have some letters here he sent me after we were liberated. He was nice too. But some of them were very arrogant and called us dirty, filthy Yanks.

T: So there was a real sense of antagonism here you perceived on the part of the English troops towards the Americans who arrived?

L: Yes. It was that way in England too, to treat...we made more than what their officers made.

T: And they knew that.

L: So the American guys could take the English girls out and show them a much better time than the officers. So, yes, there was a resentment. But I think the thing was we spoke the same language. That’s a benefit when you can speak the same language. Now my brother was billeted with an English family. He was over there for (***). He made friends with them and when he came to the hospital he spoke just like a Limey (chuckles).
T: Now in the camp how did this sort of ill will on the part of the English make itself felt in your everyday life? How would you know this? How would this evidence itself?

L: You had to be very careful how you talked to them. They always said we were boasting Yanks. They couldn’t believe that in…like in my family, that my brothers would have a car, my sister would have a car, my parents would have a car. They couldn’t believe that because it just wasn’t possible over there.

T: They had been there a number of years, so I imagine they may have had their own kind of camp life established.

L: Yes.

T: And the Americans were intruding into that.

L: Yes. Yes. We were actually intruding and we had to sit back and be very careful. What we did and said because, like I say, they were maybe one thousand to us three hundred.

T: Did you encounter or interact with prisoners of any other nationality?

L: Oh, yes. Yes. That was in 4B. There was Russian. I said about the Danish. Yes. And there was what they called the market. Now, you had precious little there, but you could… Now, we were supposed to get Red Cross parcels every week. The whole time I was in, 224 days, there was one shipment, and we had to divide that parcel among four men. So you didn’t get very much. I think there was a packet with four cigarettes and you each got a cigarette. You had to find your own utensils. We used tin cans and some of the guys would make cups out of two cans and put handles on there. They were real handy that way. You weren’t allowed to have a knife, fork, or a razor. You were allowed to have a spoon. So with my one—I didn’t smoke—my one cigarette, I went to the market and I bought this...it was like a tablespoon from this Russian prisoner for ein cigarette (chuckles).

(1, B, 594)

T: So there was kind of a flea market, you describe, of all sorts of things being bartered and sold.

L: Yes. Yes.

T: Was this known by the Germans?

L: Oh, yes. Yes. You were allowed to go there from your compound. But then at night you had to stay in. No one was allowed out at night.
T: Outside the barracks.

L: No.

T: Was there any work that was done here? Did you go on work details?

L: The one was cleaning up the bodies...

T: That was at Limburg you mentioned, right?

L: Yes. Let me see. At 4B...mostly going down to the railroad station and carrying things back...or pushing a wagon. Like horses. We had to push it because they used a lot of horses. In fact, their artillery was pulled by horses and a lot of them were killed from bombs and strafing and that. They used us as horsepower.

T: So you got outside the camp, would you say on a regular basis, making these trips to town?

L: Yes.

T: To the station?

L: Yes. They kept us busy too burying the dead because they had...it was a blockhouse made of cement blocks. No windows. Just a door. And in there was where they piled the corpses. You would wrap them in their blanket. Put the blanket over their head. Put a rope around the body. That’s the way you’d bury them. But we had to wait until you got so many. Then you’d put them on the wagon and push them.

T: So men were dying here at Muhlberg at 4B.

L: Yes. And we had to stand there, sometimes for an hour or more, until we were counted. They counted us three times a day. Sometimes someone would be missing and you had to stand there until the guards went in, and with all these bunks, sometimes it would take them a while to find...and most of the times they were dead. They had died.

T: What was killing people, from your observation, here at Muhlberg?

L: It wasn’t so much disease. I think...loneliness, really. They just...

T: Those who gave up, as you mentioned earlier?
L: Right. Right. No will to live. I never got to that point. I was very sad and very homesick, but in my letters I wrote from the camp—you were only allowed to say so much.

T: The little cards. Right.

L: Yes.

T: You mentioned you were able to write, to communicate a bit. To send these, pretty much, form letters. You filled in the lines but you knew the Germans were going to read the content.

L: Yes.

T: How many of those, would you estimate, you were able to send while you were there?

(1, B, 633)

L: I think we were allowed to send one a month.

T: So for you that would be four, five letters perhaps, that you were able to send back.

L: That’s about what I sent. I think I have three here. But I think I sent more, a couple more than that. I’m not sure. This letter is one that I sent to my mother from the Russian zone. Now, she received this before she got these. This is not the first letter. This is the second letter, the second letter from the Russian zone.

T: And that was not read by Germans, of course.

L: No. No. The Russians would not release us for a while. But our Army knew we were there. They came in...I think the third time they finally released us. They came in with the planes and wouldn’t let us go.

T: From Muhlberg. So you stayed at the camp there.

L: That was in a little town outside. I’m not sure whether it was Muhlberg or whether it was another town. They took us to this town. It was a German school. Modern school. Of course, there was no electricity and no water there yet. They had brought in a steam engine outside and they made hot water for us and we had showers outside. Our planes came in. The chaplain came along, the second time I think he came along. He had writing paper for us. Such as it was. And envelopes.

T: But you could send some message that you were okay.
L: Yes. He took our letters back. Mother received the first one from the Russian zone and she received it the day before Mother’s Day. Now, this I think was May 16. That was after Mother’s Day, so this is the second one. The first one she received the day before Mother’s Day, which was a Saturday and then she knew that I was alive.

T: So those got there well before the ones you had sent from the camp.

L: Yes. Yes.

T: Talking about Muhlberg there, camp 4B. What was your impression of the Germans that were there?

L: They were mostly older men. Germany was scraping the bottom of the barrel. Their young men were all up in the lines. The older men were not as bad as guards as were the SS troopers and the younger men like fourteen, fifteen years old. But we knew the war was going to be over because our planes were strafing around the camp and the German guards would chase us out on the playground and make us stand there and our planes would come over... Because they thought that would save them.

T: So they chased you out of buildings or out of your barracks when the Americans came overhead.

L: Yes. Yes. They knew we were there, the American planes. They would do this strafing in the village and around and they knew where we were. That made us feel good.

T: Yes.

L: Let me see...what was I going to say about that?

T: About the Germans. You mentioned that these older Germans...

L: Yes. The old...Old Slim, he was a guard at the cookhouse. A couple days before the Russians came in, the Germans came in and gave us...they said we could leave if we wanted to. But Eisenhower had dropped leaflets on the camp a couple days before and said whatever you do, do not go out and wander around the countryside. Stay until someone comes. So that’s...some of the guys didn’t listen and some of them got killed too. But I stayed and waited.

T: Had the Germans here now, when these leaflets were falling—and by this time the guys and yourself too, could put together that the war is rapidly coming to a close. And you were warned to, or encouraged to stay at the camp until someone came to you.

(1, B, 680)
L: Yes.

T: The first that arrived in your case was Russians and not Americans.

L: Yes.

T: Let me park that thought for a minute. While you were at Muhlberg, you mentioned you had some daily work, in a sense, of picking up deliveries from the train station. You also mentioned this burial detail which suggests that men were dying here. Regularly would you say, or was it isolated?

L: Yes, well, I would say almost every day someone passed away.

T: And not from maltreatment you said, so much as what you observed as sort of broken spirits or...

L: Yes.

T: Very interesting.

L: And everyone was very, very thin. The first time I was weighed I think it was ninety pounds. Then I had been eating. I had mentioned there about leaving around the camp.

T: This is once the Germans had left?

L: Yes.

T: Now, did the Germans...do you remember when it was that this happened? Chronologically. Was it April by this time that the Germans kind of melted away?

L: Yes. Yes.

T: And the Russians arrived pretty soon thereafter?

L: Yes.

T: You mentioned weighing little. What kind of food did you receive from the Germans on a daily basis?

L: We received a black bread, and I have the recipe here for that. Let me see. Here. (paper rustling) Black bread recipe. Former prisoners of war of the Nazi Germans may be interested in this recipe for World War II black bread. This recipe comes from the official record from the Food Providing Ministry published as Top Secret Berlin 24 X1-1941 from the Director of Ministry Herr Mansfield and Herr Mortis. It
was agreed that the best mixture to bake black bread was fifty percent bruised rye grain, twenty percent sliced sugar beets, twenty percent tree flour, which is sawdust, ten percent minced leaves and straw. That's what we got every day to eat.

T: That sounds like it would rot your gut out.

L: It was so hard. We used to say you could build a house with it. It was like bricks.

T: So you couldn’t tell whether it was fresh or stale.

L: And usually we got synthetic coffee and we got maybe some thin soup. You might see a cabbage leaf in it or something floating around in it. Everyone lost weight.

T: So you mentioned you weighed under one hundred pounds at the time you weighed yourself. How much did you weighed when you were in the service?

L: I wasn’t too heavy. I weighed about 135 or something like that.

T: So you lost a substantial amount of weight the couple months you were in there.

L: Yes.

(1, B, 713)

T: The way you describe the camp: it’s overcrowded, kind of a chaotic, in a sense, atmosphere—what was the most difficult thing for you personally at Muhlberg?

L: I think the most was not being able to shower and shave. I had a beard. Long hair. Of course, in the wintertime I was glad for the long hair and the beard. It kind of kept me warm. But I think...the first time I saw a body louse on me I was just devastated because I always took my shower every day. It was just devastating. The first body louse I felt...I just felt, what is that? I found out. It wasn’t long until I had them all over my body. I still have marks where they sucked the blood out of my chest. Left marks.

T: How do you deal with that on a daily basis?

L: It’s not easy. After it became warmer weather in the spring, we would sit out and my undershirt—it was an OD undershirt. Long, winter one. I would take it off and pick the nits and try to squeeze them and kill them. Because there was no hot water. You were lucky to get water to drink.

T: So this kind of infestation with body lice and things like that was something you had to come to terms with.

L: Yes.
T: In a sense, one wants to say it makes your skin crawl. In this case, literally it made your skin crawl.

L: Yes.

T: When the Russians arrived, what can you remember about that? Do you remember when they actually arrived at the camp?

L: Yes. I remember. Very well. We knew that they were coming and finally they came. The woman that came in was a Russian captain, she was. She was riding a black stallion. She tore down the Nazi flag at the gates.

T: So a Russian woman on a black horse was the first...

L: Yes.

T: What an image.

L: With her soldiers. She put up the Russian flag, the American flag, the French flag. All the Allies. That was a wonderful sight. Then as I said, we started to loot around the camp.

T: Did people leave the camp pretty much immediately then?

L: No. Most of us stayed until the Russians took us to this school.

T: And do you remember...how soon was that, Lloyd, they moved you actually out of the camp?

L: It wasn’t long. I would say maybe just a couple days, because the camp was so deplorable. Although we did go out and loot and get food. What I was going to say. You mentioned here about the German people not having food. This young mother came with her two children the one day and she asked for food. This German mother. She said, I know you soldiers were hungry, but she said, now we're hungry too.

T: This was when you were at the school here in town?

L: No. That was still back in the camp.

T: At the camp. So they came to the camp looking for food.

L: Yes. Then finally the Russians said they were going to move us. This was good. They picked us out. The English were there too. They took the English to the old
Army barracks. They took us to this nice school. The Russians didn’t care too much for the English.

T: The twist of fate there was that Americans got better quarters when they were moved out of the camp.

L: Yes. You see the thing was, the English were nasty to these Russian prisoners of war that were in the next compound. And they told of that.

T: Oh, my gosh.

L: And we were their buddies. So they took us to this school where it was nice, and finally, like I said, we got hot water and showers and that, and we also got physicals. They took us to the hospital in the town there and examined us. That’s where I know that I weighed ninety pounds.

T: I see.

L: But then the Russians did say, well now, we would go out and loot and the guys would push baby carriages full of things—most of it would be flour and things like that because there wasn’t...not the food like we have today in the stores. Express wagons, bicycles. And they did say before we go down to the school, take everything out and put it on the playground. We put all the bicycles together, all the baby coaches and all the...

T: Had this looting happened sort of spontaneously?

L: Yes. Because the Russians just... See, when our Army would liberate a camp, they would keep you under guard.

T: That’s right.

L: And you would only eat so much. You could only eat so much. But they left us eat anything we wanted. Some of the guys died. The first night I got enough to eat I walked almost all night. My stomach swelled up and I though oh, my gosh! I remember that night so vividly. I could see the moon up there and I would say, here I am. Soon be able to get back and see the moon back home, and here I’m going to die. I felt really I was going to die. I don’t think...if I wouldn’t have walked most of the night and kept on my feet, I think if I would have laid down I may have died.

T: How did you observe or see this spontaneous looting? What form did that take and what happened that you can remember? Was it individual households?

L: Yes. Yes. The Russians were very brutal to the...the Russian prisoners when they were released...
End of Tape 1. Tape 2, Side A begins at counter 000.

T: Go ahead, Mr. Dull. You were talking about this looting that took place as the camp was liberated.

L: Yes. Then after we were taken to this German school—there was a mess house there. The Russian women ran the mess house, but we had to—like KP. The Russian Army lives off of the land mostly as they go. So the one day, I’ll never forget. They brought in a heifer and some rice. My father always butchered on the farm. So I was familiar with butchering. And some of the other guys were familiar. We had to butcher the heifer and so we made like a rice stew. Then one day they brought in a pig and potatoes, a bag of potatoes. There again, my father butchering pigs and I knew how to render lard from the pigskin and all that, and we cut the potatoes and we had French fries and pork. So you see, that kind of food was not good right after you were liberated.

T: Yes.

L: They were very good to us, the Russians. Then I was with them when the war was over. The day the war was over. But the day the war was over we all hid, because most of them were drunk and they’d shoot their pistols up in the air and walk around. So we all stayed indoors (laughs).

T: So you knew when the war was over. You could tell.

L: Yes.

T: How long were you quartered in this school or under the care of the Russians?

L: I think it was…it must have been four weeks because...

T: Was there a daily routine or were you essentially on your own?

(2, A, 38)

L: We were pretty much on our own. What they would do...we didn’t have to pull much, like cleaning or anything like that. They would bring in the German civilians. They’d just go out and if they were on the street, they would catch them and bring them in. Make them do duty. The one time my buddy and I, we were sitting in this wall that surrounded the school, and they had caught this German guy and they were making him do something and we saw him...look, he’s trying to escape. So he ran up the street a little bit and hid back of a tree, and then he watched and when the German soldiers weren’t looking, he ran a little bit more and he finally escaped from them (laughs).

T: From the Russians.
L: Yes.

T: What kind of treatment of German civilians did you observe once you were liberated?

L: You mean, what treatment they gave us?

T: No. The treatment that was...by the Russians or by the ex-POWs of the German civilians.

L: Oh, the Russian prisoners in our camp were very brutal to the German civilians. In fact, my buddy and I—this Tommy Fletcher, the English guy that I was telling you about—we went for this walk, and here we saw this German. He was in his bare feet. He was dead. He was laying up against the bank. There was a pair of wooden clogs there and of course, bare feet. We assumed a Russian POW had killed him for his boots.

T: Because the wooden clogs were something you would have worn...

L: That’s right. That’s what the Russians were wearing. That’s what they gave us if our shoes wore out. They didn’t give you shoes. So the Russians, a lot of them, were wearing the wooden clogs because they didn’t give them shoes. These wooden clogs were there and this German...

T: German civilian or German military guy?

L: It was a civilian.

T: A civilian.

L: That’s what they would do. Slim, at the cookhouse, he worked in the cookhouse, German he was. Big, tall, older guy. He didn’t leave when the Germans left about two days before the Russians came in, and so these German prisoners of war hung him and cut him all up in little bits...

T: The Russians did.

L: Yes.

T: Really.

L: I guess they felt this is the way you cut our rations. Small bits. So...

T: He was killed that way.
L: Yes.

T: The rest of the Germans, rather wisely it sounds from your description, kind of got away.

L: Yes. They took off.

T: Before the Russians arrived.

L: Yes.

T: So that was the only German... was he the only German left in the camp when the Russians arrived then, that you know?

L: I think so. That I know of. I really didn’t see him, but I heard from guys that saw it.

(2, A, 90)

T: Now, in the town were there still German civilians around or had most of them sort of headed for the hills, as it were?

L: In the daytime they stayed in. Like I say, they would catch them and make them do duty or something.

T: Or kill them for their shoes.

L: Yes. After our names went to Moscow and back to Washington, and I guess back again, they finally released us. Then we were flown to Camp Lucky Strike in Le Havre, France.

T: The American planes came into near to where you were, near to where you were and then fly you out of there or did you have to...

L: Yes.

T: Did you have to go to them?

L: They came right close to the camp. They could land there. We had to walk maybe a couple miles to the planes, but they took us to Camp Lucky Strike. The camps where we'd go were named after cigarettes. Camp Lucky Strike, Camp Chesterfield, Camp Phillip Morris.

T: Lucky Strike was where a lot of ex-POWs went.

L: Yes.
T: Almost everyone, actually, ended up there at this place.

L: Yes.

T: How had your physical condition improved between when the Russians arrived and when you arrived at Lucky Strike?

L: I had gained weight. I was suntanned because I...in this one letter here I say I'm laying out just in my shorts. When I finally came home that summer I was tanned and gained all my weight back and you wouldn't have known that I, what I went through. It was only after I was discharged that things came up and I had problems.

T: I see. When you were at Lucky Strike was the care you received there essentially for your physical well-being?

L: Yes. After eating this food that the Russians had given us, there they kept us like under guard and we’d only get so much to eat. We could go through the line and get a cheese sandwich or eggnog anytime we wanted. They kept us...

T: Eggnog will pack on the calories, that’s for sure.

L: Yes. This suitcase has a story in it.

T: Little brown suitcase on the table. Like a lunchbox size.

L: Yes. They told us we could take anything, the Army, our Army, said we could take anything out of Germany we could carry, and so I took this with—I had some linen towels with a swastika on. I had some inexpensive jewelry. Something for my sisters and my mother. But there was still plenty of room in there. So we got to Camp Lucky Strike and I couldn’t resist going through the line for these cheese sandwiches. Even after I had enough to eat. So I put the cheese sandwiches in this little suitcase, and so when I got back to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, I had kind of forgotten about the cheese sandwiches...

T: And they were still in there?

L: I opened it and they were really moldy (laughs).

T: Did you come back by ship?

L: Yes.

T: So they were in there quite a while.

(2, A, 141)
L: Yes. I went over in a convoy. It was fourteen days. But coming back was only seven days. The *Excelsior*. A Liberty Ship. I'll never forget. We got to Le Havre and this guy said, "Do you mean to tell me we're going home in that small Liberty Ship?" And I said to him, "If they give me a tub and an egg beater I'll start off."

T: You were anxious to get back.

L: *(laughing)* Yes.

T: How long did they keep you at Le Havre, France, at Camp Lucky Strike?

L: Not too long. Then I went to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. From there, Fort Dix, and from there they gave me my furlough papers and I was home for ninety days that summer.

T: It sounds like pretty quick step once you got out of Germany there. The stops went pretty quickly until you actually got back here.

L: Yes.

T: Now, you talked about the physical recovery there at Le Havre Lucky Strike. Was there any attention to the kind of psychological aspects of your POW experience asking you...kind of talk you through that?

L: No. See, that's what I...I'm glad now that the prisoners of war, that they really take them and psychologically examine them. But we were allowed to come home without much even medical. I'm glad to see that they're changing the way they're handling POWs, because as I say, I should have not been discharged. I had problems that whole next year. After I was discharged I was in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, I guess for two months with this overactive thyroid. There again, I began to lose weight. Almost was down to what I was in the prison camp.

T: This was something that hadn't occurred to you before the service at all.

L: No. The surgeon that operated...finally operated...they tried to treat it with iodine. I would drink iodine in a shot glass of milk every day. And for a while, while I was drinking it, it would shirk it, but it didn't last, so a very famous surgeon here in Lancaster, your mother probably would know, Dr. Attway, said, "I know that if I would operate on you, you would be all right." He said if you consent. And so I did. And I was glad.

T: A thyroid operation you had [in] 1946, approximately?

L: Yes.
T: Did they trace the problem you were having to your time of being a prisoner?

L: He said that probably this was caused by shock. With the thyroid. Shock he said. Of course, anxiety, posttraumatic stress. All the veterans come back...veterans and prisoners have it. Some of them say they don’t, but they do. It pops up. It’s like diabetes or high blood pressure or anything. You can treat it, but it’s there.

T: You mentioned that people come back, veterans, POWs or otherwise, come back with a set of memories and set of experiences. How did you work through this stuff in the years after the war? I mean here, in a sense, you’re back on planet earth, from your experience a continent away, an ocean away. How did you, in a sense, process that for yourself, that experience?

L: I think I keep busy. If I would not keep busy, and I always have, even when I run the business. As I said, I went to Philadelphia every week to Drama School because this Ingrid, who [was at] the school where I went, (*** School in New York, said you should always keep busy, in art or drama or something besides their business, because it’s artistic and you have to...and so I did. I’m chaplain of the state and I like to help people and give them encouragement. I think that’s what keeps me going. I forget about myself.

Our motto of the national is we exist to help those who cannot help themselves. I try to keep that in front of our members. We have some that are like maybe five years younger than I, and some that are fifteen years or something like that. The Korean [POWs from the Korean War]. Yet they’re in worse shape physically than I am. I try to tell them—and I am quick to volunteer up at Lebanon Hospital—and I try to tell them even a couple hours a day go up there and volunteer and do something, or even the hospitals around Lancaster here. There’s always somebody worse off than yourself. That’s the way I feel.

(2, A, 210)

T: How long have you been involved with the ex-POWs organization?

L: It seems to me...I’m a very low number. For national I’ve been involved for years. Just getting the magazine. But I think our local chapter...then I joined the Liberty Bell Chapter in Philadelphia. But I never attended the meetings. I just paid my dues. More information that they send you. Then later on, I think about 1980, we organized the Conestoga Chapter here and I’m very active. I work with Roy a lot. He’s a chaplain too.

T: How has that organization helped you with your own POW experience?

L: You hear others and then you think, well, I didn’t have it so bad after all. Like I say, there’s always someone worse off. But it has done our wives a world of good, because I never talked much to my wife about it. I still don’t. But she goes to the support groups and the other wives are there, and the other guys, and she hears
them talking, and she reads the bulletin—and she reads the bulletin more thoroughly than I do. I think that is...

T: That’s been helpful for you in that respect.

L: Yes.

T: Now you were married in 1950. You mentioned your wife and how much you talked about this. How much did she know when you were dating or when you were first married about your POW experience?

L: I don’t think she knew. I doubt whether she knew at all until we were married.

T: That you were a POW at all?

L: I don’t think so. I think we went together two years or something like that. Maybe in the last part of our courtship I did. But then her parents...I didn’t talk to them about it until we were married quite a while.

T: How would you explain your not talking about that to either your wife or to your in-laws or to others?

L: You don't want them to have a lot of sympathy for you. Even though you feel sometimes when people complain...you feel like saying well, if you’d gone through what I did...but you don’t. You just keep that bottled down there. I think that sometimes is when it flares up and it gets too bad. I know and my wife will agree with this, that I don’t complain about things. Really. I take each day.

T: Let me ask you that question. When you think of how your POW experience changed you as a person, in what ways are you a different person from before this time?

L: I think, and most of my friends will admit to this, that it was determination that brought us through. It’s also determination now that a lot of us are much older than some of the other veterans who never even saw combat. But I think it's our determination. Even now. Even though we have problems. We’re determined. I think...

T: So you’re a more determined person, in a sense.

L: Yes.

T: Tied over to your private life too?
L: Yes. And I think...yes. Let's see. I was going to say something more. Oh, we all feel that in a way it has made us a better person. We didn’t want to go through it. It was hell. But it has taught us a lot about freedom.

T: You had it taken away.

L: Yes. And I think even...like I said about my business, and we had everything going for us...that and we planned to have a nice sum when we retired. It didn’t happen that way. But we’re happy. I think my wife’s just as happy going to work two days a week for spending money and she enjoys—she works in packaging. Something altogether different than what she’s ever done. But they have three or four retarded persons there, and they usually put her with them because she is very kind to them and some of the other workers don’t like to work with them.

(2, A, 271)

T: So I hear you saying, that in a sense you’ve become better at taking each day as it comes.

L: Right.

T: And appreciating what is there.

L: Right.

T: Over the years with neighbors or coworkers—in this case you didn’t have coworkers—neighbors or family, people who knew you, how much did you share about your war experience? There are a lot of veterans in those days.

L: My family, very little.

T: This is your mother and your sisters and brothers now?

L: My mother and father a lot. But when I first came home, my father was very interested. He had a map and he followed where my outfit was all the time. Gable Heater, and what was the other one? Those commentators. He listened to all the time. When he came home I’ll never forget the one time he questioned me. And I said, “Dad...”

T: Questioned you how?

L: About my POW experience. And wanted to know something and I said, “Dad, I don’t want to talk right now. Wait a while. Maybe sometime I’ll tell you.” And I think then, as I said, I wasn’t married then for quite a few years after I came back. And I would sit with my parents. I had three brothers and sisters younger than I, married, so it was only younger brother and sister at home and myself. I would sit
with my parents and I would tell them. Sometimes something would come up. I’d be just looking out the window or something. Something would bring up something that reminded me, and then I would tell them. I think down through the years that I lived at home with them before I was married, I think I told them a lot, but not a lot at a time. And they were always willing to just sit and listen.

T: That sounds, in a sense, like you weren’t paying for therapy, but talking about it little by little...

L: Yes. But as for my brothers and sisters, I think they really were upset when I was captured and they knew I was a prisoner. But none of them have really questioned me all that much. Now, whether they don’t want to bring up the subject to me, I don’t know. Now, I have two of my wife’s nieces are married to young men. The one’s in his forties now and the other in this thirties. Every once in a while they will question me and they seem to be interested. If someone seems interested, then I am willing to talk. But some people will ask you a question and then when you start and go off on a roll, they just act like they’re not interested and that is very, very hard on you. It just seems well, why did you ask me in the first place?

T: What I hear you saying is, if people asked you, you were willing to share certain amounts of this, but that you may not have volunteered it without being asked first.

L: Yes. And also other veterans—there’s a lot of them get very upset at us because they think we get more than they do.

T: Benefit wise, you mean?

L: Yes. Like the hundred percent medical and all that. They think that we shouldn’t be getting that. We have been called cowards.

T: Have you heard that? Are there some people call you...

L: Yes. One State Commander, he was telling me the story about when he came back. He said, I went down to the bar after I came home, where I frequent before I went to the service. He said all the guys at the bar went like this... (2, A, 312)

T: Put their hands behind their heads like giving up?

L: Yes. See this is the way we had to walk for miles. Oh, my gosh!

T: Hands behind your head.

L: And when I put my arms down, they just felt like there was nothing there (chuckles). Yes. So for a long time...
T: Did that happen to you? Anything like that? People who...

L: Yes. I was called to speak at a senior citizens group. A friend whose wife was president. Of course, I went in and I was standing there before the meeting and this woman said to this guy, “This is Lloyd. He was a prisoner of war. He’s going to be our speaker.” And he said, “Safest place to be during the war.”

T: Safest place to be during the war. Really?

L: Yes. What else was it he said? I thought, oh, oh, I’m going to add something to my speech. Then I brought out about digging foxholes and then he said, “That’s better than living in the ground.” I thought, hey, I can add that to my speech and I’m going to hit him. Boy! So I said about digging foxholes and living in the ground and I said when I was back in the POW camp I was wishing I was back there in my hole in the ground. And I brought that out about three times. And this woman came up to me after and she said, “That guy will never say that to you again.” (laughs)

T: So in a sense, as we talked before we were on tape, you have combat credentials. You were in France. You were wounded in action. It wasn’t as if you were a late arrival or a replacement who never saw any action.

L: Right. I had a foxhole buddy. Now, this was the first time I was up there. His first name was Lloyd too. He deserted the one night when we were in battle. I said, “You know what will happen.” He said, “I’m going back. I can’t stand it. I can’t stand it.” I said, “Do you know what will happen? You will be court-martialed.” He said, “I don’t care. I’m yellow and I’m going back. I’m going back.” That’s that last I ever heard of him. I don’t know what happened.

T: My goodness. So in a sense, there were people who couldn’t take it and admitted it.

L: Oh, yes. Some would even...one guy shot himself, shot his foot. He said he was cleaning his rifle, but I think he shot his foot.

T: Because that’s a wound that you can’t walk, therefore they can’t send you back.

L: Yes.

T: Let me ask you, as we get towards the end here, about the Veterans Administration. What kind of help did the VA offer to you as a returning POW when it came to psychological recovery? I mean, helping with...talking things through in the early days.

L: I think after I was discharged, and as I said, I was in the Philadelphia Naval Hospital for two months and then I came back and then I took up GI training under
the GI Bill and went to hairdressing school or business college first. But my representative asked me if I wanted to go for counseling, and I said yes.

So I went up to Lebanon every Saturday to the YM up there, to a psychologist or psychiatrist. I forget what his name was now. The VA has always been really good to me. I always would tell them. I was a POW, and explained to them. Now, some of the guys that were POWs they had problems, and I’d say, “Do you tell the doctor when you go?” And then they say, well they know, they know. I said yes, but Dr. Sayson was my doctor for many years. Sometimes I would say, “Dr. Sayson, I would like to have an appointment to have my eyes examined or my teeth.” And she would say, “Mr. Dull, fifty percent is the magic word and you’re not fifty percent.” I said, “But I’m a POW.” You have to keep telling them, because [you] have it coming to you and you have to ask.

(2, A, 356)

T: So you kept after the VA as well.

L: Yes. And I’ve been helping a lot of veterans out now who are wanting to be enrolled. They think they can just go and be enrolled. There’s such a backlog right now and my brother had to wait eighteen months to get in for a prescription.

T: Eighteen months?

L: Yes. And I had a friend call last week. He and his brother were both veterans. I told them what to do. I said, but don’t expect anything right away. It’s nature of God and the VA. Never in a hurry.

T: You really have learned to take things as they come, Mr. Dull, haven’t you?

L: Yes.

T: It serves you well it sounds like. I was going to ask you...one thing I like to ask people is when you got back from the service, what kind of issues did you have with dreams or with recurring nightmares from your POW time?

L: The one thing—and I often was sorry that I yelled at my mother like this—after I was discharged and I was sitting at the kitchen table. Of course, she had her pots and pans hanging in the hallway. I don’t know what she did, but she knocked a couple off and it just struck me so, and I said, “Don’t you ever do that again!” I’ll never forget the look on her face when she looked at me. I thought, why did I yell at my mother like that? But I think little things like that.

Down at the house here, one day I was sitting at the bar drinking coffee, and I just saw this German helmet go by the hedge. Here it was one of the neighbor kids on his bicycle with a German helmet, and you know, that just...I don’t know. I said to my wife, I wonder if I had a gun, if I would have shot at him. It just...something just
clicked. So I can see how people go off the handle and things, and how they can do things.

T: So things completely unrelated to the situation.

L: Yes.

T: Could conjure up...

L: Yes.

T: Have you had issues with dreams or things at night?

L: Yes. Yes. And especially during Iraq [War, after 2003] and 9/11 [terrorist incident of 11 September 2001], but my wife puts up with this and she usually wakes me. The one night I felt someone was pulling me up by the arms, and here I had a watch on that was fairly tight, and it was hanging out over the bed and it just felt like someone had me by the arms and was holding me. I guess I must have been making an awful racket, and she hammers on my back... But this I find with a lot of the guys. The wives will say about them having these nightmares.

T: Have nightmares been something...

End of Tape 2, Side A. Side B begins at counter 386.

T: Have the nightmares or dreams been something you've had since the end of the war, really?

L: As a kid I would sleepwalk, when I had a fever usually...my mother...and I remember sometimes getting up if would be sick and a have a fever. I would get up at night. But other than that no.

T: So when you got back from the war in 1945, were there images from your POW time that came up in dreams for you?

L: Yes. I wouldn't say right away, but as time went by. Thought over things...when you first get back, you think I'm going to forget everything. I'm going to forget...but you don't. It's there.

T: Was that a conscious thing, where you said to yourself I want to try to forget, or just kind of...we think with time, things get forgotten.

L: I want to forget this. The ninety days I was home I had a wonderful time and I was engaged to this girl. It was only after I was discharged and came back and faced civilian life and reality, that things fell apart.
T: You mentioned you had been engaged to her...before you went overseas, is that right?

L: No. After I came back.

T: But someone you had dated before.

L: I had dated her before. Rachel. We knew. I knew. I didn’t want to be engaged or married before I went overseas...but we knew that when I came back she would be waiting for me. It’s funny. My wife has since met her and they get along famously. Her sisters were customers in our shop.

T: No kidding.

L: I kept in contact with the family.

T: Was this because you perceived yourself changed as a person that this...

L: I was in the hospital for two months and she would come down. Sometimes every other day to see me...on the train and that. I just felt it wasn’t fair to her. I didn’t know what was going to happen. Get a job. The two operations I had that year...then I started to go back to hairdressing school. I guess that’s why I went back there. I felt it was something that wasn’t so strenuous that I could do.

T: Because your folks were off the farm by now weren’t they?

L: Yes.

T: I guess, the way you’re describing it, life was a little difficult. Adjusting again to being with the same people and...

L: I think if I would have gone off of the farm, come back to the farm...which I find a lot of my friends, they had their jobs. They’re married and had children. They came back and life went on. But when I came back, the farm wasn’t there and I had to just...something else.

T: That’s right. So then you didn’t have any of those pillars of stability that some other people talk about...

L: Right.

T: Because you weren’t there, and on top of that comes this adjustment process and that proved to be difficult.

L: What I found out now, I found out that guys after they became sixty-five, sixty-two, and retired, then they started to have some of the problems I had the first year.
T: That’s interesting.

L: They didn’t go to their jobs anymore and they could sit around and think, and so things came back. A lot of nightmares started to come back then too.

T: So in a sense, the way you talk about it, you think you may have been well served by having that process or this adjustment in thinking it through in the beginning.

L: Right. I think that...I feel that I don’t resent having it at the beginning because...

T: The way you talk about it, you think it would have happened eventually anyway.

L: Yes.

T: That's very interesting. Very interesting. The last question I have is this: what do you think is the most important way that this whole episode of being a POW changed your life?

(2, B, 474)

L: I think I mentioned before, determination is what brought me through and it has changed my life in a way. I look at things and people a lot different and sometimes I feel sorry for people...sometimes. Especially with material things, because I know there was a time when we had much more material [things] than we have now...but we find, and my wife and I both find this, as we get older, the material things just don’t mean as much as they did when we were first married and working for a new home and that. We have traveled quite a bit. We have taken nice vacations. England, Scotland and Wales, Germany, Austria, Alaska and cruises. So I feel we’ve had a good life.

T: Let me ask you about...you mentioned going back to Germany. What was that like for you, going back to visit Germany?

L: It was very traumatic, and I always said I wouldn’t go back. But that’s the land of my wife’s ancestors. Her great-grandparents came directly from Germany. Her name was Erhardt. That’s a very German name. I always said I wouldn’t go, but this trip came up. A friend of ours, he’s a pastor and he gets these trips together and takes some of the members of his church along and we go along sometimes. They asked us to go along and so I said I’ll try it.

T: How old were you, by the way, when this happened?

L: That was, let’s see, the Passion Play...1980, I believe. No. I think it was 1990.

T: You were retired already?
L: Yes.

T: That would be 1990 then.

L: The first day was kind of traumatic, and we went to Cologne and I remember that as just being bombed out, and there it was all built. It was traumatic...I felt that I didn’t want to go along with them up to the cathedral. So I stayed in the bus. My wife thought I was coming and she was very upset. She thought I disappeared. But I was sitting back in the bus and I talked to the bus driver who could not speak English. He was from Yugoslavia. John. I guess he wondered why I was there and I mentioned...tried to tell him about World War II, that I was there and I didn’t want to go.

Then finally they all came back. Then I saw the Rhine. It just did something. But about the third day in Germany, then I started to...but our guide, his name was Gunther, a German. I thought he’s about my age. I wonder if he was in the German Army. So about the third day I picked up courage. I said, “Gunther, have you ever been in the German Army?” He said, “Yes. World War II, and I was taken prisoner by the Americans.”

T: No kidding...

L: So then I told him I was a prisoner of the Germans. He said, how did they treat you? I thought I’m not going to get into this. I don’t want to talk about it. I just said well, they almost starved me, and that’s all I said. But I noticed we passed different places that I was familiar with from World War II, and he never mentioned a word about World War II or mentioned anything about the war. So then he just kind of tried to evade me the rest of the trip. We got to Switzerland and that’s where he gave his goodbye at the airport. He gave us a general goodbye. He went down the steps and the rest of us were there waiting to go to the plane, and I ran down there and he looked, and we embraced. We both cried. It just seemed that...it relieved something.

T: So the trip for Germany, for you was a good thing in the end.

L: Yes.

T: I’m happy it was a positive thing. That you parted like that. Were you curious at all to see any of the places where you had been held as a POW?

L: No. I never have a desire... I know that they’re probably not there, even the place where I took Basic Training in South Carolina, Camp Croft, there’s nothing there to tell you that the camp was there. There’s a Croft Park that may have been the site where the Army camp was. Of course, camp is usually not permanent. That was a camp and there were a lot of them in the South that were camps during World War II that weren’t permanent.
T: When you were in Germany, were you curious to go to Limburg or to Muhlberg?

L: No. No. I never was. Just was satisfied to stay where they put me.

(2, B, 565)

T: Because this was a package tour. They had the itinerary set for you, right?

L: Oh, you mean when...

T: When you visited Germany. Were you curious to see either of the places where you had been held a POW?

L: No. I didn’t mention any of this to the guide.

T: So that was something you were not anxious to see again.

L: No. No.

T: Anything else you wanted to add about your POW experience before we conclude? I’ve asked the last question that I had.

L: I’m just happy to be back here and as I say, I feel it was an experience I wouldn’t want to go through again, but I think it has made me a better person and has made me value life and everything much better than I would have otherwise.

T: So something good came out of something bad.

L: Yes. I always say to my wife, I’m thankful for another day above ground.

T: Very good way to approach life. I’ll thank you very much on tape, and with that I’ll turn this off.

END OF INTERVIEW