

Maurice Bower
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Maurice Bower, born on July 16, 1922 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, discusses the origins of his nickname; his parents; being an only child; growing up in Atlantic City; his mother's work managing a boarding house and his father's as a music arranger; moving into his grandmother's Atlantic City home in 1936 after his parents moved to Florida; growing up in a Catholic neighborhood, but never attending church; aspiring to be a professional trumpet player; his family's maid, Daisy; the Lindbergh baby kidnapping in 1932; a fire at his grandmother's home; graduating high school in 1940; working as a trumpet player; moving to New York City; the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941; receiving advice to enlist in the Army before he could be drafted; enlisting in October 1942; reporting to Fort Dix in New Jersey; being transferred to a base in Colorado Springs, Colorado for infantry basic training as part of the 89th Infantry Division; spending Thanksgiving with other soldiers at the home of a World War I nurse; basic training; joining the camp's band; being promoted to sergeant; shipping out and arriving in Le Havre, France in January 1945; being stationed at Camp Lucky Strike; touring camps with the band to entertain the troops; being assigned to dig up and dispose of land mines on the beach; writing music; arriving in Germany and seeing many German soldiers who were extremely young; traveling behind the front lines and performing for the troops; advancing further into Germany; learning of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death and Harry S. Truman's succession to office; advancing through Germany and arriving at the Ohrdruf concentration camp in Thuringia, Germany in April 1945; the trenches surrounding the camp, which were filled with the corpses of camp inmates; learning the backstory of Ohrdruf; a Jewish soldier in his company who, upon learning that the bodies were those of Jewish inmates of Ohrdruf, suffered a heart attack; the end of World War II; returning to France; being assigned to Linz, Austria; many of his fellow soldiers who married German women; playing at an officers' club in Linz; being discharged from the army in March 1946; the black markets in Austria and France; currency exchanges on the black market; and his reflections on Ohrdruf and the war.

Photographs and descriptions follow the interview.