

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Anthony Acevedo
October 13, 2010
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PREFACE

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ANTHONY ACEVEDO

October 13, 2010

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Anthony Acevedo**, conducted by **Kyra Schuster**, on October 13th, 2010, at the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**, in **Washington, D.C.** So, let's start at the very beginning. When and where were you born?

Answer: I was born in **San Bernardino, California**, 1924, July 31st.

Q: Okay, and can you tell me about your parents; their names and where they were from, what prompted them to come to the **United States**?

A: My mother was born in sono – **Magdalena, Sonora, Mexico**. My father was born in **Mexico City**. That was my understanding. And, they came to **United States**, my father came alone – but not together, since he met her, with time, while he was going to school. I understood he was going to school, he was learning to fly, and little things like that.

Q: Okay. What were their names?

A: My father's name, **Francisco Guillermo Acevedo**, and my mother was **Maria Louisa Contreras**(ph).

Q: Do you know when they got married?

A: I never knew what date they got married.

Q: All right. Did they get married in **California**, or **Mexico**?

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A: I think they must have gotten married in **California**, but I never pursued the thing, because I was never asked.

Q: And how many siblings? Were you the oldest child?

A: Myself, and my sister. She's – she was born in 1925, October the 15th, which is – her birthday is in a couple of days.

Q: And her name?

A: **Maria Louisa**.

Q: Okay. And what did your parents do for a career?

A: My mother was a housewife, and my father, from the beginning I understood that he worked for a company, the **Elger** company then, they call it, sanitation; which was many equipments due to – for bathrooms. And it was – from what I understood, he was working, then pursuing to make a career for engineering.

Q: Okay. And as a Mexican-American growing up in **California**, what was it like for you at the time? How were you treated by other people?

A: Being born in **San Bernardino, California** – my mother died when I was a year and a half old, and my – so that left us, my sister and me. And I recall when I was next to her, at the time of her death, I still – my sister was crawling all over the place, and she didn't know what was happening. So, my father decided, after her death, to move to **Pasadena**, and where he had met, 40 – four years later, met my

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other mother, my stepmother, and her name was **Maria Louisa**, and – and she was born in **Durango, Mexico**, in this little town of **Topia**. And so, when I lived in **Pasadena**, I grew up with what you call half-cousins. I – to me, they turned out to be more cousins than my own cousins, cause I didn't know my cousins very well.

Q: And what was it like growing up? How were you – where did you go to school?

A: I went to school in the east side of **Pasadena**. It – they call it the – **Lamanda Park**. And the little area was what you call a **barrio Viejo**, a little town, or a village, with no sidewalks and no pavement at all. And a school call – elementary school called **Freeman**(ph) school, and where Mexicans – Mexican-Americans could not associate with Americans, at that time. So we – we were all Mexican-Americans, born in the **United States**, and the – not to associate with the Americans.

Q: Do you know why not?

A: Beg pardon?

Q: Do you know why not? What did they – were the reasons why, or –

A: We never knew. It was just a question mark that we had in our minds, that why we were not allowed to play with, or associate with them. And the most funny thing is that my teacher – and I remember her, Mrs. – Mrs. **Greenhof**(ph), her husband was the conductor, Mr. **Greenhof**(ph), and he turned out to be my – my godfather

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in first communion, were a very nice person, even though they were teachers at that school.

Q: So you had separate classes than the other students? The American students, you had separate classes from them?

A: No, Americans were in – were to associate in tha – in that school at all.

Q: And how did that affect you, as a child?

A: Well, we – it was just the question, we – we didn't know why, until we found out that even if we went to **Brookside Park**, up towards the **Rose Bowl**, and – and we went swimming, that we were to swim in the – in that area where only Mexican-Americans swam. And I knew that the blacks couldn't swim in our area, wer – because we weren't to associate with them. And only the whites were to – to swim in their area.

Q: And how did – how did that make you feel, as a child?

A: Well, it – it just felt like not wanted. But, at that moment, we let it pass. We didn't say nothing.

Q: And what was the – the general treatment otherwise, like of your parents?

A: My father remained like a person incognito, because he went about his own business, never thought about – of us, or saying well, don't worry, or nothing. Just kept along. So, as I started to grow up, little by little, there my – with my half-

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cousins – there was **Ernetto(ph) Priatto(ph)**, which was – he was the son of the – of the aunt of my mother – my stepmother. So that was a family together. And so we had selling papers in the corners, delivering papers to houses. And we walk from **[indecipherable]** it was called, a little barrio. We head down **Correro(ph) Street**, to **Hill Street**, then get ready for the N-New Year's day, and sell papers for everybody to – and so they use the paper, newspapers for pillows, or cover up while the **Rose** parade was able to start.

Q: And did you go to church, growing up?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Did you go to church?

A: Our church was in – right there at the **barrio**, which the name was **Saint Joseph's** church. And with time, I found out it disappeared. But that was when I left for **Mexico**.

Q: So, why did you go back to **Mexico**?

A: At the time, well, it was all strange, that my mother started to – or my stepmother, that I call her mother, I noticed that she started to have somebody pack her furniture, and all our furniture, and – and then the truck came by and picked up all that furniture, and then as – well, we asked her, we says, what's happened, where are you going? She said no, we are all going. And I says, where are we going? She

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says, we're going to **Mexico**. And I says why? He says, because we were told to leave the **United States**. And si – but, does my father know about it? He knows about it. My father was in **Mexico**, and – and he had a good job, he had graduated from engineering, and became a – an architectural engineer, and – and all things that we didn't even know, while we were growing. Every door – everything was incognito. And so, at that time, was – by that time, I was about around nine and a half years old, close to 10, and – and where are we heading, I asked my mother. She said, we're heading toward **Durango, Durango, Mexico**. And so, when we arrived in **Durango**, I remember that my father had a house rented out for us to live, just a few days before they get a house. And so I remember sleeping on top of the – one of those big suitcases, that you used to travel in a big ships, at one time. And was funny how we had to just sleep on top of that, and fall down. And kid's stuff, that we [**indecipherable**]. So that – then I started to grow up then, and my father begin to increase his title, his engineering, his business. He became well-known. And it was altogether a different custom of life, living in **Mexico**, compared to in the **United States**.

Q: How so?

A: Oh, they call me the **gringo**, because I was born in **United States**, and that I know half English and half Spanish. And that was kind of difficult, but before I

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knew it, I had a teacher tell me, he says, I want you to help me to teach these children to speak English. And she was an English teacher, so I tag along.

Q: And what was – so you were going to school, and your father was now working – where was your father working now?

A: My father became a director of public works for the state of **Durango**. And – and so, at that time as I – as I started to grow up, he – it was time when the Olympics was supposed to start. **Mexico** was the named nation to – for the Olympics, world Olympics. And so my father decided to build a big Olympic swimming pool, which was a hundred meters long, by 50 meters wide, with all the decorations, as a – a – an Olympic swimming pool would look like, and with a – a transmitter along the side of that swimming pool so that people could listen to the music, and – and promenade. So, while I was going to school, we all got excited about the Olympics, but then there was two other fellows and myself, we all – they all – always called us the – the three musketeers. And I liked to make – do exercise, and so I – I trained re – by looking at the books my father had of **Charles Atlas**, well-known then. And every morning we used to – well, these fellows would come over and pick me up, and we'd go swimming at the swimming pool, five in the morning. And then about seven, we'd head back to s – to school. This time it was about – the war had started, the 40s, 1940. And **Corolla(ph)**, **Antonio Corolla(ph)**

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was my friend. He was a – a – the son of a – a diplomat, congressman. **Jose Blanco** – **Pepe Blanco**(ph) they call him, **Pepe**, he was the nephew of a railroad conductor. Which he knew the **Morse** code very well. So we went out swimming, and **Pepe Blanco**(ph) says, **Atlas, Atlas**, there's a spy going on. I said, why, what do you know? We are very low voice, because we hear music in the distance, and I was from the transmitter. He says that there's a **Morse** code going on, and – and – and there – there are submarines in **Baja, California** connected with – with these people. I says, but how? How do you know? Yeah, I hear, **dara de dara dara de dara dara dara** – so they said that we better get to your father. So we decided – we dashed out that swimming pool, we headed back to school. And they went to school, and I went to his office, my father's office, and I knocked quick at the door of his office, and I told him about the situation. And soon he – before you knew it, he had them arrested. And sure enough, they were spying for the Nazis, the **Germany**. Well, I didn't realize then that we had a – a German colony in – in **Mexico**. And here I was associated well with the groups of fellas, Boy Scouts. We had formed a Boy Scout group, and our scoutmaster, Boy Scout master was the **Schraeder**(ph), a **Schraeder**(ph) family that owned a hardwood store there in **Durango**. And so, by that time I was 17 and a half years old, and an amer – the consul general of the **United States** was after me because of my age, and get ready

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to go back in **United States** and serve your country. Yes, sir. He was very good friend of – he was a very nice friend of ours. And so I said goodbye to my parents, and my mother pre – my mother prepared me, meaning that she – she took my coat pocket, 200 dollars, put it – a safety pin on it. She says, this is nobody steal it from you. Use it when you can. Yeah, but how am I gonna take it out of there, it's – it's – it's secured. All these funny things get – one asks. But anyway, I had it – I said goodbye to my parents and – and I took the train from **Durango** to the city of **Torreón**, we transferred over – I transferred over to another train. And at that time I didn't know the traveling situation, because I had never traveled. And – and I – I had my little satchel with me, and little suitcase. And I heard somebody say, psst, psst, just a – like a whistling at me through the window of the other coach train. And I went up, and he says, give it to me, he say, I have a seat here for you. So we met fre – made friends, and we became friends until a year later. But I'll tell the story about that. I – I said goodbye to him, because he was supposed to meet his sister there, in **Juarez**. I crossed the border, and I headed to **Pasadena**, back to my cousin's. And that's where I headed for induction, the following day. And then the – the head of the induction center said that I needed another semester of school. And I said, why? He says, well, we don't evaluate the sc – the – what you went through in your school, is not enough. I says, I went to school seven in the morning

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til six in the evening. Isn't that enough? And, I says, they teach us very much over there. More than they teach you here. I couldn't say any more, he says, but you need – you need a one semester. So I went to **Pasadena City College**, I took a course, and I passed by three months in that vacation. And I wa – I got my diploma, and – and I'm in the army. So before I knew it, I was in **Oregon**, in **Camp Adair**, **Oregon**. We call it **Swamp Adair**, because it was full of swamps. And then I was transferred, and I had special letters that my father had given me, as a duc – introduction, showing that my efforts was to – wanted to be a doctor. And so, before I knew it, I was transferred from the infantry to the – to go to medical school.

Q: Did you know what was going on in **Europe** with the situation with the Jews, or what was happening at all during the war? Were you aware of any of that?

A: Until then, little by little, I started to pick up about **Germany**, and the spies were going on, and – and – and the frustrations of what was happening, and yet, they kept us so that we'd be alert. So they send me to the medical school, I went for four – four and a half months, and gave a study for equivalent almost for a year of study. And I graduated, and I headed back to my outfit, and before you know it, I – we're all heading back – heading for **Europe**. That's when I was going to sa – well, I'm not going to go in details, because it's just a little elaborate, but if you want me to, I

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Q: If you don't mind. Whatever you feel comfortable with.

A: Okay. We went in a – **West Point**, transatlantic, and that held almost a complete division.

Q: What division?

A: **West Point**.

Q: What division were you in?

A: The 70th infantry division.

Q: Okay.

A: And I was assigned to the 275th medical detachment, as a medic. And we had it from – from ne – **New Jersey, Camp Davis, New Jersey**, and – to **Marseilles, France**. And I couldn't stand the waves at all, and I had to lie down for 13 days in the c-cot, eating nothing but **Ritz** crackers, cause I couldn't stand the – I – it was – I got dizzy very easy. So, then we landed in **Marseilles**, and we stood there for about two or three days, and I had a friend of mine, he was Jewish.

Q: What's his name?

A: His name was **Murray Pruzan**. I always kept in touch with her – with his parents. And – and he was a medic also. And that night, we're bivouacking, and he says – he says, **Anthony** – by that time they never called me **Tony**, called me **Anthony**. And he says, I don't think I'm gonna make it. He says, I'm gonna die. I

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said, **Murray**, don't speak like that. You should pray, have faith. No, no, no, I have a feeling I'm gonna die. I said, **Murray**, don't say that. But anyway, I changed his mind by talking other things. Then that – two days later we headed for – for **Lyon, France**. And we were delighted, he was assigned to a group, and I was assigned to another group of Company **B**, and he was assigned to Company **A** something. But anyway, we went to battle, and on my assignment I headed with Company **B**, on a special assignment, and I just followed. I carried my duffel bag, and all my equipment with me, and everybody used to laugh at me, and yell at me, and say, **Anthony**, drop that. Drop all that stuff [**indecipherable**] they gonna kill you, you're a sore thumb, you – I said, no, I says, that's gonna save my life. And so, we had it to their assignment, what they had to do, and I just followed, and as we were heading back, they finished what they had to do, the battalion. And – and we were marching towards a ridge, and there was a dike down below, and I heard an echo, medic, medic, cause there were machine guns going on back and forth. And I was carrying my stuff with me, and then – and then it's – so finally I picked up the sound, and I started to head downhill. And as I was heading down the hill, I tripped on some branches. And when I tripped over those branches, then I saw up ahead, a cave with Germans. Well, there were about six Germans in there, with machine guns. And those machine guns were the umpteen, I mean, just you thought there

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were thousands of them, but it turned out to be that the – those machine guns that **brrrt, brrrt, brrrt**. And at that time when they start shooting at me, my stuff went up in the air. My duffel bag and everything, it just turn up into a **[indecipherable]**. My other boots were in ping pong here and there, and so on, so forth. I fell on the ground and I crawled to my helmet, and before I knew it I was with the fellows that they were wounded, so I – by that time they had control of the – the Germans, and the – and so I was doing repair jobs. First aid sutures and sewing thumbs. Cutting a leg off, and putting a tourniquet, and sewing up that leg, the stump. Doing this and that, so – as a medic. So finally, we all started to head back and they helped me with the wounded. And as we were heading back, our scout said that we couldn't get to – back to **Philippsbourg**, and so we decided – he said, move over to the hill. And so we went up to the hill, and there I saw **Murray Pruzan**, that he had been killed. He tried to save the – well, he did save the – our captain – commander's life. He had severe wounds, and he was unconscious. But **Murray** was – was cut in half by machine guns. I lost my friend. And, at that time, it was just like saying, all hell broke loose, there on that hill. And we were there from the – oh, for days before Christmas until the sixth – the second of – the second of January –

Q: And this is –

A: – when we were selected t-to be captured.

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Q: And this was during the **Battle of the Bulge**.

A: Yes, the **Battle of the Bulge**.

Q: And do you remember the name of the hill that you were on?

A: **Falkenberg Hill**.

Q: Okay.

A: And that's when the Germans came up the hill and – and we had to surrender, and we tried to destroy everything what we could carry. I carried my – my first aid, everything, equipment with me, as much as I could, to help the f – the sick. When the Germans took us, they forced us to get my shoes off – our boots off, walk down the slope barefooted in the snow, and march for about almost a mile, to the trucks.

Q2: Let's pause tape for a second, please.

Q: Excuse me one second. **[break]** This is a continuation of a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Anthony Acevedo**. Okay, so we're going to go back a little bit, and I want you tell me – you're in **Lyon**, and you're 19 years old, and it's your first time every experiencing anything like this. So, how did you get from **Lyon** to **Belgium**, and – let's start there.

A: From **Lyon** – for the first time, we – we took a train to head for **Philippsbourg**.

Q: What country was that in?

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A: A little town, little village of **Philippsbourg**, up towards the front of the **Maginot Line**, and the **[indecipherable] Line**.

Q: Okay.

A: And at that time, when we – we took the train, an experience was that all the fellows felt, oh, you know what, we need some wine. I said, oh no, the expression that you get sometimes that, now they want to drink, to lose their fears. No, thank you. But, smell this. And it's – and a – and they call it schnapps. And I says, well, that smells like turpentine, that you wash your hands from, after you finish painting. That's – then they tell, that's better than vodka. I says, I don't drink that. I **[indecipherable]** importance, but that – the fellas starting to feel that – that they wanted to feel a little numbness from the fear. And we got to **Philippsbourg**, and it turned out to be a wire factory.

Q: I'm sorry, what country was **Philippsbourg** in?

A: It's a little town of **France** and **Germany**, that it has a highway, and they – they used to call it the 80 – the corner 80. I don't know why they used that term, but anyway, it was **Philippsbourg**. And from **Philippsbourg** to **Falkenberg** was just a few kilometers to where the – that hill was.

Q: And that was in **Belgium**?

A: In – in – no, **France**.

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Q: In **France**.

A: **France**.

Q: Okay.

A: At the time that we were going to do our f – up front, I hear somebody call me, medic, medic. I turn around, and I [**indecipherable**] the fella, and I says, what do you want? I says, I'm afraid, I don't want to go.

Q: Was this during the battle?

A: In the battle.

Q: What was going on around you?

A: We – we were going to head back to – I mean, we were going to head up the front, towards the battle. And he – he wanted – he was afraid to face the battle. And so I had to tag him, and call him as a casualty.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: No, I don't reme – no, I don't remember his name.

Q: Okay.

A: At that time there were fellas that – where you had to – or they commit suicide. And that – just sign a – a card where he heads back to the medical corps, and call him a casualty, or he would commit suicide, or shoot at everybody.

Q: At the Americans, at his colleagues?

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A: American. American. Oh, there would be fella that they were – they were afraid and – and they started lose that – that feeling of – want to do something, and yet they cannot do anything at all, because they couldn't think any more, and they said, could you baptize me? Or he says, I don't know how to pray, I'm afraid. And so I would more or less remind him a prayer, or whatever. I says, the – I'd ask them what religion. No religion. They had no faith, and they weren't taught to have faith, and so this – these were fellas that y-you – you come across.

Q: What faith were you?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: What religion were you?

A: Catholic.

Q: Catholic. Did you have a prayer book with you, or how did you help them pray?

A: I pra – I had my prayer book with me, and – and I would use some phrases that wouldn't be too long, but enough to – for that person, that soldier, to motivate him, make him feel motivated, and feel free of fear. That's what he was, he was afraid.

Q: So you weren't just a medic, you were their chaplain.

A: I had to use the – th-the – the chaplain – we had the rights to do that, for purpose of trying to save lives.

Q: How did that make you feel?

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A: It made me feel that – more opened, more relaxed, more faith, more strong. And that's what gave me – invigorated me not to be afraid.

Q: So how did you feel going into battle, and what did you see around you?

A: To me, I had question marks in up here, and I said, God help me, and there I go with the rest of them. And – and I'm in your hands.

Q: And what was it like that – those first few days going into battle, what did you see?

A: Afraid that any moment wi – a German was going to sh-shoot in where or what direction. Cause when I – at that time, when I had turned over that – that fellow, a – a sergeant asked the captain, what are we going to do with these Germans? They had captured about 30 - 40 of them, and they had them all by the wire factory, to the side of the wire factory, and so the sergeant went over and said, captain, what do we do with them? Take care of them.

Q: This is taking care of the Germans.

A: Take care of the Germans. Well, you can use the terminology in two ways. Take care of them by – by guard them, don't do anything to them, because they're prisoners, or shoot them. Well, that was the incorrect. He shot them, all of them.

Q: The American.

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A: And – and that gave me a feeling of, why did they have to shoot them, since they were already in our hands, with no equipment. And they were not endangering our lives. A prisoner of war is a prisoner of war.

Q: Did you see the shooting take place?

A: But I submit – I submitted that report. That was wrong, what they did there.

Q: Did anything – were there any repercussion for that American?

A: I never knew. I never knew. But wa – that was one of the cases where I – it kept me – in my mind. So – and so that was, at the time, before heading out into – with my duffel bag and everything. And so, when I was up in that hill, and I took care of the fellas –

Q: How did –

A: – first aid.

Q: Yeah, I was, how did you take care of the fellas, cause you were now up on

Falkenberg Hill.

A: Oh, I'm now back on **Falkenberg Hill.**

Q: And you – you were ordered – your whole unit was ordered to go up there?

A: The whole –

Q: How did you end up on the hill?

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A: We – when – when the machine gun in the – when we finished our – the assignment, where my duffel bag bursted up in flames, and then –

Q: Where was that?

A: That was before getting to **Falkenberg**.

Q: Okay.

A: We were heading back, and the assignment that the group had been assigned to do away with – annihilate certain pillboxes that there were Germans.

Q: What are pillboxes?

A: That's where Germans had equipment, the secret equipment, the missiles, or – or **[indecipherable]** bombs that they were shooting. And so, us medics didn't know what was then – what they were doing, what were the assignments, it was secret. And us medic, you just take care of the sick and the wounded. So that was when, upon heading back, they had finished the assignment, and that was – it was heading back, and when I heard that the – the sound effects of the medic, medic, and – and you can – you – you find the echo from all sides, and a **[indecipherable]** the echoes just travel in the – in the – in the forests. And there was snow up to your waist, so your voice gets to where you say a word here, and it echoes over there.

Q: And where were you during this?

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A: I was on top of the ridge, heading – marching to head back to the – to the – the wire factory.

Q: And what town was the wire factory in?

A: **Philippsbourg.**

Q: Okay.

A: And so we f – that's when my – when I headed down the – the – the slope, I – I tripped on a – on the branches. And as I tripped, my duffel bag went up in the air. And I th – it went up in the air, the machine guns started, and they were firing at me. And so I fell in the – on the ground, and I sl – I crawled into my – my helmet, and then I crawled to where my fellows were. And so I – I started to give them first aid, and fix it up, and – and there were fellows that had a leg blown up, and so I had to do my first aid tourniquet, s-sew it up, and cut it off.

Q: How did that make you feel? Was that the first time you had to do something like that?

A: I had experience learning, as – if you want to be a doctor, you have to be – do what you have to do. And I did it with – with all my heart, and feeling that young fellows the same – my age, do or die. But fear nothing and injected him with morphine, and – to prevent the pain, and – and repair that wound. But

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[**indecipherable**] blown up, fix it up, whatever you can do it, to stop the bleeding.

Wounds, everything, and fears of anything yet. Keep the morale going.

Q: Mm-hm. And how was it for you, this – you know, you’d grown up in **Mexico**, and now you’re in this foreign country, in a – what was that like for you? Was this totally different from – I – I mean, you’d never experienced anything like this. How are you feeling at that time?

A: To me, I – I – when I left **Mexico**, I – I wasn’t too happy living in **Mexico**, because I was used to my being in – in good old **Pasadena**. That’s where I wanted to be all the time, because if I turn back a little bit over there, living in **Pasadena**, my cousin and I would have a little scraper, and we buy ice, big cubes of ice, and scrape it. And that fill up in a cup, and soak it with **Kool-Aid** flavors and sell it for three cents a cup, going down the road, house by house. And that’s how we – and every penny, or whatever penny we made, we’d give it to my mother, or – part of our lives. So, things like that motivated you, the – doing things that you’re not supposed to do.

Q: So, thinking about your family, remembering home –

A: Yes.

Q: – helped you a lot.

A: Yeah.

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Q: Yeah. So, what happened after this incident? You were now – your unit was heading towards – was charged to head towards **Falkenberg**?

A: Yeah, when we heard – well, we were up there in the **Falkenberg** when – then I saw – I saw **Murray Pruzan**. I had lost my buddy, and – and Captain **Schmidt**(ph) was very seriously wounded, he was unconscious. And so I did what I can to – to continue on part of the – what **Murray** had left, he wasn't able to complete, when he was wounded, or killed. And a sa – same thing I did with the other fellows that needed wounds that – per the conditions that us medics had to do.

Q: How did it make you feel when you came across **Murray**, when you found him?

A: Well, it's funny. I prayed for him, God had taken him, and I said, I told you **Murray**, I told you not to fear, that you were going to survive. That's all I had to – I couldn't do anything else but to pray for him, because his soul had been taken. And he was a very kind person, very docile type. So we headed back down the hill, they took u – forced us to take our shoes off.

Q: Wait, I want to go back, I'm sorry.

A: Okay.

Q: So, you were – how long were you on the hill before the Germans came?

A: It was until the – until the – January the sixth, when the Germans took us – captured us. We were – we were there –

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Q: Were you fighting during that time, were you holding them off? What were you – what were you and the guys doing?

A: Well, I wasn't in the hill very long, because that h – hill had been occupied by our company, Company **B**. And we hadn't had any information about it until when we were heading back towards **Philippsbourg**, when the scout informed us that we couldn't go because the Germans had taken **Falkenberg** – I mean, had taken **Philippsbourg**, the wire factory. And that – that to head for **Falkenberg**. And so we headed up there, that we had to entrench ourselves, and get – dig in and make our own foxhole, and – until whatever happened, because the – our planes were protecting the area, permitting the Germans to go up the hill. But it turned too late, because we ran out of ammunition, and the – the – then the Germans had more control of the area, and we couldn't do it any more there, our buddies couldn't do it any more, because they ran out of ammo – ammunition.

Q: Did – I'm sorry, did you know what the other units in the area were doing, or you guys were completely on your own?

A: We were on our own. Like Company **C**, Company **K**, they were all farther away from the areas.

Q: So what did your guys do when they ran out of ammunition?

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A: That's when we had to – yeah, we gave up. We started destroying our equipment – well, they started to destroy their equipment, because I don't – we, as medics –

Q: The Americans did. The other – the infantry.

A: [**indecipherable**] and the other infantry destroyed the machine guns, and – and dug the – all the am-ammunition, destroy it, dug it and buried it.

Q: Why did they do that?

A: To prevent the Germans from getting control of it.

Q: Okay. And so, wa – after they did all that, how – did you have food, did you – how did you take care of yourselves?

A: We ran out of – we ran out of food. We had no food. As a matter of fact, we had a – I remember that I was in a foxhole, and that was the last moment, and I had my last little **K** ration, it was a chocolate bar, and I fell asleep, and the – the Russian probable was very hungry, so he stole it from me.

Q: There were Russians with you?

A: There were a White Russian that our outfit had captured.

Q: Okay. And –

A: But we – we didn't punish him. We – we –

Q: So, you were all in foxholes, or how did you –

A: In foxholes.

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Q: Okay.

A: We were in foxholes.

Q: And how long were you there?

A: Unt – from – that foxhole, from the first of January, to the sixth. That was when we had it – when we were told to head for –

Q: So who told you to surrender, this –

A: The – the scout.

Q: The americ – your – okay.

A: The American scout. When the American scout – we were heading back after the battle that we did away with it – with the Germans down the hill, when I fell down.

Q: Right.

A: Okay. We headed back, and as we heading back to **Falkenberg** – I mean, to **Philippsbourg**, the scout said – we bumped into him, and he told us to head to – to **Falkenberg**.

Q: But you were bunkered down on the hill, you were stuck there?

A: Yeah.

Q: For a week, you said? For how –

A: From the second of January, to the sixth.

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Q: And it was the – your – the American, one of your guys in charge, gave you the order to finally surrender?

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: Okay. So, what happened? The Germans – what happened after you surrendered?

A: The Germans – one of – one of our lieutenants, acting as a commander, took over.

Q: Do you remember his name?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: I had his name, but it's been so long.

Q: It's okay.

A: Okay. Hard to remember names. He – as a matter of fact, later I'll tell you about him.

Q: The – which one? The one in charge?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And he se – decided to ser – we'll have to surrender. We'll have to give up everything, so destroy everything you have as equipment, firearms and everything.

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And so, dig holes and bury the ammunition. And so, I'll come out with a flag, white flag. The Germans start coming up the hill, and that's when we had to surrender.

Q: How did you feel at that moment?

A: Bad. We felt bad. Yet there – there was not a thing to do but save our lives, and save our – the wounded. And so, the Germans took us – we had to take our shoes off, we had – and the snow was up to our waist. The coldest winter in a hundred years. Pretty close to 50 degrees below zero. And we headed back, we headed towards the trucks.

Q: Why did they make you take your shoes off?

A: Prevent us from escaping. We headed for the trucks, and then – then they took us to **Bad Orb, Stalag IX-B**.

Q: Where is that?

A: That's near **Frankfurt**.

Q: Okay, hold on.

End of File one

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Beginning File Two

Q: This is a continuation of a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** with **Anthony Acevedo**. So, tell me what it was like the first time you saw the Germans in battle, or when you first came across them.

A: When I came across, that's with reference to before being captured?

Q: Whenever. In battle, or after you were captured, or – your first experiencing – experience with them.

A: Well, the – the experience was when they're being shot, at that cave, and then one of the Germans decided to escape, and yet, he had a rifle, and he was going to shoot one of us. And one of our fellows happened to be a very sharp shooter, and at 400 feet away, blew his head.

Q: The German's head?

A: The – the – the American blew – blew his head up. And that was my experience of seeing something go up in the air.

Q: How did you feel about that? What was your reaction?

A: It was a – a feeling of, I says, oh my God, but it had to happen, it's either he or us.

Q: Mm-hm. And you mentioned being in a cave, were you in a cave, or were you in – were these the foxholes you were captured in?

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A: They were – they were in a ca – they were in a cave.

Q: They –

A: They were in – they were in a – hidden – there were six Germans with machine guns hidden in a cave.

Q: Okay.

A: And they were waiting for our – our bi – group, company.

Q: This was way before you got captured.

A: Yeah.

Q: This is when you fell?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: That's when we –

Q: And after the Germans captured you guys, how – how did they treat you? Were you worried that they were –

A: Well –

Q: – going to treat you the way that your – some of your buddies had treated them?

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A: Yeah, we didn't know the way the Germans would treat us, but well, we were forced to – to get our shoes off, and one company commander of the Germans before he – I headed t-to the truck, I didn't know that h – that he had a background on me, when he saw me as a medic. Because he says, stick with us and I'll – I'll see that you go to University of **Munich**. I'll take you to **Munich**.

Q: Did he say that to you in German, or –

A: In English.

Q: Okay.

A: And it was very strange for him to tell me that, to offer me.

Q: Why did he offer you that?

A: Because – I don't know. I didn't know. But, I told him, I'm a medic, and I'll stick with my buddies. So, we headed back – I mean, he send us to that prison camp called **Bad Orb, Stalag IX-B**.

Q: How did you get to **Bad Orb**, you rode the trucks?

A: The trucks. We got a –

Q: The whole way to the camp?

A: To the camp. It was two, three miles from there.

Q: Okay.

A: And –

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Q: What were your first impressions, when you arrived?

A: Well, we were scared, and yet we were – we were blah, like – like –

Q: You were numb.

A: – why did this happen to us? And they tossed us into these – these barracks, and – and th – the – they told us – interrogated us, and gave us a number – prison number.

Q: How many of you were there, in your group that arrived at the camp?

A: I couldn't remember exactly the group, the number, because since the German divide – divided us, all privates into one section, **PFCs**, so [**indecipherable**] section, and then – or sergeants and corporals go to another section.

Q: And what was your rank at the time?

A: My rank was **PFC**.

Q: Okay.

A: But I didn't know that I was already a corporal.

Q: Okay.

A: I found that out afterwards.

Q: So you were with the **PFCs**.

A: **PF – PFCs**.

Q: Did you see any other prisoners when you arrived at **Bad Orb**, at **Stalag IX-B**?

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A: Yeah, yeah. We – that prison camp was composed of – of about close to 40,000 prisoners.

Q: But they weren't all Americans.

A: Only amer – Americans, English, Spaniards, South Africans, Arabs. They had it all.

Q: Okay. And you were first registered by – who registered you an – into the camp?

A: Commanding officers were at our table, and they –

Q: Were they Germans who registered you?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And what did they ask you, when you got up to the table?

A: Just – just my name and – and – and give you your – a number, your registered number.

Q: Do you remember your number?

A: Yes, **27016**.

Q: Okay.

A: And I have it on my license plate of my car. The six is not in there, because it doesn't fit the plate. But –

Q: And what happened after they registered you into the camp?

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A: Then they select – sele – selected you to go to one of the barracks. You go into the barracks, and you stay in there, and then – til they tell you, in groups, to come out, to – for feeding, or for war indoctrination, or what they wanted do to you.

Q: What did the – such as what? What were some of the things they wanted to do to you, or –

A: Oh, just – just make you stand out there in the cold, and then nu – th-they didn't say nothing, absolutely nothing. They just ke – just to control you, as then – and they don't want you do nothing, say nothing, and otherwise you'll be punished, if you did something that yo – out of – out of order.

Q: Mm-hm. Were you ever interrogated while in **Stalag IX-B**?

A: Until one na – one day, it happened to about – about a week later, after captured, we were all inside, lying down on the floor, and we heard the – the chains of the gate – the door.

Q: In the barracks.

A: In the front, t-to open.

Q: Open the barracks, or open the camp?

A: The barracks.

Q: Okay.

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A: And in walks two guards with machine guns, and behind them a tall official Gestapo. And he looked to me, you thought, my God, we all looked a-at him, is he a movie star, or something? We were hhheee – like that, trying to laugh. But anyway, we acted we were asleep or something like that, that we didn't know nothing about what's happening. And he walked around. He had a – a monocle, and a – a tip – cigarette tip, the hat, a big, long, black coat – leather ja – coat, down to his – below – just below his knees. Boots. Very artistic looking type of person. And – and with a baton, shaking it, and checking everybody in the – on the floor. Some with their blankets covered, he'd flip the blanket, until he came to me and he poked me, and he said, up. And he said, **arriba**, in Spanish.

Q: Were you wearing – you're still wearing your U.S. military uniform?

A: Yeah. They didn't give a change of clothes.

Q: Okay, they didn't issue you – okay. So he knew –

A: Only were poli – yeah –

Q: – who you were, ha – you had your name on your uniform.

A: – only political prisoners, or the – the Jewish, they had them change their –

Q: Okay.

A: – status. And – but when – he told me to get up, and I – I walked behind the guards, into a room with a table and two chairs, and – and the interrogation started.

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Q: What were they asking you about?

A: And he says – he got kind of close to me, and he says, what’s your name? I told him my name. And he says, where were you born? I told him where I was born, and where I lived. Yes, he – he says, what – what do you know what’s happening up front? Nothing. Defending ourselves. He said, what are you here for? I don’t know nothing, sir. All I know is my serial number, my name, and that’s it. If you want me to give me my social security number – he says, I know that. Social security number, and he reiterated it.

Q: He told you what your number was.

A: What my number was.

Q: Okay.

A: And he says – then, he started to tell me about my family, I started **[indecipherable]** where I was raised. He says, you were born **San Bernardino, California**, but you went to **Pasadena**. You graduated at **Pasadena City College**. And you were in **Durango**, your family lives in **Durango**.

Q: How did he know this?

A: He slapped my face when I asked him. I says, many a – he asked me so many questions, the fact that he even tell – told me that – that – he says, your scoutmaster is the **Schraeder** family, huh? Sure enough, **Schraeder**, I tried to ignore the – the

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name, but he happened to be the owner of the – the hardware store in **Durango**, and – and I kept denying. And everything I denied, he slapped my face. Then he started to put needles in my fingernails. He wanted to ask more questions. He says you – he say, your father is so and so, your parents are so and so? He says, and by the way, you – he kept tr-trying to tell me – he pu-put me in – in – in a suspense. And he says – he says, the battle of the **Graf Spee** in **Montevideo**, a German battleship with a British battleship, fought in **Montevideo**. The cousins of the **Schraeder** family went to your father, came up to – he said, they happened to be a cousin of a **Schraeder**, mind you, he sold a rifle to your father. I says, I don't know. Well, I didn't know, because I hadn't been to **Durango**, and I – and I hadn't seen my father, I hadn't seen my parents. But sure enough – just jumping ahead, I asked – I asked my father, I says, did a cousin of **Schraeder** ever sold you a rifle, automatic rifle? Yes. And I says, can you show it to me? And the way the German described it, it was folded, and turned into a special leather case. And he showed me the rifle.

Q: How do you think – or why do you think they knew so much about you? Why you?

A: The **Schraeder** probably cau – were in contact with the Gestapo, the SS. And how come that that one captain asked me the quest – told me – offered me to go to school, if I gave him information. What information would I have? I'm a medic,

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like I told th-the ca – the German. I said, I'm a medic. All I know is take care of the sick, and the wounded. I don't know nothing. And I gave him the express – the expression, the terminology to him in – in – in – in – in military words – I don't want to express them to you, because they don't sound good –

Q: It's okay.

A: – but if you want me – can I say it?

Q: Sure.

A: I said, I don't know shit from **Shinola**. That's the expression. And he slapped my face.

Q: Did you ever know the name of the Gestapo officer?

A: He never gave me his name –

Q: No.

A: – and – and he didn't never wanted to be given his name.

Q: Did they ever ask you – did he ever ask you other questions about what happened in **Durango**? No?

A: No. But what he told me, that – that – that the – the two fellas were si – were put up before the wall and shot.

Q: The German spies from the pool?

A: The German spies, yeah.

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Q: Was that the only time they interrogated you, or were there other times as well?

A: That was the only time they interrogated me.

Q: And how long were you then – you were then returned –

A: Then – then – then he finished me with a – then with my hands all bleeding, after he had finished with me, I headed back to the barracks, and all my buddies there in the – were surprised to see my hands. And they were yelling at me, what did I say, and what I had to say. And I yelled back at them, and I says, I don't have nothing to say, what do you want me to say? And I – and y – and – but you start getting words that you don't want to say, express yourself. Because you're in pain at the same time. But anyway, days went on, and –

Q: What was daily life like in the – in **Stalag IX-B**? Were you able to write home?

Did your parents know where you were?

A: No, you couldn't write home, you – I remember that – that my wife, that's ill, she – there were – we were just friends, and she would send me things, or food, or something, but it never got to – the letters, they never got through.

Q: Was your family notified that you were captured as a **POW**?

A: My family got through – well, not exactly. My mother – my mother was visiting, came from **Durango** to **Pasadena**, bringing my brother to the Children's Hospital in **L.A.**, because he had infantile paralysis. And so, my mother was staying with –

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with my aunt, her sister, in **Pasadena**. And my aunt was working then at a defense factory, where they built certain rifles for the army. And she stayed home – my mother was at home, and she was sir – received a knock at the door, and a **Western Union** – she wasn't supposed to receive that let – that telegram.

Q: It was supposed to go to your aunt.

A: To my aunt. And my mother re – well, received it, signed, and she read it, and she got sick.

Q: What did the telegram say?

A: That I was missing in action. And she wasn't supposed to receive that. From there on, she turn – she got sick. Her gall – gallbladder.

Q: Why did the telegram go to your aunt, and not to your parents in **Mexico**?

A: Well, slowly my aunt would have told her, in a very different way, to prevent her from a shock. And – but then, coming back to –

Q: Back to the camp.

A: – back to camp –

Q: Were you able to get – you weren't able to get letters from home, did you receive any Red Cross packages?

A: No.

Q: No.

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A: No. In the course of time before – after this whole thing turn up there at the – this interrogation, I had a wristwatch, and it was a political prisoner, Jewish, and he says, I'll give you four loafs of bread for that watch.

Q: This was in **Bad Orb**.

A: In **Bad Orb**. So I told him, I says, okay. So, it was a watch, the name brand was **Haste, h-a-s-t-e**. And I got the loafs of bread. So then I divided the loafs of bread with the fellas, and I left one for me. And I used that as a pillow. And before you know it, by morning, it was gone. They net – picked – they picked it, and every crumb was eaten. I never forget that. Anyway, came the day –

Q: How – how long were you in **Bad Orb**?

A: Until the eighth of February.

Q: Okay, and what happened on the eighth of February?

A: Just before the eighth of February, just a couple of days, the Germans selected for us to – well, a few days, a week before that, two fellas had, of our outf-outfit – not my division, but from another division, hacked the kitchen cooks in the head, to steal big salami. And so we were forced to stand outside until they gave up, or otherwise they shoot us all. So they had the machine guns at us, and if we didn't re – come up with the two fellas, they would shoot us all. Yet, when we were forced to

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leave the barracks, fellas could not have – they did not, or were not able to put their shoes on, or socks on, to stand out there in the snow, barefooted, or whatever.

Q: They just wanted everyone to go quickly.

A: All day, all day. And there was a fox – the [indecipherable] were standing so they could fall into the hole. So we were there from six o'clock in the morning, and at – til around four o'clock. Finally, the two guys gave up. And that was from the help of the chaplains, couple of chaplains that were captured.

Q: What did the chaplains do?

A: They turned the cha – to – turned the fellas to the police, German Gestapo.

Q: Did they give them up, or did they negotiate an agreement?

A: No, they – they – they gave up themselves because otherwise they would see that – that they would have killed everybody.

Q: And what happened to those two?

A: They were put in a dungeon. We never knew what happened to them afterwards. But they were punished, they were put into a dungeon, where they can see la – the light. And so, anyway, about a week later, on the eighth of February, we were forced to come out of the barracks, and line up, and then the commander said, all American Jews with names Jewish, take two steps forward. And a lot of our fellows started to yank their – some had a little star medal, and their dog tags carried the –

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the – the **H** for Hebrew, and started convert that into a **B**, by scratching it. And some, in desperation, threw in – on the – on the ground, and buried it in the snow. And whatever happened, to eliminate that situation. In other words, Germans hated the Jewish, totally. And they – my buddy, I remember **Norm Feldman**(ph), he says – he says, I held onto it. I didn't give a shit. Pardon the expression.

Q: That's okay.

A: And a lot of them didn't. They held onto their faith. And so they were only able to get about 85 to – close to 90 fellas, and then –

Q: Did they step f –

A: – then the Germans came selecting.

Q: Did the Jewish soldiers step forward? Did they identify themselves?

A: Oh yes. By name, or the way they looked, the Germans pointed their finger, or their – or their knives at them. Like it or not.

Q: Then what –

A: The Gestapo was mean. And then a commander came by, and then he poked at me [**indecipherable**] by – put me up front as an undesirable, because I spied.

Others –

Q: Mm-hm. What do you mean you spied? I'm sorry.

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A: I – I spied on – on two employees of my father, and – and for – I guess the – the Gestapo, of the Germans that were spying, connecting in –

Q: The ones at the pool?

A: The pool, yeah.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: And then the other undesirables, bad records, whoever had – had bad records, they selected them. And they knew very well what kind of background they had.

Q: How many Americans were selected?

A: Three hundred and fifty.

Q: Okay.

A: Three or 350.

Q: And what did they tell you, after the selection?

A: Nothing. They wouldn't even talk to you about nothing, absolutely nothing. For a while they didn't say nothing, until you were to be completely segregated from the whole groups. You were nothing but a – a little sel-selection here on one side, and to leave the place, and says – and the term was that we were to travel to a place that we were supposed to have oh, the unique place to play ball. We'd have motion pictures, and oh, beautify our thoughts, by giving us good thinking.

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Q: So they just told you – they tell you you were being transferred to a different **POW** camp?

A: No, nothing like that. All just to say – tell us that we were being taken to – excuse me – to a place – selected with better care. And it was hell.

Q: So, did they take you out of **Stalag IX-B** that – that day?

A: The following day.

Q: So what did – how did you – what did they do to you, the next day?

A: Put us on a train.

Q: What kind? Like a –

A: A boxcar, where you couldn't kneel, you couldn't squat, for six days, in the – in those boxcars. And fellas couldn't defecate at all, they had to do it right there, right – and for six days, you – and you couldn't eat nothing, you couldn't have nothing to eat, nothing to drink. But the – the snow that hit the – from the cracks, you tried to lick it, or p-poke your hand through the slot window, to get the drops of water, from the rain. Until we came to **Berga an der Elster**, which is part of the – the compounds of **Buchenwald**.

Q: What did you see when you arrived at **Berga**?

A: It was so snowy that you couldn't catch the glimpse very well, but you see like a towers of houses, and – but – or, we were forced to march out – when we got out of

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the train, and to head to the area, that turned out to be barracks that were ugly, ugly, like falling apart. So, in other words, the barracks were that the cracks – when you were inside, you could see the – the wind, feel the wind coming in through the cracks.

Q: And how many men per barrack? Was it – were you all together in one?

A: One barracks is – we were divided into groups, to fit 60 to 80 in a – in a – in a barracks, with a – three bunks. Three slots –

Q: How many people per bunk?

A: Three. Three to a bunk.

Q: Like three per level?

A: Per level, three levels.

Q: Okay. Were there other prisoners there when you arrived?

A: They had them separated from us. They were the Jewish prisoners that had – they had them separated from us.

Q: What was your first impression when you saw those prisoners? Did you know who they were?

A: We didn't know. We didn't know – we didn't know until afterwards, we found out that the – they were being worked in the mi – in the tunnels. So, when they selected our groups into si – 16 per group per tunnel, there were 11 to 12 tunnels. In

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each tunnel, they had fellas go in and dig into the tunnels, to enlarge the areas inside of the tunnels, to – well, we didn't know why the tunnels were being built.

Q: Did you have to work in the tunnels, or were you given a different job?

A: Us medics were to only take of the – the sick. And then, what I did was, I asked the commander, why not? If a fellas gotta work in that tunnel today, gi-give him a day off tomorrow, and have another group work for him, so kind of liberate him from it.

Q: So what was their work schedule?

A: They slapped my face. They slapped me, they hit me, because I was supposed to say nothing. But that was not [indecipherable] I'm a medic. You're supposed to – I said, don't we have a doctor? They told us they had a doctor, but that wasn't true. So we didn't have a doctor. So what we were doing is trying to take care of the fellows. **Norm Feldman**(ph), as well as others like that, worked in the tunnels, and they breathed the silt, that – that came out of the – the rock. And that damaged the po – the lungs. Some of the fellows, like **Norm**, would – would tell me what they did was try to weaken the – the – the dynamite, so that the – they wouldn't be too powerful [indecipherable]. But I laugh when he tell me about the things. Totally laughed.

Q: Like what – what other things? They tried to do sabotage.

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A: Sabotage to make them – and then they would sabotage the – the cars that – that carried the rock, to dump it out to the side of the la – the river. And – and this – or damage in the – the springs, of the – of the cart, when you pull, would fall apart, without the germ – Germans knowing that it was being done that way.

Q: And what were you doing while they were working in the tunnels? Did you work in the tunnels?

A: No.

Q: What was your job?

A: No, I – I'd go into the tunnels, very on and off, when they let me, to see that the – what they were doing, and th-that – th-that they were okay, and I'd tell them, I'd say he's not well, or please let him out, let him rest. He's not – he's weak, and you're not feeding him, he's not eating. He has diarrhea, the dysentery, diarrhea, everything he had, the fellas.

Q: So you were still being their medic.

A: Ye – beg your pardon?

Q: You were still being their medic.

A: Their medic, yes.

Q: And what was your – so, did you – did you have another job specifically at the camp, th – a role?

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A: No, nothing, nothing. Nothing a – but just a – keeping up with a – the – with the sick.

Q: Okay.

A: And seeing that they were taken care of. Sometimes some of the fellas started to feel that they wanted to escape, and – and when they tried escape, they wanted to do something without the German knowing about it, but it – it didn't faze us too well, because the Germans were too smart in that respect.

Q: Did anyone manage to escape?

A: There was two, three of them that escape. **Cohen. Cohen** was – did escape, but then he was killed. But there's another – **Latell**(ph) escaped, and he managed to escape. And **Cohen**, when the German asked me, or told me to verify, to sh – as a medic, that he was shot because he tried to escape. In other words, you shoot a person from a distance, okay, you gonna hit him in the back. So, the German asked me, I want you to check and to see that he is being – he was shot trying to escape. I says, can I turn him over? Can I look at him? And they're saying okay. And the Germans was shooting in the forehead, with a wooden bullet. What did they do? They stand him on a wall – behind the wall, and shoot him in the head, then they waxed the hole. What does a bullet – wooden bullet do? It's just that it shoots in, and splinters inside the – the head. Okay, they were using that as an excuse. They

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thought that I wouldn't identify the wax that covered the hole. So the Germans were slaughtering our men that tried to escape.

Q: And the conditions were obviously much worse in **Berga**?

A: Well, they started to – force us to take our clothes off, and just sleep with their underwear, and they would force me to take all the clothes into a shack, just a little bit outside the barracks, to prevent anyone from escaping. So this got worse, because the sleeping without the clothes, it was dangerous for your health. Getting worse pneumonia, and all the qua – the effects, the side effects that you would get, without being able to eat at all.

Q: Right. Did they – I mean, what kind of food were you provided with? Were you able to – were the men able to get anything, any nourishment, or any wa – or did they receive any packages, or – I mean, some camps, people were able to receive mail, or Red Cross packages.

A: In one occasion we received a package, a Red Cross package, and it was divided into four to a package, or six to a package. The package was meant to be for one. One per pack – one per person. And that's how I got my d-diary, from one of those packages.

Q: So you received the diary –

A: I received the book –

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Q: – in **Berga**.

A: – in **Berga**, empty book, yes. And not at **Bad Orb**. And I used that for that purpose. But, I mean, the Germans had stacks of Red Cross packages, stacked up in a – in a warehouse.

Q: So, what was an average day at **Berga** for all of you? Was there anything as an average day? Was there any typical day?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. And it – stuff – tea to drink was nothing but just grass, boiled it into tea. And the same thing would be if we got a soup with a few spuds into it, and to flavor it, we got – we receive harsh water, no taste at all, and with cockroaches, and rats mixed into it. And it would make you sick from the stomach.

Q: Was there any interaction with the other prisoners? The other political prisoners, in the other part of the camp?

A: We didn't know anything about them, but just that they stayed a – a distance from us.

Q: Did they work together in the mines, in the tunnels?

A: No, no, they had – didn't mix with us.

Q: Okay.

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A: But from underground, we found out why the Germans had us – had these men working in those tunnels. We found out later that – that those tunnels were being made because the Germans were developing secret equipment, missiles, buzz bombs, and other equipment that they had in mind, that they were hiding in those tunnels.

Q: And the physical conditions were atrocious. What were the Germans who ran the camp like? How did they treat you guys?

A: They treated us very bad, because the fact that they beat them. They beat them with the butt of their rifle, and poke them – would force, say, to get a – a ti – a railroad tie, and carry it into the tunnels, to repair the railroad ties. And they could barely ha – carry the weight th-they had for themselves, because the fact that – the weakness that they felt. Not eating, you're not going to be able to lift anything so heavy.

Q: And did you receive any news of the war? Did you – was – did you guys know what was going on outside of **Berga**?

A: Well – well, we'd – we'd – underground, there was comments. Their one guard, he was an Austrian, and every time he'd see the bombers fly by and he w – he would make the sign of the cross and he said – and he – he looked on the side, to

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the Germans don't look at him, what he was doing. But thinking that the – our bombers would be heading for – it would be about 500 **B-17s** per hour.

Q: Wow.

A: They would bomb the sites. And you could feel when it bombed the areas, they – the windows would – the – the glass would crack, the vibration of the bombing. But things like that. Another thing what we found out, we were – got a hundred grams of bread per week. Now a hundred bread – grams of bread is not much for every – but it was a mix of barley with sawdust, ground glass, and ground sand. And the barley to camouflage – and they make that black bread black because they – the Germans loved the black bread. And it – that caused damage in your stomach.

Q: Did it give you – how did you feel when you would see the Americans flying overhead?

A: The day came when the germ – when the Germans started to feel the – the heat. And the German started to feel the heat when they found out that the English were coming from one side, the Russians from the other side, the French from the other, and the Americans. Then they decided to – to put us on a march.

Q: Do you remember what date that was?

A: Happened about around April – April – **[break]**

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Q: A few more – a few more questions about **Berga**, to go back. With the terrible conditions in the camp, when did men start being affected by that, aside from men who were killed when they were escaping. How many men had died, or – or what happened to them? What was the –

A: Men – th-the fellows were starting to – to get the effects of the – of the – or the eating, and – and the work, exhaustion, because of the – I mean, th-they – they couldn't move their muscles, they had their – they were exhausted. And that was practically from the beginning of – at the time when we got into **Berga** to – to live – one thing that just went by me is when we got to **Berga**, well, they took us to the – the cremation center of the – of the **Buchenwald**, to gi – bathe us. Well, we didn't know that there – that was a bathing, we thought they were – they were going to cremate us.

Q: Like the gas chambers, the showers.

A: They took us to the gas chambers, and we – and we –

Q: Why did you think that?

A: We didn't know. They took us there, and we saw that – that the tubings, the pipes up ahead, one was for gas, the other one was for water, with a spray, and when they told us to take the clothes off, they said that they were going to fumigate us, take all the lice. Well, fine. But they showed us, and we saw what the Germans

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had done, is the – they had – where they were cremating the – the people. Children and mothers and fathers and all that.

Q: Okay.

A: But, well, this affected a lot of fellas emotionally, because they started to break down. Stress, and the weakness due to hunger. And that was just before – that was just right after – oh, about a – about a week after we got there.

Q: To **Berga**?

A: To **Berga**.

Q: Okay.

A: The – the time that we were to leave the area, there were six fellas that were in very critical condition. And they were to be sent to a ho – a British hospital.

Q: To leave which area? I'm sorry. When you were forced to leave **Berga**, or when you left **Bad Orb**?

A: **Berga**.

Q: Okay.

A: I have the names of the – the – they slip my mind, but –

Q: It's okay.

A: – one of them, right now is dying. He's still alive, but he's dying. He's in no condition now even to talk. **Martin Wendt**(ph). And the other one, he died,

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because the Germans didn't let me do what I was going to do. I had a fountain pen with me that I was writing all the time with it. As a matter of fact – well, I'll tell you afterwards.

Q: You can tell me now.

A: That fountain pen lasted quite a bit. I don't know how, God gave me that ink to last. And the fellow that I wanted to – he had diphtheria, he couldn't breathe, he was choking. And I asked the guard if I could talk to the commander. I said – I said to the commander, this fella is not going to live. If you don't let me do this, you're going to kill him. And I says, he has diphtheria. All I have to do is make a tracheotomy operation, and put that thing in so he get – make it to the hospital. And here's a fella, he was an older fella. Is a funny name, it – I have it written in – in the diary. And – and the Germans got mad at me and hit me with the – with the butt of the rifle, hit me in the face. And the fella didn't make it. He couldn't breathe any more. When [**indecipherable**] gave me – it gave me as a gift, another **Sheaffer**. I hadn't seen a **Sheaffer** for a long time.

Q: Now, did – were the American – the Jewish soldiers that were with you, did they get treated any differently once you arrived at **Berga**, or were all the men treated the same? Were they singled out again, for being Jewish?

A: Come again?

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Q: Were the Jewish soldiers that were with you singled out for different treatment, when you arrived at **Berga**?

A: At that area, it seemed to me like it was – was – because the way they were being treated –

Q: How were they being treated?

A: But **Norm Feldman**(ph), **Cohen**, **Bernard Vogel**(ph), he was a young fella, very docile, and he – he gave up very easy, and they forced him to work in the tunnels. He couldn't make it. And I asked the – the guard, the – the commander to trade jobs that – so that they can rest. And they would poke me with a rifle, and they said, **nein, nein, nein**. They wouldn't let me do stu – but I'm a medic. You'd force me to – to do these things, yet, you don't follow it up. But they didn't care. They did it with hate.

Q: Now, you mentioned your diary, and that you were always writing in it. What were some – what information were you recording in your diary? **[technical]**

End of File Two

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Beginning File Three

Q: This is a continuation of a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Anthony Acevedo**. So, we left off, you were talking about your diary, and I was asking you what information did you record in your diary, in **Berga**?

A: I tried to keep my, as close as possible, as the information related to the condition of my fellow men, because the fact that, more or less, I knew that maybe someday, it would be a valuable thing for – for us, to know that – that there was important – I was concerned at the condition, knowing that maybe I was at risk carrying that diary, because a couple of times, it dropped out of my pants. I carried it right – right inside of my b-belt. And on one occasion, one of the guards picked it up. It happened to be one of the good guards, it was the Austrian fella that – he said, what are you writing? I said, just my memoirs of the ca – the beautiful country. Just faked it, to let him know that I wasn't writing anything wrong. And so, he believed me. But I tried to keep it as much as – secured as possible, as I went along, especially when you would be on the march, and you'd – it would drop on you, then you would lose it.

Q: Did the other – your fellow American soldiers that you were with, did they know you were keeping the diary?

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A: No, na – only a couple of them. But no one – no one knew.

Q: When did you find time to write in it?

A: I'd find time for just a – where I'd sit, or whether I'd be in the barracks, when we were then, or where – when we were on the march, I tried to more or less fake it. Like, I'm going to sleep, I'm falling asleep, and well, everybody would doze off, and no one knew what I was doing.

Q: Why did you keep a secret from your fellow soldiers?

A: Just to prevent – in case I would run in danger of one of them saying something to me.

Q: To you, or to the Germans?

A: To the Germans.

Q: Mm-hm. And what were the events leading up to the march from the camp?

A: That march was when the Germans decided that – that their being encountered with all the allies, almost coming together, and – and so the commander, **Merz** and **Metz**, threatened us to the march towards the Bavarian mountains, where **Hitler** lived. And on the march we – I saw – if the other fellows see – seen also, if they noticed, but I saw that the – the Germans were carrying umpteen – in trucks – umpteen frames of paintings, that they had with them, towards the mountains. And the treasures that they were stealing from there.

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Q: What did the Germans tell you when they decided they were going to evacuate the camp?

A: That we were leaving be – they didn't tell us why, but that we're supposed to leave. That's all they di – they didn't tell us why.

Q: Do you remember the date, approximately, when this was?

A: I have it in my diary, I thir – think it happened about around the ninth of April se – ninth of April, something like that. Se – ninth or 10th of April. And we finished – the end of the trip, it was April the 24th – 23rd – 23rd.

Q: So, when – so, you were all gathered together, and told to leave, and what did the Germans tell you to do? Do you know where – what direction you walked in?

A: No, just go – get out and start marching, walking down the highway. And as we passed **Hof**, a li – a town of **Hof, Germany**, we noticed some of our fellows were getting s – more sicker and sicker, and they were dying off. And so then we were experiencing an attack by our jet fighters, against the Germans. They're firing at ta – at tanks, German tanks. And so we had to dodge the – the fire, and – or towards the edge of the highway. Otherwise, we would have been slaughtered by the machine guns.

Q: Did you see other prisoners, as you were marching, from other camps?

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A: There was a section where we experienced the most awesome thing that we ever saw. And, since we noticed that the Germans were – had behind us miniature tanks, operated by remote control, and if we intended to escape, or do something, they would throw those tanks at us. But they were behind us, guarding us. They were operated by some German, I don't know how they do – were doing it, but wi – they had an advanced operation. But up ahead, we noticed that the Germans were slaughtering political prisoners, we called them political prisoners, but it turned out to be they were Jewish fellas, and families, children, mothers, and older fellas. And they were hanging them to the barbed wires, as we went along. Hanging on the barbed wires because they tried prob – escape, go over the fence.

Q: Where was this, on the road, on the way to **Hof**?

A: On the road to – on the f – o-on the road to wherever the **[indecipherable]**. And then the – further – still further up ahead, then we had to pull out of the highway, and I don't know why they made us – to make a shortcut, or whatever, but we saw a pile of – same thing, of women and children, families, they were all slaughtered, murdered. And they weren't just days, that happened – happened instantly, ahead of us, they were doing it.

Q: Okay, and what were the – what was the physical condition of yourself, and the other Americans?

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A: Was wa –

Q: What physical condition were you in?

A: Oh, we were just almost at the tail end of where we just – our men were dropping – dropping off the highway, out of – out of the lines of the march. Our cart that we pulled and pushed, was full of our sick men, and we could barely pull, because of our strength, there was no strength at all at th – with all of us being without food and water.

Q: What did you – sorry.

A: And – and up ahead, we kept on going, and some were dropping out of the lines, and – and so, we'd stop by a barn, and rest for a minute, or whatever they would let us rest. The snow started to melt, which was ster – April, part of April, when the snow is getting less and less, but it's still cold.

Q: What did you do at night? Did you march all night?

A: Kept on marching. Kept on marching sometimes, kept on marching, until the Germans told us to pull over and – and take a break.

Q: And di – were you given any food at – when you were able to stop?

A: No, not until one – at **Hof** – we got into **Hof**, and they – they gave us boiled eggs, and spuds, but that was just then. After that, we kept on marching again, and some fellas tried to escape and go to other farms, just to get away from the lines.

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Q: Were they successful?

A: Some were, some weren't. They were – be caught up, and either they were shot at, or – or able to escape and get back to the lines.

Q: You said a lot of men died during the death march. What did – what happened to them? What did you do with them if they –

A: We couldn't do anything because the Germans wouldn't let us do anything at all. Bury them, or whatever, they wouldn't let us do nothing, unless we were – we were stationed in one spot, either they – they would let us [**indecipherable**] or pull them over, and leave them right there, in the spot. Otherwise, they wouldn't let us do anything to bury them. Unless we were in a camp, like we were in the barracks.

Q: Right, right. And so, do you know how many days you were marching? Do you remember?

A: Well, from the day of – that day we left, about April ninth, and we got to – far as **Cham, Germany, c-h-a-m**, and that was on the 24th of April.

Q: And what happened –

A: Whe-When we were li – we wound up in this big barn, and that was the end of it. We got out there, and – and it was awesome, because when we got in there, we were welcome by the owners, and they brought us food and all that. But, to sleep, we had to sleep in the – on the slush of the animals. And – but we were able to eat

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some of the bread, the bread was black bread, the good bread. And – and then suddenly, very early in the morning, the German commander – well, we all heard the firing in the distance, thundering. So, we heard that there were tanks approaching, and we don't – we didn't know whether they were Americans, or French, or English, whatever. Or Russians. But the Germans started to feel the – the heat, and so they wanted us to follow them. And so they push – they pulled the – the rifles against us, and pointed at us, and says, w-we – either we go, or – with them, or they'll shoot us. That's what they wanted to do. So, as I yelled back at them, and the other medic, I mean, we're medics, and we're t-taking care of these men, and they're dying. One just died – or two just died just a – a while ago. So, how can we go, and – they can't walk any more. So, before you knew it, they too escaped, and th-the guards turn in our – gave us our rifles. And he says, we'll stay with you. And we started to hear the rumbling getting closer, and th – we – we all started to run towards the highway, and when we got to the highway, the tanks were the 11th armored division, liberating us.

Q: Going back just a little bit; when you were on the death march, did you know – have any sense of what was going on with the war around you, as far as how close the allies were getting, or any news that you were receiving, now that you weren't in the camp?

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A: We ni – we didn't even know what was going on until we found out that the ger – the Americans were making a big sweep. And when they saw us, they thought that we were enemies, and that we were camouflaged, and we didn't have the –

Q: When the 11th armored division found you.

A: The 11th armored division saw that – when they saw that we were Americans, and we spoke English very well, then – then they welcomed us, and one of them pulled me like a – like a beet, string beet. Pulled me up on top of the tank, and then I ju – just sighed with relief that we are in their hands. And as we were running towards the – the tanks, some fellas started to fall down dead, because of the excitement, and because of the weakness.

Q: What was it like to see that white star on that tank, to know that they were Americans?

A: We were so excited, we – we cried. We cried, we – we – we had the – we were so excited that we couldn't s-say any more **[indecipherable]**. And as we – as I was on the top of the tank, one of the fellas said, look, there's a girl with a – there was a young girl, oh, probably in her 20s, and she had a jug of milk. And he said, well, let's get that milk for – for you guys, and so you can drink. And he was not aware, and we felt hungry, and we started drinking it. Well, Lord behold, it made us sick. My stomach went like this. We weren't far away from the – from the place of the gi

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– Americans has already established themselves, a hospital, that they had to pump the milk out.

Q: Do you remember the first thing you said to the Americans when they found you?

A: Oh, there were so many things. God – God liberated us. And all the fellows cried, and some kneeled down and cried, and kissed the ground, because of the liberation.

Q: Of the 350 Americans that were taken to **Berga**, how many were still alive at this point?

A: We come out of there approximately – approximately about 185 out of 350. But then, after that, they're starting to die off.

Q: While – after you – after liberation?

A: After the liber – liberation, yes.

Q: Why was that?

A: The conditions, sh-shock, and reactions. Resistance, the ba – the body had – couldn't take it any more.

Q: How much did you weigh when you were liberated?

A: Well, when I was captured, I weighed 149, and when I was liberated, I weighed 87 pounds.

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Q: And where did the Americans take you?

A: They took us to a hospital there at a camp, **Germany**, it was just a regular tent hospital. They stripped us from everything we had on, and – to be burned, and – and we showered, and were injected.

Q: With what?

A: Against infections, or whatever. And inspected for lice, and they gave us new – new clothes, and then some of us were flown to **Reims, France**, and some were flown to other hospitals, depending on the conditions.

Q: Mm-hm. What was it like for you that – that first night that you were in a real bed, in this hospital, after liberation?

A: I thought I was floating in water, because of the fact that it – it – I slept on – on – on-on the ground, and slept on the rocks, the snow. Y-You just freeze to death. And sleeping on a bed, you just fall – totally fall asleep. I remember still the – when we had the liberation, there was a factory close by a camp, and I decided to go see the – where they manufactured the – the famous camera, German cameras. And I – and I got a – a micro – microscope, electronic microscope that they – that they – Germans were famous for. And – and someone in **Austria** gave me, as a gift, a – a cross, a beautiful cross, silver. Well, I put it to the side of my bed, and I fell asleep. By the

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next morning the micro – th – the micro thing, disappeared. I never saw it again, but the cross was there.

Q: Do you still have it?

A: Yes, I still have it, yeah. It's a – i – i – i – it – it was awesome. One of my sons has it – has the cross, but I couldn't believe it. Then they flew me to – they flew us, a group of us, they flew us to the general hospital in **Reims, France**.

Q: And was – did you have difficulty sleeping at night, or when – you know, now you're – you're sleeping in he – on a cloud, as you say. Was it difficult for you to – to rest, after what you had just been through, physically and mentally?

A: For moments I did, because of the dreams.

Q: What kind of dreams were you having?

A: Just remembering back, bring back dreams, and – and thinking of the fellows, what they were feeling like, the pain, and the – and reminiscing.

Q: The fellows that were with you, or the ones who didn't make it?

A: That – that – that were with me.

Q: Okay.

A: That I was able to, in the barracks, we were all – the conditions that they were looking forward, and that cou – they could – they couldn't be treated, because we didn't have the proper medications at all.

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Q: What was it like at night in the barracks?

A: It was a – a – just a – a thought after another thought, of thinking of we – praying that there – there wouldn't be another – another day like this.

Q: What gave you hope to get through all of those dark days? What did you think of?

A: Just prayed with faith that nothing like this happens again.

Q: You mean, overall, or just the being in the camp didn't happen again, or –

A: Overall. Overall, because a lot of – a lot of fellows have different ways of approaching conditions and thoughts, and approaching things that they – they c – didn't consi – consider that in reality, why this and why that, and we hope that it doesn't happen to anyone like this, what we went through. We – we used to keep a – after – one after another, how come that we had to go through this? Why did they designate us to be – to go through this?

Q: How long were you in the hospital in **Germany**?

A: From April the – that 24th, liberation day, let's see, April, May – with all total, between that date, til May – May the 28th, something like that, between the camp, and **Reims, France**, and we left – we left **France** by ship, to cal – to ki – to **New Jersey**, we left about the first part of June, of '45.

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Q: In – in going back again, when you were recuperating now in the hospital, or even when you were liberated by the 11th, did they – what was their reaction when you told them, we had been in a concentration camp?

A: To the hospital people?

Q: To your liberators, to the hospital people –

A: Liberators?

Q: – did people – what was their reaction to that?

A: Th-They – they cou – they couldn't believe it, after they saw us so – in the condition that we're – at first they thought that we – that we were camouflaged. That we purposely dressed that way to simulate that we were soldiers, that –

Q: That you were undercover, or something?

A: Undercover. Yeah, yeah, they thought that we were undercover.

Q: How did – what did you tell them?

A: No, after that they believed it, because when they saw that so-some fellows died right in front of us, the condition they saw, they couldn't believe it, until finally they ha – the tanks started approach, and the ambulances started to get in closer, and picking up all the fellows.

Q: Did you see, when you were recovering in the hospital, did you see other – any other camp survivors, or have the opportunity to speak with any other **POWs**?

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A: No, no, we didn't, because they had us very secluded.

Q: Why did they keep you secluded?

A: Just to keep us close, to prevent any – I mean, some fellows could try to escape, because of fear, because of reactions to the medications, or whatever, because the – some effective medications fire back on them. And then, right then, when we left the hospital, and then – and then some had to leave by plane to **United States**, because of the conditions, like – like **Norm Feldman**(ph) had to leave by plane, because of his – he – he would have had his leg amputated because of the infect – severe infection he had. And lucky, at that time, that penicillin had been discovered. And he'll never forget it, because he says, **Tony**, he says, that penicillin saved my life. Saved my leg, because that turned gangrene. And – but we were – in leaving the united – **England** – I mean, **France**, we were forced to sign an affidavit.

Q: So, I was going to ask, did anyone from the army come visit you in the hospital?

A: Yeah, I went to a f – **Lucky Strike**, the da – the distributing center, and just before it – getting to the ship, and then we had to sign an affidavit where we had to swear that we never were in the condition, or suffered in the condition that we had to go through, by the Germans.

Q: Was this something that all **POWs** had to sign, no matter where they were?

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A: I – I found out that very few of us had to do it. I don't know why, **Norm** had to sign it, I remember he said he – he had to sign it, and others, a few of them had to sign it, my – I had to sign it.

Q: Was it just the **Berga** guys who had to sign this?

A: Yes, only the **Berga** guys.

Q: But other u – other **POWs** never had to sign this form.

A: No, no, no.

Q: And what was the army's reason for making you sign this affidavit, what did it say?

A: We – we – we came out under the – funny thing, you wouldn't believe it, I have to inject this, because, at the time **Wayne Drash** –

Q: From **CNN**.

A: – from **CNN** approached me, I, by coincidence ri – I get the – this magazine, “**World War II History**.” In that magazine, showed the nine scientists that **Germany** had. And we found out, **United States** was involved with **[indecipherable]** corporation, **Ford**, **General Motors**. Oh, and then the wordage of why. Because it – because we would also affect the Americans being – fi-fighting, and their prisoners, by the Japanese, and they would be severely tortured. Well, **United States** was involved with **dimon** – with **Toshiba**, **Mitsubishi**, and you

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name it. But, who did we hire for space [**indecipherable**], when I went to work for [**indecipherable**] – right after fo – '45, months afterward – I – which I wanted to be a doctor, and it turned out to be a [**indecipherable**] design, because I could do the design very well. And I drew a sketch of the **Reims** cathedral. I don't know if you've ever seen it, or you've been there, but it – it's – it – it's composed of all the **arcs**, and the stat – statuettes are made by statues, the **arcs** and everything. And I put it for – for a contest in **L.A.** Well, I won the first prize to be a designer at **Hughes** Aircraft, I went to work for **Howard Hughes**. Who do I meet? Scientists from **Germany**. They were hired by **United States**. **United States** took scientists, German scientists for air – aerospace, who – the **Titan** missiles, and the **B-1s** and **B-2s** were duplicated in **United States** by **von Braun**. And he was one of our top scientists.

Q: Going back to the document, did you ever think about not signing the document, the affidavit? Did you have that choice?

A: No. They threatened us to be jailed, federally, by the **United States** government. We never received an apology, by nothing. And I'll interject this; we never received an apology from our government, and when we were discharged, thank you for your services? Well, to provide you for the minimum of what you served as a prisoner, we are sending you 150 dollars a month, and that turned out to be for six months.

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Q: How did that make you feel? I would have been very angry. What was your reaction to that?

A: We were angry. And I said, I – it was a slap in the face. Years later, we received a document by a lawyer, **William Marks**, an attorney for the – for the – I have the copies on it. I will [**indecipherable**] showing it to you. And it's – he was a lawyer for the – for the Holocaust muse – Holocaust group of people, pertaining to the – the Holocaust. We received a hundred thousand dollars from the Holocaust, all of us would, survivors.

Q: From the claims conference, or – do you know the name of the organization?

A: From – from the Holocaust, with the help of the – this attorney that worked for them.

Q: Okay. And – oh, my mind just went blank.

A: **Norm Feldman**(ph) would – would let – would let you know, too, because he's our witness.

Q: The – I remember, I was going to ask, the German soldiers who were guarding you during the death march, who turned themselves in to you, before you were liberated, do you know what happened to them?

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A: We never knew what happened to them. A – they probably might have been liberated, because they were not part of the – of the – their atrocities that they did to our men. **Mer** – **mer** – **Merz** and mer –

Q: The commanders of the camp.

A: – were supposed to be sentenced to – to hang.

Q: They were the commanders of **Berga**.

A: The commanders of the – of the camp.

Q: They were brought to trial?

A: They went to trial – they went to trial –

Q: Were you guys part of that?

A: Do I have that?

Q: Were you – were you, and any of the other –

A: No.

Q: – **Berga** survivors part of that trial?

A: No, no.

Q: You didn't testify, or –

A: No, they didn't even asked us.

Q: Okay.

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A: But I understand that **Truman** wa – **Merz** was supposed to hang by – in – on – yeah, supposed to hang, and instead of hanging, they – they pardoned him, and they gave him 20 years of prison. Then – then five years, then he was liberated.

Q: Did you ever find out why?

A: Never. But I understand he committed suicide. But why did **Truman**, knowing that he was a ja – an assassin to all those fellows that were prisoners – he was a murderer, along with **Mert(ph)**.

Q: What happened to the other one?

A: I think he – I have it in my book, it's gonna be – I think he must have – was liberated, and he ca – and he hung himself.

Q: So he also committed suicide?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. We're gonna pause, cause I think we're gonna switch.

A: I'm okay. **[break]**

Q: Okay, this is the continuation of tape three, of the interview with **Anthony Acevedo**. This is the aftermath, after the liberation. And so, when – how long were you in **New Jersey**, after you returned from **Europe**, and you went to **New Jersey**?

A: When I re – when I returned to **New Jersey** from – from **Europe**?

Q: Yes.

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A: Well, isn't it funny. We were put in a sardines, we call it sardines, the – th-the ship, we came back. And there were only about – about 85 of us in that ship. And the ship had food for 60 days, and we ate the food in 10 days.

Q: In 10 days?

A: In 10 days.

Q: And how long were you on the ship, then?

A: Ten days.

Q: Ten days. So the food lasted for –

A: Yeah, to get – to get back to **New Jersey**. Getting off the – getting off the plank there was a surprise to us. We were coming down the plank, and – and the Red Cross had a – a big banner, and said, welcome, **POWs**.

Q: And how did that make you feel, when you – that welcome.

A: It made us sick.

Q: It made you sick.

A: Because, we didn't have a penny to us, and they were selling us a chocolate and a donut and a coffee, and we didn't have one penny with us. I says, with the fellows, I said, you mean to tell me, we were prisoners, and we're gonna eat, and they're charging us money for that? I mean, I ya – the whole – the whole boomerang just blew up, and they said, no cross for us.

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Q: So you started to realize what the reality –

A: Yeah, we – we didn't – we – we left them. None of us had a penny to us.

Q: And how did you feel about the future then, at that point, about your future in the **United States**?

A: Oh, we got, from there, we were put on a train, some for – some at the – who lived in **New Jersey**, stayed in **New Jersey**, went to their hospitals. And then, a f – like a few of us from **California**, they put us on a train to head for **California**.

Q: And how long was that journey back to **California**?

A: It turned out to be almost a matter of a – a week, before we got back to – we got to Camp **Bill**.

Q: And where is Camp **Bill**?

A: Camp **Bill**, **California** –

Q: Okay.

A: – is an air force base.

Q: Okay.

A: And we stayed there for a day, then we headed for **Santa Barbara**, where we didn't know, but there was a recovery center for all **POWs**. And it had a – a – like a – the motels, hotels, and each – each hotel had a – a low – the lobbies hotel were

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refrigerators full of food. And they said, you can raid the icebox. Do what you want, and eat what you want.

Q: And how did you feel, after everything you had been through?

A: Well, we felt great, and then – and then he said, when you slept in the hotel, he says, don't touch the beds. You don't have to do the beds. So, just sleep, rest, and – and relax.

Q: And what was your physical condition by that time, by the time you reached **California**?

A: Well, you started to feel more at ease, and you – you – you get re – lectures, and from psychial – psychiatrists, because of the conditions. Yet, amazingly, in those days, nothing was known about what was a trauma, or what was a – the side effects. But the dreams that you'd get, almost stumbling when you're asleep, yelling, and screaming, crying.

Q: So it was post-traumatic stress.

A: Yeah, and yet, we didn't know that that was it, because that vi – no one spoke about it.

Q: And what did the psychiatrists tell you in their lectures, what –

A: Well, I re – I remember that the time we le – we were there for a while, we got a – received a lecture, say, you fellas are getting a 90 day resting period, and – and

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you must – you must not go to work, you must not get married, you must not go to school yet. Don't do – don't do this, don't do that. Well, we did everything what we were supposed to do – what we weren't supposed to do. I remember that when I get the – I received those 90 days, I said, well, I think I'll go see my parents. And as I re-recall, that I was on – on my way to **Mexico** to see my parents –

Q: Your parents were still in **Mexico**?

A: Yes. And – and I – I got to **El Paso**, and I went to the – there –

Q: Water?

A: – surplus store, there in **El Paso**, and I – to – to buy me some paraphernalia's, just to take us as a – as a souvenir. And – and I – someone got behind my back and put his hands over my eyes, to hide – to see who else – who was doing that to me. And he turned me around, spun me around, and – and then he says, you don't remember me? And I says, oh my God, I says, **General Elpidio G. Velázquez**. It was – was the – the governor of the state of **Durango** –

Q: Okay.

A: – which my father was his – my father was his assistant.

Q: So did – was this a coincidence that he was there?

A: Well, I wasn't expecting him.

Q: So he – he greeted you? He was there to meet you?

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A: He gree – he – he – by surprise he caught me with his – with his reporters, because the – he was on a tour in – in **Mexico**, it was in **Juarez**, but happened to be in **El Paso**, buying some souvenirs. And he – he did this – and he s – he said to the reporters, make a note of it, the son of engineer an – **Francisco Acevedo** is my father, touring with us on the – for the new – to come president of **Mexico**, which would – would have been **Alemán** back then, in '45.

Q: Okay. And did he know that you were a prisoner of war?

A: Yes.

Q: He knew?

A: Yes, because he – he received a letter, or I received a letter from him, when he recommended me a good standing citizen, before I was drafted, back in **United States**.

Q: Okay. So he knew of your war experiences –

A: Yes.

Q: – and that you had been imprisoned.

A: So, I – I said goodbye, and I took the train the following day, got the train in **Juarez**, and I dressed in my uniform. And then I got to the coach and sat down, and there were very few people. And just a – as the train started to move, oh, it got to about 30 kilometers inland, then they ask you for your identification. And so I told

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them, said my identification is my uniform. Isn't that enough? That's the passport, isn't it? I'm a citizen of **United States**. So he says, well – I said, but if you have any problems, I understand that Mr. **Elpidio G. Velázquez** is in this train, and he told me that if I had any problems, to approach him. So he made a turnabout, went inside, came back 45 minutes later, and he says, the train is yours. You're welcome to the train, he said, you don't need no **I.D.**

Q: And how did that make you feel, after everything you had –

A: Well, it made me feel good. I had no tension. So, that started a good point. But then, that time, some of the people that were in the train were – I met, by – that they wanted to be amiable. So, that's where I met my first wife. That's – which was the mother of **Fernando**.

Q: **Fernando**. And what was her name?

A: **Amparo**.

Q: **Amparo**.

A: **Amparo**. And – but it was a coincidence to be in the train, because she was a neighbor of a friend that was a – a prisoner of war camp with me. And the fact that he lived – they were neighbors.

Q: So, did she know – had she ever heard about you before?

A: No.

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Q: No?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: Nothing [**indecipherable**] pure coincidence

Q: So it was pure coincidence.

A: Yeah, she was renting a room, a – a – the garage space, to hi – to put her – store her furniture, when she was getting – going to get married to somebody else.

Q: Oh, and how old were you at this time?

A: I was 20 years old then.

Q: And how old was she?

A: Nineteen. So then, funny thing is that at that moment, I just said goodbye, we split trains. And I had her address and phone because of my friend that wa – that – that – but nothing to say – to stipulate that a – a friendship of – to get going as a girlfriend. So then, I let it go by. So I got to **Mexico**, and over to **Durango**, and I was on the way to – to **Durango** to see my parents. And then – then I would leave **Durango** and go to [**indecipherable**] to meet with the girl that I was supposed to marry.

Q: And –

A: Which I'm with now. And –

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Q: Oh. And she's in your diary.

A: – she's the one that's in th – in bad condition.

Q: Yeah.

A: So then, I was visiting my parents, and – and I get the remark from my father –

Q: How – how – when you – when you reached home, when you reached your parents, they were living in **Durango**, describe – did they – did they come for you at the station, did you go to that home on your own?

A: No, I – I got – I got off the train, and – and nobody received me, I – I just got off the train, and no – and re – got a taxicab, and – and went to – to the house, and I surprised them. And – and when they received me, everything went okay, and – and –

Q: What did your mother say?

A: My mother was crying, because I – I was finally freed, after what she had received while –

Q: Right.

A: – while I was a prisoner, that – that my aunt –

Q: That you were missing.

A: – that I – that I had been a prisoner. And she got sick. So, she was sick all – for all that time.

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Q: Did they know at – before you reached home, did they know that you were alive? Had they received any news?

A: I to – what – I – I – I called them by phone –

Q: Okay.

A: – that I was – I was alive, and that I was recovering, and all that. And then they – they asked me when I was coming to visit them. So then I told them I was coming over. So, when I got to the **[indecipherable]** and they were happy to see me, and my brothers and all that. And they were still young, and –

Q: What about your father?

A: Well, we sat on the table, and – and everything. Made a big salutation with a bottle of – a glass of cor – of cognac, or champagne. And I says **[indecipherable]**. And then – then in front of all, he asked me, what made you cowardly, to be captured? I mean, only cowards let themselves be captured. And all of them just made a remark –

Q: Against him?

A: – against him, and they said, why did you have to say that? And I got up from the table, excu – I excused myself, and I packed my luggage and I said to my mom, Mama – my mother – my s – my – even she was my stepmother, but I loved her

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because she – she was more like a mother to me. And I said, Mama, I'm going to – excuse me, but I'm going to leave, and I don't want to see my father again.

Q: And did he ever apologize?

A: For seven years I didn't see him.

Q: For seven – and where – where did you – where did you go?

A: When I received his apology was when he's dy – he was dying.

Q: And, how long after was that, when did your father die?

A: My father died in 70 – '87.

Q: So it took over 40 years for him to –

A: He never apologized to me until then.

Q: So where did you go then, when you told your mother you were leaving?

A: When I left, I left – I left – I left **Durango**, and I came back **United States**. I was transferred from – from the il – recuperation center of **Santa Barbara**, to the original hospital in **Pasadena**, which was then the – the **Constance** hotel. And I was an eye, ear, nose and throat assistant to the doctor, and I wer – worked there until I was discharged on December 10th, of '45.

Q: Of '45. And did you – how – describe going back to the united – coming back into the **United States** from **Durango**. Was that a difficult process, was that – was it fairly easy to come back into the **United States** from **Durango**?

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A: Oh, it was easy to come back, and it was nice to be back here, because I felt like I had – I had my other f – my whole family here, on this side.

Q: And how did your family on this side of the border treat you?

A: Much, much wonderful. Even though they were half – half cousins and half aunts, and half everything, but to me they were full.

Q: And did you say anything to them about any of your experiences?

A: Oh, they felt bad, they felt very bad. And yet, how was I to know yet – the traumas, we go back – that I still had that stigma in me, to go back to **Durango** and – and tell my mother, and yet see my father, face him again, after I told him I don't want to see him again, that I was going to get married to – to the girl I met on the train.

Q: And – and –

A: Without even seeing the girl that I was going to si – marry in [**indecipherable**].

Q: So you had two people in mind. So –

A: So –

Q: – and – and how did you feel, you – your pra – your parents before – and we're going back now to before the war – your – your parents were sent back to **Mexico**, they had to go back, and you were encouraged that – as an American citizen, born in the **United States**, that you had to serve in the army. And you go through

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everything that you went through, and then you have your father turn his back on you, and call you a coward, and how did – how did you feel about everything? You had gone through this experience in the **POW** camp, and then you were in **Berga**. And it was your father who encouraged you to go back to the **United States** and to serve in the army. So how – how are you feeling at this point, about everything that you've gone through?

A: I – I – I put a blank in front of me. I decided then, not to let that bother me.

Because I had other conflicts that was disturbing me, and that was the emotions and the stress, what I went through when I was a **POW**. And then, what hit me worse afterwards, I kept that, the stigma that he said to me, that I was a coward. I kept that behind me, and I – and I couldn't get it out of –

Q: And how did you deal with that for the rest of –

A: Yeah. It st – it still bothers me, because you never see a father tell that to his son, unless he feels like he isn't proud of anything.

Q: And how did your friends, your old friends who you knew back in school, and in **California**, did you see them again after you returned, and how did they treat you?

A: Yeah, I – I – I received my friends and – and then they treated me very well. The – and their conditions were very – they – mucho – mutually, totally complete, different. Not like when I told my father, I says, what do you call this, being a

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coward, is it – but I'll tell you one thing, what makes a person is that – because he would tell me about **Pancho Villa**, and – and – and the big, tall heroes. I says, you know what, that powder that they burn in **Mexico** is no comparison to the powder of a woman's powder that she puts on her face. Because our powder in our gu – weapons, can burn up your heart before you can say a word. That's what I told him.

End of File Three

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Beginning File Four

Q: This is the continuation of our interview with **Anthony Acevedo**, this is tape four. And we're going to go back one – once more, to before you went to – into the army, we're going back to your time in the **United States**. Why did your family return to **Mexico** from **California**?

A: They were forced out of the **United States**, because they were – they were Mexican citizens, and not American citizens. And they had no – I understood that they had no perm – documents to permit them to leave the **United States**.

Q: And describe your relationship with your father at that time – at the time.

A: Well, supposedly my father was to be my father. I – he – when my mother – originally, my mother died when I was about ano – a year and a half old. He remarried when I was four years old. And th-then I grew up with my mother's other family, and – and got to where I felt like I had another family.

Q: And did you – so, did you get along with your father at that point?

A: I didn't seem to get to know my father very well, because in the first place – I don't think that he was very much a father. I hate to say it, but I feel that, with an expression of – of feeling, because I remember when I was still in – in dur – in **Durango, Mexico**, that one day he said, come along with me, and I want to show

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you a part of life at your age. And I didn't quite understand what he meant, but I tagged along with him.

Q: And how old were you at that time?

A: I was – I was getting to be where I was 15 years old. And – and so he – what he did was to – he took me to a place where he get – getting his car serviced. And while he was getting his car serviced, we stood out there on the sidewalk, and he pointed me to a canteen, a bar. He says, you know who I – who works out of there? I says, no. He says, well, how come? Well, why do you ask me? And he says, well, a lot of young fellows like to get into bars. I said, what makes you think that I would la – rather get into a bar? And he didn't like the answer, or the question. And then, so he changed his mind, and trying to finagle me into something else. And then he took out some pictures, and he says, see? And he showed me three children. He says, well, he says, I want to do away with you and your sister. What makes you think that – that [indecipherable] do away – you want to kill us? Why not? And that let me to feel more cold. And, with time – he didn't repeat that again to me, but I kept away from him, and that gave me more thoughts of almost trying to leave the country.

Q: To leave **Mexico**.

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A: And – because, one day – the schools in **Mexico** had – have that facility of dressing up for a parade. And that was a day of parade, the **Cinco de Mayo**. You dress in white. And I happened to be one of the head of the – of the – of the parade. I don't know why – why they made me that way, but they had me make. So that day, I finished the parade, come home. I just got in at home, and then my mother says, **Antonio**, when you have time, when you undressed, you changed clothes, don't forget to throw the trash. I says, oh yes, I will change the clothes. Before you know it, my father had overheard, and he got the box, a box of – tomato box, empty, and he cracked it on my back. Just like, boom. He says, get out of here. I don't want to see you again.

Q: And how old were you at this –

A: About 15 years old.

Q: Fifteen.

A: And I felt, I didn't insult my mother, on the contrary. She knew what I said, and – but he took it the other way. So it – things beginning to get to where I th – wasn't wanted. So I left the house like he said, and I went to a house, a friend of mine, and I told him the situation, and – and he told me, he said, you're welcome here, stay here. And then he – I didn't go to school the following day, I was afraid to even be at school, my father [**indecipherable**]. So anyway – but the boy told the – the di-

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director what my father had done, because I explained to him. So that's why I – I stayed with him. So I didn't want to stay in me – in **Mexico** any more, I wanted – I didn't want to live there any more. And then, before you knew it, I was waiting for my friend after school, I was waiting for him about three or four blocks from there. And with him was the director, and my father was with him. And they were coming over to – and my father, to apologize to me. By that time I had that – I didn't have that feeling that I had a stigma against him. So that made me feel that I didn't want to be no more in – in **Mexico**. That's why. No more. And that taught me to be more – get away, too.

Q: And so then you came – you came back to the **States**, you joined the army. And – and what was your father's profession when you lived in **California**, before the family went back to **Mexico**? What did your father do for a living?

A: Well, my father's profession was east – he was starting to become an engineer. And he was going in for engineering, and became an architect, or engineer.

Q: And in **California**?

A: In **California**, and then he left for **Mexico**, and – and he went – became a director of fa – public work, for the state, and – and the chief construction of highways for the Pan-American highway, which is that 45 that comes through leo – through **El Paso**, yeah.

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Q: So coming back now, this is after the war, and you've returned to **California**, after leaving **Mexico** once again. Where did you live, coming back from **Mexico**, where in **California** were you living now, in [indecipherable]

A: I live with my half cousins again, same with the – my – my cousins, in **Pasadena**.

Q: And what did you do for a living, like what did you do to support yourself?

A: When I was discharged?

Q: Yes.

A: Not after – well, let's see, that would be a-after, actually after I was discharged, and got very – I went to work f – I went to work for a – a mannequin, where I designed the mannequins for – for clothing style. And – and then I presented a drawing to a – a company that I was looking forward to – for some designers, and I won the first prize, and I became a assistant to designing at **Howard Hughes** aircraft company.

Q: And did you go to school at any time, to study design?

A: I was going – I was going – at the same time, I was going to medical school, trying to see if I could get my degree – I had eight months to get to be a doctor. By that time I had gotten married, and –

Q: Tell – tell us about your wife.

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A: – oh [**indecipherable**] didn't want a doctor in the family.

Q: No?

A: And so I became a design engineer at – at **Hughes** aircraft company, and so I worked in aerospace for 47 years.

Q: And when did you retire?

A: I retired in '72.

Q: And you – you married the woman who you met on the train.

A: Afterwards, I divorced my ex, and – because there were problems that she didn't understand my situation, my traumas, which was obvious, and yet, she didn't comprehend. And those traumas caused me to – more or less, she has a fear of – I had – I'd swing my bra – my arms around and – and yell, because I was having those traumas, I was a prisoner of war.

Q: Did you ever get professional help?

A: It wasn't until when I met **Maria**, my present – when – she had been married before, and her husband was a air pilot, and he had traumas there, and told me about the VA hospital in **Loma Linda**. And so when I went there, they – I got the treatments.

Q: And tell us about your children, how many children do you have?

A: I have four, three boys and a girl.

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Q: And what are their names and their – their ages?

A: Well, my older, he works for **Boeing**, he's a – a – a mathematical an-analyst designer for **Boeing**. And my daughter, well, she was laid off from **Rayon(ph)**, so she hasn't been working at all, sh-she's out of work. And **Fernando**, he's an engineer for aerospace. And then **Ernesto**, he's a chief – he is a command engineer for a company, **Davoco(ph)**, that does the f-fuel systems for underground fuel systems for aircraft and missiles.

Q: And what is your daughter's name?

A: **Rebecca(ph)**.

Q: **Rebecca(ph)**, okay.

A: And **Anthony Francisco Acevedo** is my oldest son, junior. And **Fernando** and **Ernesto**.

Q: And **Rebecca(ph)**. And how many – do you – do you have grandchildren?

A: From the – from **Ernesto** I have **Gabrielito(ph)** and **Alejandra(ph)**. And from – from my junior, **Anthony** junior, is **Jason**, he's a psychologist, and **Stephanie(ph)** is a teacher, instructor. And **Fernando** two boys, one is a photographer designer, and the other one is a marketing.

Q: And do they all live in **California**?

A: Yes.

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Q: Okay. And going – going back to your experiences, and your children, when – what did you tell your children about your experiences in the war, as a **POW**, and in **Berga**?

A: Oh, they're very enthused about it, because they want to know – they want to know and have more experience of – of what I went through, and – and they feel that – that everybody should know.

Q: And when – when did you tell them?

A: Oh, I – when they were able to understand their – when, conversation-wise, the questions thrown at me, because of this, and because of that, and does that affect you, or will it affect you, or – no, I says, sometimes it's good to get it out of your system. I think it does you good.

Q: Mm-hm. So you didn't keep anything from them?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It's better to let it know, and in good and friendship si-situations, where it gives you better thoughts.

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Q: And describe your meeting with – with other **POWs**. What – what are those meetings – have you met with other **POWs**? I know Mr. **Feldman**(ph) –

A: At the – at the **Loma Linda** hospital, we have a get together the first Thursday and the third Thursday of the month, from 10:30 to 12, and they're all from **Europe**. We don't mix with the **Pacific** or Korean, because they had different thoughts. We're trying to get together, but yet, they're – they're a little different. But, we bring out things that – one of them, like he was near **Dachau**, was one of the prison camps, and he suffered a lot. And he has a trembling thought about – and so, we bring out the subject, and – and get it over with, and in – in talking about it, it helps to relieve some of the pressure.

Q: And how many still meet today?

A: Well, I do the – I do the re – a letter that I send, reminding them about the meeting, where we gonna meet. And that keeps me busy too, and – and they feel relieved, and so sometimes, either we have, out of the 36, 35, 36, we have about 10, 15 of them that get together, that we get together. Some others are not even – able to even drive, able to coordinate any more.

Q: And do you still continue your artwork, your – your drawing?

A: Oh, artwork, I don't have time. With my wife being so – where she needs attention, I – I keep busy as a medic. I'm back as a medic.

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Q: You're back as a medic. You continued. You – you got to go back as being a medic.

A: Yeah.

Q: And as – as a Latino coming back to the **United States** after your experiences, did you ever feel invisible, or misunderstood by members of your community, the Latino community, or did you ever experience any prejudice, any discrimination?

A: No, I – like, for instance, my house, your house, in – i-in – in **Yucaipa**, I have the American flag, and the **POW** flag flying every day, and they feel proud that I – that I do – that I have that. And they come and they say hi, and we do con – conver – converse, exchange thoughts. And they're up to date with me, and they all appreciate what I do.

Q: And speaking of that –

A: And no animosities.

Q: No animosities, no –

A: No.

Q: – no. So, when did you begin to speak publicly about what happened to you in **Berga**, and in **Bad Orb**?

A: Yeah, well, it's back in the late 90s, gradually I've been asked to – if I could give a lecture to the public school. It would be in an auditorium, or would be any

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group there's a school class – class, two classes. One of them I had – they had me for five hours.

Q: Oh really, this was what grade level?

A: Junior high, and high. Yeah, because you have the li – young ones, and it – it's hard for them to understand. But the other ones understand, and you see tears coming out. It affects them. But they all say, why didn't my father tell me about this, and why did my grandmother didn't tell me about this, why didn't the school tell us about this? And you see you – your remarks coming out of young children, why didn't – why weren't they educated to learn about what happened to my grandpa back in the – in the f – in the 40s.

Q: So, do they come forward with personal stories –

A: Yes.

Q: – about their families?

A: Oh yes. Yes, you get lot of – I wish I'd a brought a – a – letters that – that I get, but that I –

Q: What do some of the letters wha – is there any –

A: Thank you for giving us a speech, and thank you about this, and thank you, because you know –

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Q: Is there any one moment when experience with students that you can share with us, that really touched you, that – that – in your –

A: What – what – what really I can't believe it, is that **Martin Luther King High School**, you find some student, you get to a table, and you find five students, and they all [**indecipherable**] you know that –

Q: Where – where is this school?

A: Beg your pardon?

Q: Where is **Martin Luther King** –

A: The one in **Riverside**.

Q: In **Riverside, California**?

A: Yeah. Th – right off near the **March** air force base.

Q: Okay.

A: And – and I got a letter, thank you, and all that, and inside, a five dollar bill, or a dollar bill. I said, oh my God, why do they have to tell me to do this? You know, that's how emotional they get. You're not asking for money, you're – and you don't expect that.

Q: Mm-hm. And what do you plan to do with these letters? Do you keep all of them?

A: I keep them. I – I've kept them just for a while, they – what can I do?

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Q: Well, to – to our knowledge, you are the first Mexican-American that will be registered in our survivors' registry, here at the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**. The Holocaust – as a survivor of Nazi persecution. Do you see yourself this way, as a survivor, as a Holocaust survivor, when you think of this?

A: It's an honor. It's a pleasure to be in – part of it, because I feel that what they went through, my respect to all those people, children and mothers and fathers.

Q: When – when people started to talk about what they had gone through in the Holocaust, did – did that encourage you to begin to speak publicly?

A: Your emotions get to where you want to say a lot, but you can't cover a lot of territory. You wish you'd cover a lot of territory, and yet, it – it – it ties a knot in your throat.

Q: And what – as – as a Latino, what would you like Latinos to understand about this experience, about your experience?

A: Some are hard to understand, but some stress out and – and to the surprise, they remain blah. They – they di – don't understand why it happened, why this, why that. Now, that's what you c-call, it takes a coward to do things that you weren't supposed to do.

Q: And so, when you look at this – this large group, this large ethnic group, minority group here in the **United States**, it is the largest minority group, and

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should they learn about the Holocaust, Latinos, as much as it's part of Jewish history?

A: Yes, they should.

Q: Why?

A: They must learn to be able to love more, to understand, and be able to get along with each other, and respect each other, and respect others.

Q: Do they ever – has it ever been your experience where they think it won't happen to them, because they're not Jewish, or –

A: No. It could happen.

Q: So, with that, today, you've – you've come to the museum, and you are donating very significant and very personal belongings that you've kept for decades. You're donating them to the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**. And this includes your diary.

A: Yes.

Q: What does this diary mean to you?

A: It was a part of my life. A few words with it, it's part of my life.

Q: And yet, you're giving – what does this donation –

A: With all my love.

Q: And the armband that has the names of your fellow Americans.

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A: Yes, yes, every members of all my fellows that were with me, although the names are starting to dissipate. And in there is one of my buddies, that was Dr. **William Shapiro**, which he died this Christmas, past Christmas, of cancer. Otherwise, he would have been with us, in this group.

Q: So, by giving us these very personal belongings, and this being the nation's memorial, to tell this history, what do you hope others, particularly younger audiences, what do you hope that they will understand when they learn about your diary, and when they learn about what you've given the museum? What do you want them to understand, through the – this donation?

A: One important thing is this able to – to get into their hearts, and their minds, that feeling of – that they would think that it sounded impossible, but the impossible came true to life, and able to understand, and penetrate into their minds, what reality did exist. Because some of them do not understand yet. And this they ha – something has to get – be implemented into their lives, so it would penetrate. Otherwise, it would be a blah, not understanding what it is exactly.

Q: And there's – there's something that a soldier, an ethos of a soldier at war, and – and I want to read this to you. The soldier's war ethos. I will always place the mission first. I will never quit. I will never accept defeat, and I will never leave a

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fallen comrade. So, what do those words mean to you today, over 60 years, after all you've been through?

A: That penetrates, cause it's the truth. It's – it's more than a prayer. And hope to under – everyone will be able to understand the meaning of it.

Q: And with that – with those words, and – and your comrades, when you – when you have talked to other survivors throughout the years, do you feel that bond with the other **Berga** survivors? And how do you describe that bond, if you feel it?

A: I fe – these words, so hard words, that mean a lot. It is a feeling of – it means a lot, really. It's penetrating. I hope that people would understand that.

Q: You – you and others who were imprisoned at ber – in **Berga**, you were denied full disability. You mentioned that only for six months, you received 150 dollars, and then it stopped. And the **US Army** would not publicly acknowledge what happened to you. Can you put into words what that meant to you, what that means to you now? What that meant to you then, and now?

A: Well, that – to me, I got to where a lot of us fellas, buddies, when I read this to – material, we all came out with the expression of – we memori – murmured it. It was – the expression that, how stupid – and pardon the expression –

Q: It's okay.

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A: – of using it that way. If not, there's another word for it, and that there must not have been no feelings at all, to think that the **United States** gave all those people, all those soldiers to be out there, and gave their lives, for other lives just to survive, families. There must not be no feeling. Why they have that audacity, that yet it doesn't penetrate into their minds, the feelings of what other people have, a life. And yet, some go to church and pray, and they turn around and slap you in the face. And yet, the – no respect. And here, one the – instead of giving the 150, here, because you served your country. It's a laugh. Like, lot of people said, we don't expect the money. We res – we expect dignity, and – and the true fact of – the feeling of – of love. Not double talk. **[break]**

Q2: **Tony**, you just spoke so eloquently just now, of what it felt like when your country turned its back on you, and told you that you couldn't talk about what you'd been through, and denied you the benefits. And yet, you fly your flag, the American flag, and the **POW** flag every day from your home. Can you talk a little bit about that sort of feeling of – of – there must be something in there that – that says, on some level, there's a love for this country, even so. Otherwise, I don't know that you'd be flying that flag. Can you talk a little bit about that?

A: It's very hard to express myself for that respect, but I fly the flag of the **POWs**, because the thought of what's remaining, and what's gone. The gone is, God took

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them. The American flag is due to respect, and the dignity of the **United States**, remains a love. But yet, you would think that there's still something way back over there, that they're trying to almost implement a law that there's no such thing as in God we trust, or nothing like that. Which I think it's nothing but a bunch of double talk that they're trying to do, to implement. We're trying to f – it is the fact, give our countries more strength. If the people would open up and be more dignified, to maintain the firmness, then we'd show we respect that flag as the strength of the country. And in God we trust. We love. And He protect us, which they don't believe in that, but they're a bunch of atheists.

Q2: Today you're giving, as **Christina** said, a set of your most precious documents, that talked about what you went through, to the Holocaust Museum. What made you decide to make this donation to this institution?

A: What make me decide to – to do that?

Q: Yes.

A: I – it's a wonderful thing to – to find out that finally there is a place where – there's a resting place, dignified, the respect of what all these young people, old people, disappeared, without necessity, with no reason at all. It was horrible, and I think they deserve at least something, a piece of my life.

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Q2: Very soon, the generation that served during that time, both in the s – the forces, and also were in the camps, and suffered under the – the hand of the Nazis, will pass from being a living history, to being something in records. What would you hope that anyone, young, old, anyone coming to this museum, seeing your life on display, what are some of the things you'd like people to take away, about this history, and your part in it?

A: I – it's hard to explain. You could say it in many words, but you – there could be one word. With all dignity, I do respect the lives of what was missing. At least to remember those of the past and present, which were remaining, of that life that existed. And we pray for them, too. But the courses – the life of theirs, that remains. I do – do it with a very dignified manner, and love. That was a very words in it, but that means a lot. **[break]**

Q2: This is the last tape, tape four, of the oral history done with **Anthony Acevedo**, on October 13th, 2010.

End of File Four

Conclusion of English-language interview

A brief Spanish-language interview follows