Dale Peterson was born on 2 September 1921 in St. Paul, but he grew up in western Wisconsin, graduating from Osceola High School in 1940. In October of that year Dale enlisted in the Army, and initially served in the infantry. With the expansion of the Air Corps after US entry into the war, Dale transferred to this branch of the Army, completed pilot training, and received a commission.

By early 1944 Dale was pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress, assigned to the 401st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, and stationed at Deenthorp, England. On just their third mission, on 8 March 1944, Dale and his crew were shot down on a mission to Erkner, Germany—with engine trouble, they abandoned the plane near the Dutch–German border.

After a brief stay in Dulag-Luft, the central interrogation facility near Wetzlar, Dale was sent to Stalag Luft I Barth, in far northern Germany; he remained here until the camp was liberated in early May 1945 by advancing Soviet troops.

Dale spent several months recovering from his POW ordeal, at Camp Lucky Strike, France, and US facilities, then resumed his military career. He finally retired from the US Air Force in 1960, with the rank of major. Dale then worked a number of years with the FAA, retiring in 1976.

Dale was married in 1946 (wife Dorothy), and helped to raise two children. He was active in the American ex-POWs organization, serving one year as Minnesota state commander.

Dale Peterson died on 25 February 2009, at age eighty-seven.
Interview Key:
T = Thomas Saylor
D = Dale Peterson
[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 19 April 2004 and, on the record, thanks, Mr. Dale Peterson, for taking time to speak with me today.

D: You’re welcome.

T: I’m going to put into the record some of the information that we’ve gone over already. You were born on 2 September 1921 right here in St. Paul, Minnesota. You grew up in Wisconsin, though, and graduated from Osceola High School, class of 1940. You enlisted in the service in October of 1940. Spent three years as an enlisted man before you decided that there was more to life than enlisted personnel and decided to become a pilot. By 1944 you were a pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress in England with the 401st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, at Deenethorp, England. On your third mission, to Berlin, 8 March 1944, returning from Berlin your plane was downed near the German-Dutch border after being hit by flak. All members of the crew, including you, the pilot, got out safely. You went through the Dlaug Luft facility and then to Stalag Luft I.

Let me begin by asking you, when you think about that mission on which your plane was downed, if you can sort of give some of the details about the actual...when you realized that your plane was not going to make it, what was going through your mind?

D: What was going through my mind was really if we sur...with that one engine windmilling, running away, and then we started losing the other engine on the left side. Can we make it across the North Sea back to London, or is it best to get out here?

T: Was it a case of going over the water was riskier than actually heading out over land?

D: I considered it that. Yes. So that’s what we did.

T: Whose call is it to make as far as bail out or keep going?

D: The pilot’s.

T: So it was your call.
D: Right.

T: How tough was it for you to make the decision to bail out when you knew that you were going to become POWs, most likely?

D: Well, it was either that, I felt, or going down and drowning in the North Sea. We’d have a chance.

T: If you bailed out.

D: Yes.

T: Over land.

D: Yes.

T: When you gave the order to bail out, as you get out of the plane and you’re going towards the ground, and now it’s pretty clear you’re going to become a POW, what kind of thoughts did you have at that point?

D: Hmmm. It’s hard to say. When...ah...well...I tell you, they said to delay the chute because the Germans may shoot at you on the way down. So I delayed, and maybe a little too long. I pulled the ripcord and nothing happened. Well, I didn’t pull it far enough. I took another pull, and it opened. I’d say it opened about 2500 feet from the ground, and I hit the ground pretty hard. It was in a plowed field actually, so I thought... The people there were wearing wood shoes. I thought well, we’re in Holland. So I said, “Holland. Netherlands.” “Nein. Nein. Nein. Deutschland.” Oh boy! So I got rid of my chute and started running for the woods.

T: As you were getting closer to the ground, could you see the civilians on the ground there?

D: Oh, yes.

(1, A, 34)

T: Were they coming towards you or paying special attention...

D: Just standing and looking. So I started running, and the German came around the corner with a 30.06 and he said, “Halten, Sie! Halten Sie!” And I just then started running in a zigzag course, and so he shot and hit...went right through my left biceps. Then I stopped.

T: Civilian or military guy?
D: He was a soldier. German army.

T: How close was he to you when he fired?

D: Probably five hundred feet, something like that. So obviously I stopped right there. Took me back to the little farmhouse and then he called the nearest guard post, you know, for them to send a wagon out because it was bleeding pretty good. My arm. The farmer and his wife took me in and gave me a cup of coffee and a piece of bread with jam on it. But they wouldn’t let the German soldier in. So he stood by the door.

T: So you were inside with just the two...

D: Yes.

T: Were you concerned that the civilians that you saw might mistreat you or...

D: Not those out there in the country. They didn’t give any indication of that. Evidently they were...by them taking me in there and giving me a chair and giving me a cup of coffee, I would say they were more or less friendly to the troops.

T: Yes. So your arm was still bleeding.

D: Yes.

T: Were you together with any other members of your crew at this point?

D: No. Of course, when you bail out you’re going forward, and they’re scattered along quite a ways.

T: So you were just by yourself here.

D: All the crew members were. Probably.

T: How long did you stay at that little farmhouse?

D: Oh! Probably half an hour...hour.

T: So a pretty quick stop.

D: Yes. Then they showed up with a wagon. So they hauled me into a bigger town. Whether it was the outskirts of Frankfurt or what, I don’t know...it wasn’t that close. It was a German post, you know. Sentry post. Then from there, why I guess I went...how [I was transported], I’ve forgotten, til I got to Frankfurt—the Dulag Luft.
T: So you were transported in some way that you're not quite sure you remember how.

D: Yes.

T: That first German post you were in. What kind of questioning did you receive or what kind of medical treatment did you receive?

D: Nothing right there. Oh, they wrapped the wound up with paper. A paper tape. Just kind of stuck to it. I don't know. I don't remember if they put anything in it. Any antibiotic or anything. Any sulfa. They just kind of washed it off and wrapped it up.

T: Did they question you at all at this point? Any kind of...

D: Not there.

(1, A, 67)

T: Was there any communication between you and the Germans in this facility at all, or were you just kind of sitting by yourself?

D: By myself. Waiting to... From there then I don't recall how I got to Frankfurt, whether it was by German car, Jeep, or what, but they were gathering up people from all over. People that had gone down. After [me].

T: When you were at that first post there, here you were the only American with these Germans in uniform. Is it safe to say you were scared or nervous?

D: Yes. Nervous. Scared. Yes. Sure. (chuckles) This is not as briefed.

T: Well let me ask then, how had you been prepared for this turn of events? I mean, it was clear American bombers were going down all the time. Had they prepared you for what to do if?

D: Yes. Name, rank, and serial number. That's it.

T: Any kind of, sort of, help or training with what you might expect or how the Germans might treat you, or was that kind of just an unknown?

D: Not really. They said, I think, depending on what branch of the service got a hold of you, whether it was the SS troops—then you were in for a bad time. Otherwise, the German troops...I guess they treated you as they would want to be treated.

T: So you weren't necessarily worried or concerned about being lynched when you hit the ground or anything, as you were going down in your parachute.
D: No. No. No. But when we marched through Frankfurt, left there...

T: When you left Dulag Luft.

D: We left at night when there weren’t any civilians around because—I knew a guy in prison camp that had been left for dead on a pile—they killed a bunch of Americans. But he wasn’t dead. So he just laid there.

T: The civilians did this.

D: Yes. The civilians did that. [So we waited until] dark. And got up and made it to a German sentry. So...see the difference.

T: So you realized when you got to Stalag Luft I, that there were very different experiences with how civilians might treat you.

D: Oh, yes.

T: Although you had, yourself, no specific treatment from...[no] bad treatment from civilians.

D: No.

T: Let’s move to Dulag Luft then. You don’t recall how you got there, but what do you remember about the actual...

D: We got from Frankfurt to Dulag Luft...yes, we went by boxcar.

T: Oh, from Frankfurt.

D: To Barth.

T: How about at Dulag Luft? At that facility there. Were you questioned or interrogated at Dulag Luft?

D: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That’s where they questioned everyone. All they got was name, rank, and serial number. Even they’d come up with things that we knew that...I don’t know how they knew them.

T: Like what?

D: Who the commanding officer was and all that.

(1, A, 101)
T: So they knew more about you than you thought?

D: They knew more about some things than I knew about it. Really. So we just put on a flat face and don’t say anything. Name, rank, and serial number.

T: What rank were you at this time?

D: Second lieutenant.

T: So you’re a pilot with a couple of missions...what kind of questions do you remember them asking you?

D: What was your target? Of course, they knew that. It was Berlin.

T: But they asked you anyway.

D: Yes.

T: Did you tell them?

D: I don’t know. I guess so. Because that (chuckles) we’d already hit it, so there’s no military secret anymore.

T: That’s true. This interrogator, how many times were you questioned? More than once?

D: Oh, yes. One time they didn’t get any satisfaction, get the answer, so they go back to the cell and then they’re calling again, and same questions.

T: Same interrogator?

D: No. I don’t think so. Somebody else. But same thing.

T: Same questions.

D: I don’t know. Come to find out...see, third mission, they knew more than I did about it. Really.

T: Three missions. Where were your other two missions to? You went to Berlin the third one.

D: One was Leipzig. Leipzig, I guess. One. And...I don’t even remember.

T: The third was is obviously the one that sticks in your mind. So you were questioned a number of times at Dulag Luft, and were you kept in a cell with other people there at Dulag Luft?
D: No. Each one had a little room.

T: How big? Do you remember?

D: Probably eight by eight or something like that.

T: Not much room to move around in.

D: No.

T: How long did they keep you there? A couple times questioned.

D: Well, I was there only about two or three days. As I recall.

T: In and out, pretty much. Couple times being questioned and they let you go.

D: Yes.

T: How was your arm doing by this time? The wounded arm.

D: Pretty good. Not okay, but it was all right. I mean, it wasn’t festering or anything.

T: Which was the big concern, I guess.

D: Yes.

(1, A, 127)

T: Did they give you any medical treatment there at all?

D: No. They put another bandage on.

T: But in a sense, you were on your own. It was going to heal up by itself.

D: Yes.

T: You mentioned that you went by boxcar from Dulag Luft to Barth, to Stalag Luft I.

D: Yes.

T: When did you arrive there? Do you remember when that was? When did you get to Stalag Luft I?

D: Probably...let’s see...8 March...no, no, no. I’ve forgotten. I believe it took about three days.
T: On the boxcars.

D: Three to four days. Yes. Because they couldn’t go straight through for all the bombing.

T: That’s a long way from Frankfurt to Barth, anyway.

D: Five hundred miles, I think. Four hundred miles.

T: What do you remember about that boxcar journey?

D: In one end of the car they had a little heater. You know, a little stove with a German guard. There was one or two guards. Guys were sitting on the floor and whatever.

T: At the other end of the boxcar.

D: Yes.

T: How were you separated? German guards from American prisoners.

D: There wasn’t any separation. They were at the other end. Up where the stove was.

T: There was no screen or anything. Mesh or anything.

D: No.

T: And how many Americans, or how many other POWs, were in that car with you? Do you remember?

D: I don’t know exactly. I’d say there was about thirty-five. It was pretty crowded.

T: During the trip there, was your train at all ever attacked by strafing planes...

D: Not that I know of. No.

T: Just a slow, kind of plodding movement.

D: Yes.

T: What do you talk about in a car like that when you’re sitting for days with a bunch of other guys?

D: Where you’re from. This and that. How long you’ve been in.
T: Kind of chatter, killing time?

D: Yes.

(1, A, 153)

T: Did you know any of the guys in that car or were these people that were all new to you?

D: They were all new.

T: So there were no members of your crew in here?

D: No.

T: Did you ever see members of your crew again at Barth, for example?

D: Yes. I believe my copilot was there. At Barth.

T: What was his name?

D: Morse. George Morse. I think he was from New York.

T: So you saw him again at Barth?

D: Yes.

T: Any other members of the crew just kind of...somewhere else?

D: Yes. Scattered all over. Yes.

T: When you got to Barth, here's really the first permanent and the only permanent camp that you were in. What kind of an impression did that camp make on you as you walked in there for the first time?

D: This is your home for the next...indefinite period and I guess, when the gates closed behind you why, that was sort of left permanent (chuckles).

T: Were you...I mean, in a sense, you've gone through some traumatic events. You've bailed out of a plane. You got shot by a German guard. You were transported to Dulag Luft. Interrogated. Was this cause to finally kind of exhale or relax a bit? This was a sense of stability, or were you still kind of nervous and tense?

D: Sort of. It...probably you got...it was a sense of a little stability for a while. Then it could be the end of the line and so, I mean, you just hope for the best.
T: Were you by nature an optimistic person who found it easy to hope for the best?

D: Well, I think so.

T: So in a sense, you could find the good in a situation as opposed to focused on the black clouds.

D: Yes. We could make the best of the situation. You know, you’re always trying...we were always trying to bait the guards and (chuckles) stuff like that.

T: Let’s talk about the Germans at the camp. How much contact did you have with them on a daily basis? I mean, you had roll call every day, right?

D: Yes. Every morning and evening.

T: What was that like? Kind of...just a roll call.

D: Everybody fall out. “Raus! Raus!” Means hurry up in German. And everybody get up and fall in line in ranks. Four deep and about fifty long. One evening—long days over there, being that far north. So the Germans had moved along the road. To the west of us was a fence where the end of the compound ended. These were three barracks out here that the Germans were using. Well, they were getting so many prisoners that they had to...they took them down to the other barracks where the flak school was, and they cut a hole in the...they didn’t; the fence was still there, see? But here’s the guard tower. The original, see? The end of the...now they’re going to be down here. So he couldn’t see this end of the fence.

(1, A, 199)

T: The German couldn’t.

D: The German in the guard tower. It was blocked. His view was blocked. So we kicked a soccer ball around and the Germans, they were trying to line us up and get a count. Well, all this time these guys were going over the fence. Sixteen got out. Eight of them were back in camp that night. Then the other eight got caught later on. But we did succeed and that’s the only way anybody ever got out of there, because no one got out through tunnels. We had 108 tunnels. And no one ever got out through a tunnel.

T: What about escape? I mean, it’s so often talked about. Escaping. How much was it really on your mind?

D: I tell you...to be honest, I can’t speak any German and [we look completely] different from Germans. Most of the people thought it was kind of useless to get out of there. I believe.
T: So what...

D: But it’s just something to keep them aggravated. The Germans.

T: As opposed to really escaping.

D: (chuckles) Yes.

T: And you’re right, if you don’t speak German, you’d be caught immediately.

D: Yes.

T: These Germans. Did you have contact with them? I mean, communication contact at all? You mentioned bribing guards. Something you did personally?

D: No. Very few people had contact with them. I guess the powers that be thought the fewer people talked to the German guards the better off we were. But they had some people that could speak German. They could make the deals. You know, trading. Like for these pictures. Get on the good side of the guards, and he would actually risk his skin for those cigarettes.

T: So cigarettes...how important were cigarettes?

D: Very. We had a little canteen you might call it, set up where you could buy stuff for so many cigarettes.

T: As currency.

D: Yes. Well, I didn’t smoke. My dad was... And the cigarette companies... I guess they gave them to be able...or real cheap and sent them over. So I had all kinds of cigarettes. I had almost enough by the time we were liberated to buy an A-2 jacket. Leather jacket. Then of course, inflation hit (chuckles). So I never did. Here I had all these cigarettes, so I gave them to people that smoked. We hid cigarettes under our bunk...

T: So they were something to hoard, and to trade.

D: Trade.

T: For anything.

D: Yes.

T: And the Germans also wanted the cigarettes.
D: Yes. Because the cigarettes they had were terrible. They were Turkish made. I tell you, they were terrible smelling.

(1, A, 236)

T: I see. So getting cigarettes and having them... You didn’t do any personal trading with the Germans but you knew people who were.

D: No. We had traders.

T: A moment ago you mentioned the contact. Were you encouraged or ordered not to speak to the Germans?

D: More or less.

T: What do you mean by more or less?

D: Well, not to get buddy-buddy with them. Just nod and...keep civil. Keep a distance

T: That’s interesting. From your perspective, how did the German guards treat the prisoners or treat you?

D: In Barth we had pretty good treatment. I’d say good. Of course, that’s the only thing I had to compare it to. They were real good. Other camps...I don’t know first hand. Now IV was terrible. They treated the prisoners up there terrible.

T: But from your perspective, you were never physically assaulted or never saw prisoners...

D: No. The only person...the people who would do that were the SS troops.

T: Did you have those in your camp?

D: Oh, no. No. No. The Germans, regular German Air Force; they didn’t have much use for them either, from what I understand.

T: The guards at your camp were supplied by...not by the SS.

D: No. They were German Air Force.

T: So guarding Air Force.

D: They were mostly old timers. All the young people were out fighting the war. And these old guys, they looked like our fathers.
T: Here were you, twenty-three years old, and so these guys were clearly older than you.

D: Oh, yes.

T: So they were a little more...they were kind of easy-going. Is that what it...

D: Yes. They could be...except, don’t cross them. Because they got...

T: But if you mind your Ps and Qs...

D: Yes.

T: The barracks you were in. Paint a picture of that. How big? What kind of conditions inside?

D: That [barracks] was probably about one hundred feet long, hundred fifty. With a hall down the center. Then we had...I think there was only one latrine for that bunch. There might have been one down at the other end. But there was one with about three stalls. Now, a lot of the camps didn’t have that. A lot of the camps had outside pit latrines. So we were lucky there. They were more or less like our prefab buildings during the war. Something like that. Single walls and a little stove. We had sixteen men in a room. A little stove in the corner. Little Dutch stove, I guess. It didn’t work until we redesigned it. Then it worked pretty good.

(1, A, 283)

T: Was it cold in the winter though? Inside?

D: It was sort of temperate. It was up there by the sea.

T: How about inside your barracks? Was it cold? I mean, did that stove work?

D: The stove worked, but we didn’t have much coal. Coal was rationed. And it’s reconstituted coal. The bricks were soaked in creosote or something and were pressed.

T: Right. The brown coal briquettes.

D: Yes. About the size of a brick.

T: Yes. But you only got so many of those.

D: We only got so many. Yes. Yes. And then the doors were locked. They were open in the morning for roll call. They stayed open all day. For roll call. Then at night...they were locked after roll call. The shutters. They were shut. Like I say, it’s
pretty long days, so probably nine o’clock, because it’s still kind of light at nine. So they probably locked the doors about nine o’clock.

T: Okay. So roll call, and then inside, and then doors locked from the outside.

D: Yes.

T: Shutters closed too, you said.

D: Yes.

T: So really you were in for the night, as it were.

D: That’s right.

T: Could you hear anything outside at night? Guards? Dogs? Anything like that?

D: Once in a while the dogs would bark. We had one incident where this Red Morgan I told you about, Congressional Medal of Honor winner. He got kind of drunked up on the wine that we made. We’d save our prune pits and everybody would bring them back from the mess hall. That’s where we had a consolidated mess hall. Before somebody burned it down. Anyway, so he got kind of drunk on that wine and he was going to take on the German Army. So they put him in the cooler (chuckles). They threatened to court-marital him and all that, but it didn’t come to pass.

T: Ever in the cooler yourself?

D: No.

T: Here you had these barracks and it sounds like comparatively decent quarters. I mean, they weren’t...you had protection from the elements.

D: And when we got there we had...you know wood chips?

T: Yes.

D: Wood shavings? That’s what the mattress covers were filled with. And after about three or four days you were down to sleeping on planks. I mean they all ground up and there was nothing but... We had sort of a...I think we had a sheet. But it was that real coarse material. I don’t know. I guess we washed them ourselves. Yes. We did wash them in the sinks. In the summertime, or when it was fairly good outside.

T: So washing was one of those things you did during the day. How else did you fill the days? Long days or short days. What did you do?
D: We had books to read and just outside in the sun. Sitting and talking to this other (**).

T: So a lot of talking.

D: A lot of walking. Walk around the compound. As long as you didn’t go up to the warning wire.

T: So you knew what was on and off limits.

D: Oh, yes.

T: You mentioned only one member of your crew that you saw there. Did you make what we might call close friends here at Luft I?

D: Oh, yes. Yes. I have one that’s in Roaring Springs, Pennsylvania. Which is very hard to get to. It’s up there between...you know, mountains run northeast...

T: The Alleghenies.

D: And Roaring Springs. He and I went to London.

T: This is after Camp Lucky Strike.

D: From Lucky Strike. Yes.

T: Would you call him your best friend at camp?

D: Probably.

T: How important was it for you to...


T: Ed Brockt.

D: From Washihatchee, Texas. He was a P-38 pilot. He went down...right engine was on fire. His extinguisher wouldn’t put it out. And it was a P-38 which is very hard to get out of without getting hit by the tail.

T: Right.
D: So he had to...the best way is to roll it over and drop out. Because when you go out you will go down like this. If you jump out you'll go down, but if it's straight you're liable to get cut in two by the tail. Yes. I saw him after the war a couple times too. I'd say he was...yes, he was probably the best friend in the camp. But this other fellow, what'd I say his name was?

T: The guy from Roaring Springs.

D: Yes. He and I, when that airplane said, does anybody want to go to London? He and I got our bags and went (laughs).

T: When you have friends at camp, how can friends help each other in a POW situation?

End of Tape 1, Side A. Side B begins at counter 377.

T: Let me go back and ask about the food you received there at Barth. What was the food like?

D: We had bread. It would come in on a wagon. I can show you a picture of it here. It was like... There (shows photo of bread wagon), see this? That's bread in that wagon.

T: So you got bread on this wagon. What was it...

D: It's a wagon with two handles on it, like a wheelbarrow. Like a big wheelbarrow. Big wagon wheels on the side. And that's about four, six, five feet long by about three feet wide. Full of bread.

T: And this would be delivered. Where was it baked?

D: I don't know where it was baked.

T: In the camp or out of the camp?

D: No. Out of the camp. Yes. It was about forty percent sawdust, and some flour in it. On the bottom there was about a half an inch of real thick—like putty. Would settle out on it.

T: On the bottom of the loaf.

D: Yes. So we'd have to cut that off, because that's not hardly edible. In fact, we'd save that, and in the wintertime mix it with a little water and use it for caulking around the windows, where the wind was blowing in.

T: Great stuffing, right?
D: Yes. And then the same way with the potatoes. They’d come in on a wagon.

T: Now these wagons, when the Germans brought the food, how was the food distributed? Did they distribute or did you distribute?

D: The room captain got it. So much for the room.

T: So depending on the number of people in your room, X numbers of amounts of loaves or of potatoes were delivered.

D: Yes. Right. The same way with the coal for the stove.

T: And who actually...was the bread then sliced or how was it equitably distributed?

D: You get so many loaves. I don't know. There was about four people to a loaf. You would get a piece of bread about two inches long. You could slice that and toast it on the stove or some would put jam on it. We did have a mess hall, like I said [until it burned down in April 1945]. We ate in shifts. So many barracks would go there at the same time. They had barley. They made barley soup. It wasn't ground up. They just put the whole barley in there and cook it all night. Then it would get soft. Instead of soup it was cereal food.

T: Like an oatmeal mixture.

D: Yes. Like oatmeal. And we'd get...they'd get so much, you know, in your kit or bowl that you brought with that you eat out of. You’d sit there and eat it. When the new guys would come in, they’d see...they’d cook it, weevils and all. Cooked in that barley. They’d say we ain’t going to eat that. They’d push it aside and the next guy would grab it and eat it. Well, if you’re not going to eat it, I’ll eat it. It won’t hurt you. They’re dead.

T: So your standards quickly...you learned to come to terms with what's there.

D: Sure (chuckles).

T: Now, what happened to that mess hall facility? You said it burned down?

D: I don’t know who started it. But some of us thought that some American started it because he was dissatisfied with the way they were cooking in the mess hall. Alongside the communal dining room there was a big pit. It was for water. For that purpose. For water. In case they did have a fire. But the Germans...I’ll tell you. Did you ever see, oh, that movie with the Stooges trying to get...they came out...anyway. So that’s all burned down. We just had a circus there watching those Germans trying to fight that fire. They turned the pressure on before they got the nozzle on. If you’ve ever seen a hose whipping around. They tried to catch that hose instead of
shutting the water off and then put the nozzle on *(laughing)*. It burned to the ground.

T: I got it. So how did that affect your meals then?

D: Then we had the rations. So much per barracks or per room. So much barley and so many potatoes.

*(1, B, 424)*

T: You had to cook yourself then?

D: Yes.

T: You mentioned food. Did you get food regularly and was it enough, in your opinion?

D: Well, it was enough to keep us alive. I didn’t lose too much weight. Of course, I wasn’t that heavy when I went in. I think I came out 140.

T: What did you go in at?

D: No. I must have been lower than that. I was about 125 when I came out. I went in about 150.

T: So you lost weight, but not...

D: I was only, what, twenty-two?

T: Twenty-three years old. Yes. You were born in 1921. So you had food, but from your perception enough to keep you going, but certainly, you sound like you were hungry.

D: Yes. You know, there were D bars in the Red Cross parcels. High energy.

T: How often did you get Red Cross parcels?

D: Let’s see. We got...golly, I think about every two weeks, I think. As far as I know there were four ...or two people to a parcel. There were some cigarettes in those.

T: So you remember getting those fairly regularly.

D: Yes. Until towards the end of the war. They said the trucks couldn’t get through. The great white fleet. Red Cross. They were painted white with a big red cross on the side. So that's the reason they gave. But lo and behold, when the Germans left, there was a whole warehouse full of Red Cross parcels over there.
T: I see. So from your memory you got them regularly until the end of the war when...

D: Close to the end of the war. Yes. They said they couldn't get through. But they did evidently.

T: As you looked around, yourself, hungry prisoners here, as you looked around, how did prisoners get along with each other?

D: I'd say good.

T: From your perception, what kind of things could lead to conflicts or did lead to conflicts between prisoners?

D: I don't know of any conflicts. Really. We didn't have any in the room. There were sixteen in a room.

T: In your barracks room.

D: Yes.

T: All Americans in your room, by the way?

D: Oh, yes.

T: So people found a way to work together and sort of keep things on an even keel?

D: Yes. We did have books. They had a library. So we could get books.

T: They had something to do, in other words.

(1, B, 454)

D: Yes.

T: Books is not the same as news. I'm wondering how much news of the outside world did you have? Or of the war?

D: We did. We had a clandestine radio. It was in the wall.

T: Of your particular room?

D: No. No. We didn't know where it came from. It's better off if you don't know. As long as they passed the sheet of poop along.
T: So you were content not to know where it was.

D: Sure. Yes. But we found out afterwards that they did have it. One guy maybe had the earphones, see. And another guy...well, they had it built and it was in the wall. And he could, [through] the pinhole, plug in these earphones. It was tuned to BBC. Then somebody would take down notes. Maybe he would. I don’t know. We just...the less you know about where you get it, the better. Nobody can get it out of you if you don’t know anything.

T: That’s right. So you were content not to know that kind of stuff.

D: Yes.

T: Did you get news that came over that?

D: Yes.

T: And how did you get that news? Written or verbal?

D: It was written. It was passed around.

T: You’d get like a piece of paper that said...

D: You go out for a walk around. Somebody from the room and somebody walked along with somebody else. Get the news.

T: How regularly did you get news? Once a day? Once a week? Once a month?

D: Apparently once a week. I think there’s a copy of it in here.

T: It’s literally a piece of paper, on which something would be written.

D: Yes.

T: So you could find out about the Allied invasion of France...

D: Oh, yes.

T: How aware were you that the Russians were close to your camp? I mean, when that time came.

D: Ah...well, the German’s attitude towards us, I think, changed a little bit. They were a little more decent.

T: So you detected better treatment. Towards the end?
D: Yes. Then it got so...well, we didn't know that they were that close. Until that morning. We woke up and there were no Germans around. We heard all this commotion at night. They were loading their wagons and stuff. They took off.

T: So you didn't really have advance warning, rumor or otherwise, that the Germans were leaving. They just were gone.

D: Yes. They were gone.

T: So you could follow the progress of the war, as it were, and could tell slowly that the Allies were getting closer on both ends.

D: We were getting the news. Yes. From BBC. Like I say. And it would get passed around. Maybe not by paper, but by word of mouth.

T: So you could kind of tell how things were going, and they were getting better, from your perspective, as far as the course of the war.

D: Yes. Yes. The guards were showing a little more compassion, you might say.

T: So they knew what was going on too.

D: They knew about it. They were ready to leave.

T: Did your guards change over time or did you see the same people kind of most of the time?

D: Most of the time they were the same. Same old troops.

T: You mentioned older guys.

D: Yes.

T: So faces that you would see on a regular basis.

D: Yes. Oh, that night those guys went over the fence, they tried to get us to form up for, I guess, an hour. And we weren't forming up. If you have a tier of people and you move one...and the Germans would get halfway through counting, eins, zwei, drei, vier...then they'd multiply. Well, if one guy moves, they're way off. So we'd do that. And kicking the soccer ball around between them. We were formed up like this. So pretty soon here comes a squad of Germans with fixed bayonets and full battle gear up to the gate. So the colonel says, "Okay, men. Time to fall in." (laughs) Because they mean business.
T: So the escape attempt was something you could tell was going on.

D: We didn’t even know it at that time. We did find out by the grapevine afterwards how they went over the fence. We knew somebody was going, but we didn’t know where they were going. Most of the people didn’t.

T: Was there any kind of retribution because of that? By the Germans, because of that escape?

D: No. Not that I know of. Not that I don’t remember.

T: The Russians did arrive. Talk about when the Russians arrived at your camp, because that was another change of perspective.

D: Yes. Of course these guards, they’re crazy. They said, what are you sitting there for? Why don’t you...you’re free. Go!

T: Do you remember when they actually arrived? I mean literally, when the Russians...

D: Yes.

T: Talk about that moment.

D: Yes. Yes. They came driving up in a Jeep. They sent an advance guard or team, call it that. So they had a high-level conference with Colonel Zemke, and they said get ready to go east. They wanted to take some of us, march us. And he said no. Thank goodness for him.

T: How did you get this news? I mean, you weren’t part of that conversation. How was this news passed to you? Second lieutenant in the barracks here.

D: We got out. He passed it around.

T: That the Russians wanted to move you east.

D: Yes. Then we were getting a message to London...I don’t know how we got it. That we had been liberated by the Russians. It might have been the Russians. The Russians might have told them. I don’t know.

T: Right. What was the situation like in camp now? I mean, the Germans, in a sense the order, the people who supplied the order were gone and the Russians are there. Is there a sense of chaos or more of organization?

(1, B, 525)
D: *(chuckling)* I’d say chaos because the Russians wanted us to...they said, you don’t have to stay here. Go! And the commander is saying, you better stay put or you’ll get shot. They don’t care who. Americans or Germans. They’d [Soviet troops] shoot you if you wouldn’t give them your wristwatch.

T: Were you tempted to go or tempted to stay? You personally.

D: Oh, most of the people stayed.

T: You included?

D: Oh, yes.

T: So you weren’t tempted to wander off or go to town or anything like that?

D: No. Where are you going to go? There’s still fighting out there.

T: The safest place was in the camp, as it were.

D: Really. Yes. Yes. Isadore Moore. He was one of the guys that got...they went out. They were going to...see, the Russians had a guard out by the water and they were going to go and get this boat. I don’t know whether they were going to paddle to Sweden or what. But anyway, they were going to take this boat and this Russian says—I don’t know what halt is in Russian—but halt. And they just kept going. And he puts his gun down toward him. So they turned around and came back to camp.

T: So there was a sense of...first of all, a lack of communication, Russian and English. And then it was clear that they could be hostile as well, these Russians.

D: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes. Because they...you know, they were very...oh, they call them peons over there. Russian soldiers. Peasants really. Before...let’s see. That was after the Russians got there. This guy came. One evening. Observation plane. It was a Russian. Crazy approach. He came in there and landed. Drunker than a skunk, and he’s talking to the Americans there.

T: Landed his plane in the camp?

D: The airport.

T: Right next to it.

D: Yes. Right next to it. Then he got to talking. Said the Russians were so and so many kilometers over there. This was after the Germans had left. Anyway, so he goes back and gets back in the airplane and takes off. They’re crazy.
T: These Russian soldiers in your camp, what did you make of them? I mean, here they’re in your camp now and you’re there for a couple of weeks in this camp still. These Russians are there. What did you make of those guys in your camp there?

D: You know, there weren’t many. We didn’t see many Russian soldiers. I don’t know where they were. They were hanging out. You know, they had women with them. They cooked their own meals. A little group, a platoon or whatever it is. They didn’t have kitchens. They just…(chuckles).

T: So who was administering the camp?

D: Well, Colonel Zemke was giving the orders then. When the Germans left. So he was talking to the advance commander too.

T: So there was still regular…

D: More or less.

T: Food was being supplied by?

(1, B, 567)

D: Well, we found the Red Cross parcels. Over in that warehouse.

T: Got it. So here was at least something to eat.

D: Some people went out. I’ll tell you, they went out and shot cows and then they butchered them. We had all people that could do everything. Some people were butchers and some were…you know, doctors. Some were chemists and everything.

T: So people were supplying themselves, in a way, with meat or whatever.

D: Sure. And they didn’t let it cure. Got sicker than dogs. Some of them.

T: Did you?

D: I didn’t. Meat’s still warm, and they’re cooking it.

T: You didn’t grow up on a farm though, did you?

D: Sure. It wasn’t a big farm. No. But it was a farm.

T: Because the Germans were supplying potatoes and bread for you.

D: Yes.
T: Did that stop then? That supply. That you recall.

D: I don't know. They may have had a big supply of bread over in this, you know, where they got it from. Originally. I don't know. I don’t know. They did some aircraft maintenance there at the airport. They had slave labor. I don’t know what they were doing. They weren’t making airplanes. But some kind of repair shop. They had all kinds of tools in this...I tell you. And POW Americans were in there and they pulled the shelves down, and it was knee-deep in tools. I had some tools in a little satchel I was going to take. I was going to take these German tools home with me *(laughs)*. When that airplane came in, I just left that.

T: [American] B-17s were flying you out.

D: Yes.

T: Were you prepared for the arrival of those American planes, or was that kind of a surprise?

D: No. The commander kept us informed. He said airplanes would be in there. It was orderly. In other words, the airplanes didn’t get mobbed. They weren’t mobbed when people would get in. It was more or less...it was military.

T: So you knew they were coming and... I’ve seen some photographs of people getting on. It looks fairly well organized.

D: Yes.

T: Getting on the planes. What was your thought there, finally, when the American planes are coming and it’s clear that your POW experience is actually over? What’s going through your mind?

D: Great! Thank the Lord!

T: A sense of relief, in a way, or...?

D: Yes.

T: I’m wondering if you felt...when the Russians were there, did you feel you were still a POW or were you free or...

D: We felt we were free. We probably wouldn’t have felt so good if we would have known then that we were so close to going to Russia.

T: But you weren’t able to go back to American lines. You were kind of in a limbo situation, weren’t you?
D: The lines, I think, were quite a ways from us.

T: Yes. Probably seventy miles.

D: Yes. Something like that.

T: So you had to wait it out.

D: Yes. Yes.

T: But nevertheless, the Germans are gone, so there was a sense of, at least the Russians are Allies as opposed to the Germans.

D: Yes. That’s right.

T: You went to Camp Lucky Strike in France.

D: Right.

T: And how long did you stay at Camp Lucky Strike? Do you recall?

D: I was there about...well, we got a partial pay. I was there...golly, about a week or ten days. That’s when nothing was happening that we could see. So my buddy and I, we...this airplane came in from London, and I don’t know who they dropped off or what the purpose was. Airplane. B-17. So we got our duffel bag and went.

T: Pretty much on your own initiative.

D: Yes. So I suppose we were AWOL for a few days.

T: You said earlier that nobody seemed to miss you.

D: No (chuckles).

T: How were you feeling, physically, by that time?

D: All right. I mean, I didn’t lose enough weight to be bothered physically. Neither did he.

T: And you weren’t...you didn’t have any kind of illnesses that would have kept you bedridden or in the hospital for a while.

D: No.
T: Now, in London did you check into any kind of medical facility or were you just kind of...

D: No. No.

T: On your own.

D: We were just on our own.

T: Staying where? Where did you stay?

D: I don’t remember. I don’t remember. I was just...I tell you, that six weeks, six months after getting released and coming back to the States is just...I don’t...I know that we went to this big hotel. I don’t know why I was sent there from this part of the country. But a lot of them when they came stayed at that—on the East Coast where some of the resorts there. They put us up in a big hotel in Long Beach.

T: California.

D: Hamburgers about that big around. About six inches *(laughing).*

T: Getting back to being a civilian or to being out of the POW experience, now. What kind of...[did] the military provide you with physical recuperation or...

D: Yes. Physical. Complete physical.

T: They checked you out and put you in a couple of R and R facilities.

**(1, B, 643)**

D: That’s what that was, see? That hotel. R and R.

T: In Florida or California?

D: In California.

T: Long Beach.

D: Yes. From this part of the country, I would have thought I would have gone to Florida.

T: They sent you all the way out to California.

D: Yes.
T: California’s okay. What about any kind of counseling, what we might call psychological counseling, about what you’d been through?

D: No. I don’t remember.

T: So they took care of the physical stuff.

D: Yes.

T: Checked you out. Fed you. But you don’t remember any kind of counseling or talk about that...

D: No.

T: You were married in 1946.

D: Yes.

T: First, let’s go back. Your dad was still alive and did you have brothers and sisters around at this time?

D: Yes.

T: How many brothers and sisters?

D: I had one sister.

T: Any brothers?

D: She was a nurse. One brother.

T: How soon was it that you saw them after you got back to the States? Your dad and your brother and sister?

D: Then, see, we got a thirty-day leave. Yes. After we left Long Beach. Let’s see. The war ended 8 May. So we spent about another, oh, three weeks all told, probably still at Barth and then at Lucky Strike. So that would put it about the end of May. Probably got home...June probably.

T: After London.

D: Yes. Then probably went to Long Beach and then about two weeks there. That would be in June. Got home probably.

T: Back to Wisconsin?
D: Yes.

T: That's the first time you saw your dad or your brother and sister, was at that time?

D: Yes.

T: When you saw them, how much did they ask you about your POW experience?

D: Not much. Whether they were afraid to talk about it or afraid I was, I don't know.

(1, B, 678)

T: That's the question, really. Was it, from your perspective, was it more they did ask or you didn't tell?

D: It's probably I didn't tell. I figured it's over. There's no use dwelling on it.

T: Did you get the impression that they wanted to know more than you were telling?

D: I don't know. It's hard to tell. Well, yes...you know, that's probably...when anything traumatic happens, people don't want to ask about it. I don't care what it is. Whether it's an accident or something. Right?

T: So you felt they may have just not broached the subject...

D: Yes.

T: So you wouldn't have to talk about it.

D: Yes. I think so.

T: That's interesting. It almost suggests that it was almost in the air between the two of you, but neither you nor they were talking about it.

D: Yes.

T: That's interesting. Did that change over time? In the years after the war did your brother, sister, or your dad, did it become a topic of conversation later or never really?

D: Not really that I remember.

T: How about your wife? You and Dorothy were married in 1946. When you were dating and after you were first married, how much did she know about your POW experience?
D: She didn’t know until quite a few years later.

T: At all? That you had been a POW at all.

D: Yes.

T: Was that a case of you didn’t want her to know?

D: No. Just never talked...just get on with life. Just forget it.

T: When did that change? Because obviously you've been a big part of the American ex-POWs. When did that change for you?

D: That’s probably when it changed.

T: When you joined that organization?

D: Yes.

T: When was that?

D: Probably about 1976.

T: About the time you retired?

D: Yes.

T: Did you search out the organization or did they find you?

D: I think they found me.

T: So it had been thirty years when you kind of put that on the shelf, your POW experience? What prompted you to change your...

D: I think that’s...they’re still looking for people that have been POWs and haven’t said anything about it. They know that there’s still a whole bunch out there that have never...

T: Yes. What prompted you to finally, in a sense, change the way you had approached that over the years?

(1, B, 722)

D: I realized that I wasn’t alone. There was a whole lot more that had this experience. Just never said. I obtained a couple members. Two or three members.
They said well, what's that? I don't know where people are that they don't read about it. Well, I don't know where I was either up until...*(chuckles)*. So I really can't say that...didn't read or anything about it or anything. So.

T: So for you though, it changed once you became part of the American ex-POWs.

D: I would say so. Yes.

T: How has that organization helped you as far as dealing with your own experiences?

D: It helps me...like it helps everyone. That I wasn't the only one that was caught up in it as a prisoner. I really wasn't proud of it. Really. That I only had three missions.

T: You felt almost ashamed that you were shot down, in a way?

D: Yes. Yes.

T: Although, getting hit by flak is a matter of chance, isn't it?

D: That's true.

T: And yet you still felt...

D: Could have done something different.

T: Do you think so? Do you think that...

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

T: You think, Mr. Peterson, that was more pronounced because you were the airplane commander? You were the pilot who made the decisions about...

D: I think it is. Yes.

T: And it was your call to bail out, too, wasn’t it? Does that mean that you felt, in a way, responsible that nine other guys became POWs?

D: Yes.

T: Have you dealt with that in a sense, since 1944?

D: *(sighs)* Well...when I think about it, I guess I haven't dealt with it. I mean, it should have...well, it could have been the other way. We could all have been killed.

T: If you had risked going back over the North Sea and the plane had crashed.
D: Yes.

T: Do you think of that? That could put the POW thing in a more positive light in a way. I mean, that in a sense, you could almost argue you saved the lives of your crew.


T: But you don't.

D: I do and I don't. You know.

T: When you get together with other ex-POWs, what kind of things come up as topics of conversation? Do guys talk about their POW time a lot when you get together?

D: Not a whole lot. Really.

T: So although you share experiences, in a way, people talk about other things?

D: Yes.

*(2, A, 17)*

T: That's interesting.

D: Yes. We have some members that were on the Bataan Death March. Ken Porwall.

T: Yes. I know Ken real well.

D: Do you know him?

T: Yes.

D: He doesn't talk about it. Terrible. He was in the hospital for four years, you know, when he came back. With tuberculosis of the spine.

T: Yes.

D: So they had to use about three or four vertebrae. And Ray Makepeace. Do you know him?

T: Know Ray real well.
D: Old Ray. He says...any time he thinks things are getting tough, he says, “You ain't seen nothing yet. They get tougher.”

T: Is there, in a sense, the fact that you, as a POW of the Germans had a relatively easier time?

D: Oh, by far.

T: Is there a sense of guilt almost attached to that? That those guys had it worse than you?

D: You can't really...you can't really feel guilty. I mean, the Japanese are savages. I mean...well, first of all, they never heard of the Geneva Convention. Those countries that were members of the Geneva Convention overall were good. I mean, look at Vietnam. They didn't have anything to do with the Geneva Convention. This thing that's going on now.

T: You mean the Iraq thing?

D: The Iraq War.

T: Yes.

D: But the Germans, more or less, followed that. The best they could.

T: So you could see, in a sense, you could see your own experience as comparatively more fortunate?

D: Yes.

T: Is it, when you get together with ex-POWs of the Japanese, is it difficult to find ways to communicate with each other? I mean, because your experiences were so different?

D: Oh, no. Not really. No. They were different. No doubt about it. One hundred eighty degrees different as to how the captors should treat their prisoners versus the Germans.

T: Yes. How about guys from Korea or Vietnam? Are there...is it easy to communicate with them too?

D: Yes. I would say so because they know how much different the Koreans were. They never heard of the Geneva Convention either. Do you know Kenny Hansen?

T: I don't. I've not interviewed him yet.
D: He’s a Korean War. And Bill Hinninger.

T: Where does Bill Hinninger live?

D: In Hastings.

T: Bill Hinninger?

(2, A, 45)

D: That’s Hinninger.

T: Last couple questions I have here: thinking about your own after the war experience, how much were you troubled with recurring dreams or nightmares about your POW experience or about being shot down?

D: I don’t think I was. Maybe I was, but it’s been so long ago that I’ve forgotten, probably. I’ve been having dreams and nightmares now. I don’t know what it’s from. It doesn’t seem to have anything to do with the war. It’s just…I don’t know.

T: So this is a more recent phenomenon.

D: This is not related to this, but I think being a caretaker has something to do with it too.

T: For your wife.

D: Yes. Because we can’t get out and go like we used to and it’s a complete change.

T: Yes.

D: She used to like to go to the meetings, but she just can’t hack it now. We would have been going to the convention if she felt good.

T: Sure. So that’s a change and that’s brought on new sets of stress and issues for you. I bet it has. Over the years, your kids as they were growing up, how much did they know about your POW experience?

D: Hmm.

T: Kids ask questions.

D: Not until after I joined the organization.

T: Since you kind of came out.
D: Yes.

T: And then people started to know, and you started to share your story. How easy was it for you after that time to talk to groups of people, or people at your church, or whatever? Was it something easy to talk about?

D: Never talked about it.

T: I mean after 1976 let’s say, when you joined the organization. Was it easier for you to talk to people in general about this?

D: I’d say it was. Yes. Part of the purpose of the organization is to open up.

T: To help people open up.

D: Yes.

T: What kind of things does the organization do to help people in that?

D: We have an essay contest. We go and talk to schools and the kids listen. High schoolers are pretty rambunctious and pretty yakking and talking, but once we start talking about this, they settle down. I mean, there’s...

T: They’re attentive.

D: Yes.

T: Have you talked to school groups yourself?

D: Yes.

T: What kind of questions do they ask you?

D: Oh, boy. How old were you when you were shot down? Or what did you do for entertainment? Well, we read books. We had books. We did have books. Most of the camps had books. Furnished by the YMCA.

(2, A, 77)

T: Right.

D: A friend of mine, Dick Carroll, do you know him?

T: Sure do. Spoke to him last month. He came to my class, actually.

D: Oh, yes?
T: Yes.

D: Then these kids write a little note. What was funny? That one of the kids wrote. I didn’t know you were that old, or something like that. We were reading them the other day.

T: But you find kids attentive and interested in what you have to say.

D: Yes.

T: That’s good. Final question I have is: what do you think is the most important way that your POW experience changed you as a person? Think of yourself before and after.

D: *(Pauses)* Well, I guess more aware of, you can say, we think that every day is a gift from God. That we’re still here.

T: Do you consciously think about that, kind of on a regular basis?

D: Well, I don’t dwell on it every day, but when things happen... It just wasn’t my time.

T: Would you consider yourself to be more religious or more serious about your faith since then?

D: Well, probably a little more, but I always have been...[have] had a faith.

T: So before you were shot down as well.

D: Sure.

T: Was that faith, do you think, made more intense or more meaningful in any way?

D: Could have been made more meaningful.

T: Are you a different person in any way than the person who went up on that mission on 8 March?

D: Yes. I think so.

T: How would you describe that?

D: About sixty more years different. Ah...I don’t know what to say. What you’d...
T: The person that emerged in, let’s say in May of 1945, gets back to the States in June or July. How was that person different? How was that Dale Peterson different than the person who got shot down a year and a half earlier?

D: Not a whole lot. But I think my faith was reinforced, if anything. I always did have a good faith. But I think it was...when I think that...surely God had something else in mind.

T: That you were preserved. You weren’t killed then.

D: Yes.

T: One thing that I neglected to ask you earlier was, you were a career military person.

D: Right.

T: Twenty years in. Do you feel you were given certain advantages or certain disadvantages because of the fact that you’d been a POW? Because you stayed in the service. In other words, did it help you or hurt you?

(2, A, 117)

D: You mean, how it helped me?

T: From your perception, was it an advantage or a disadvantage, either of those to have been a POW? In other words, did you advance in rank more quickly or more slowly, or was it a value neutral thing. Didn’t matter at all.

D: No. See, if I could have done five missions, why we’d go to first lieutenant. Actually, it helped. I missed. And not getting more missions than three. Five missions and we went in for a first lieutenant.

T: So it cost you that at the moment.

D: So it cost me one grade of retirement. Really.

T: Because you would have been...

D: I would have been a lieutenant colonel.

T: As opposed to a major.

D: Yes.
T: Do you feel, of the duty assignments that you had from 1945 to 1960, that being a POW held you back in those years or helped you get ahead in any way?

D: I don't know. You know, I don't know if they even looked at that in the military.

T: So from your perspective, you're not aware of it being a plus or a minus, really.

D: Only due to the fact that you know, you have to stay so many years in the grade. So second lieutenant. I graduated from flying school 23 June 1943 and then I went over in December '43. England. See. And was shot down in March. If I could have flown five missions or ten missions, I would have been a first lieutenant. Then when I came back, I would have made captain.

T: Right. So there was that direct disadvantage there. That's just by when you got shot down, right?

D: Basically.

T: Yes.

D: Yes.

T: That's the last question I had, and on the record, Mr. Peterson, I will thank you very much for the interview today.

D: Well you're quite welcome. As you can see, I didn't do anything heroic. I always regret I didn't get my missions completed. See. Had I completed my missions, twenty-five or whatever. It was twenty-five then. They kept going up later. I would have finished them in July probably. '44. But then on the other hand, I might not have been here.

T: That's right.

D: So.

T: We can second guess ourselves a lot, can't we?

D: That's right. But anyway. And I probably should have gone back to school and gotten a degree in something. I don't know what it would have been. Let's face it, I wasn't too good in school. I wasn't an A student. But anyway, I was enough to be a crew chief on a P-38.

T: Was the military, staying in the military, the right decision until 1960?

D: I think so.
T: That’s good you can say that now.

D: I think so. I have a wife, a beautiful wife that likes to travel, and I’ll tell you, a lot of military unions broke up.

T: Because of moving, you mean?

D: The wife couldn’t stand it.

T: That’s the last question I had. Mr. Peterson, I’d like to thank you for your time today.

D: You’re welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW