I pronounce your first name Hilbert?

Yes.

OK.

My nickname is Hibby.

I heard. It's a nice nickname.

I answer either one.

You said 8:15 in the morning, or 8:30?

On occasion, I've also been called Howard.

[CHUCKLES] I wonder why.

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Hilbert Margol on October 20, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. Thank you, Mr. Margol, for agreeing to speak with us today. Earlier, we had an interview with your brother Howard, and now, I'm really pleased that we can have one with you. I'm going to start with the most basic questions and from there, we'll learn more about you and your war experiences. So the first question is, can you tell me what was your name at birth?

Hilbert Margol.

Sometimes, it's a different name, so that's why we ask that. And what is the date of your birth?

February 22, 1924.

And where were you born?

Jacksonville, Florida.

Do you have any siblings?

Older brother, who's no longer living. Younger sister, who is living.

What were their names?

Older brother was Melvin, and our sister, Bernice.

Bernice. OK. Any other siblings?

No.

Well, what about Howard?

Forgot about him.

[CHUCKLES]

He's my younger brother, since I was born first.

Oh, really?

We are identical twin brothers.

All right. How much time difference is there between you? How much older are you?

Well, we were told I was 10 minutes older than him.

Tell me a little bit about your parents. First of all, with their names, and then I'll ask more questions.

My father's name was Morris, originally in Europe, was "Margolis." Later years, in the States, he dropped the I-S and it became "Margol." He was from a small village in Lithuania. Pusalotas, Lithuania. Our mother was also-- her family was from Lithuania, different village, but her family came over from Europe and resided in Baltimore, Maryland.

What is your mother's first name?

Sarah.

And her last name?

Bernstein.

Do you know what village in Lithuania she was from? Guberniya sounds familiar, but Howard would be the expert on that.

Guberniya?

Well, that was maybe a region or an area.

Yeah. That's the-- I believe, the Russian name for region.

Yeah, probably. Howard's the expert on Lithuania, more so than me.

Did your father-- when did he come over to the United States?

There again, Howard's the expert. He's written the whole family tree, going back to early 1800s. And I know my father came over-- he left Lithuania, I think he was 15 years old, exhausted whatever education facilities they had there and went to London where he had a sister and a brother with their families, living in London. Stayed in London for a couple of years before coming to the United States. And I think it was maybe 1913, '14, somewhere around there.

Did he have a large family in Lithuania? Did he come from a large family?

Oh, yes. I met the one sister that lived in London.

Your aunt?

It was my aunt. She and a first cousin came to Jacksonville on one occasion. My father, also later years, once he settled in Jacksonville, because originally, he was sponsored by a cousin in Connecticut, so he came over through Ellis Island and ended up in Connecticut until he got the word-- they had a farm in Connecticut-- and he got the word that Jacksonville, Florida was looking for a Hebrew school teacher. So he went to Jacksonville to fill that position, and once he arrived there and got started and realized how little the pay was, he decided that wasn't going to be his future. So he first was a peddler, ice peddler, and from there he ended up marrying my mother. Our mother was visiting from Baltimore, Maryland. Her cousins had relocated to Jacksonville, so she came on a visit. They met, fell in love, got

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married, and then he decided to open a clothing store, men's and ladies clothing store, no children's.

Now, did your dad, was he called up to serve in World War I?

No. I don't know the circumstances, but I guess, officially, he was not a citizen at the time. That may have been the reason.

I want to go back to the question I asked a little bit before. He had a lot of siblings?

Yes.

OK. So he had a sister in London.

He had a sister and a brother in London. He had a sister and I think, also, he has a brother that moved to South Africa, Johannesburg area. His youngest sister and her husband and several small children remained in Lithuania. And I remember my father corresponding. They corresponded with letters back and forth, and of course, soon after, not too long after the war broke out, my father stop receiving letters from the sister. Of course, he didn't know what happened until after the war was over.

We'll come to that. We'll come to that. So she was the only one of his siblings who remained there?

Right.

And what was the reason for why he left? What was the reason why any of them left? Was it the same reason, for example?

Well, you know, that's a question that was never asked. I was told as a youngster that my father originally went to London, and from London came to the United States because he want to go to medical school. But of course, after he arrived in the States, he had no money, so 'til he could get a job and make enough money to go to medical school, well, of course that never happened.

And let's turn to your mother's side of the family. Do you know much about her roots in Lithuania? Did she have any siblings that were born there that came over with her?

Oh, yes. My mother, she had two sisters and six brothers.

Oh my goodness.

And they all ended up in Baltimore, Maryland. And then I remember one sister married a Morris Maney from Lebanon, Pennsylvania, who was related to the Levitz family that ended up creating the Levitz furniture chain. My favorite uncle was Jack Bernstein, and over the many years I had, probably, for a number of reasons, I had more contact with him than I had with maybe all the other brothers, uncles, although I had plenty of contact with all my mother's family. The one that raised my Uncle Jack was my favorite uncle. I guess, one reason, he was the most successful. He became-- in business, real estate, he became quite wealthy and became very civic-minded and did things in Richmond and for the state of Israel that are all part of history.

He was in Richmond, Virginia?

Richmond, Virginia. He was honored for a number of reasons, connection with Israel. He put together a group that bought an old ferry boat that turned out to be the ship, the Exodus.

Oh, my.

He acquired some two Constellation airplanes, which ended up as the Israeli Air Force.

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Wow.

Because I remember, he had opened-- he bought a dress shop in Richmond, expanded into a chain of dress shops-- Virginia, North Carolina. And I remember my mother asking him on the phone one day, as a youngster, asking him, Jack, why did you buy an airplane? Well, he said he needs a plane and a private pilot to fly around to the different stores in Virginia and North Carolina. And she said, well, it's not that far to drive. Well, as it turned out, that was the reason why he wanted to learn something about the airplane business, so that enabled him to acquire these two Constellation airplanes, which they had them broken down, packed up into different kind of crates, and shipped over to Israel.

Was this after the war?

Yeah, that was after the war, before 1948, as some kind of machinery or something. And of course, they reassembled them in Israel.

That's quite a story. That's quite dramatic.

Well, I remember, on a number of occasions, visiting him. His son is still living in Richmond. His daughter passed away some years ago, but I remember in his office in Richmond, on the wall, he had a very enlarged picture of him and Ben-Gurion standing on the steps of one of those Constellation airplanes. So he was very instrumental, involved, and that kind of goings on.

Well, it is pretty core. That's core for the very, very beginning.

Right. In fact, you know, he did so much. All the reasons why I say he was my favorite uncle, because when he wanted my grandmother to move from Baltimore to Richmond where most of the family were, he bought an estate and then donated it to start a Jewish old age home so his mother would have a facility to live and have a strictly kosher facility. So things like that, that he did. But that's about him.

OK. But it also tells me something about you and about a person who was important to you and helped shape you and was a model of sorts.

Well, that's one of the reasons, many years ago, I became a member of the board here, the Israel Bonds Board, and I have supported Israel bonds for many years, although I voluntarily left the board a couple of years ago, I'm still very active in investing in Israel bonds.

Let's return now to your family and pre-war life. Do you have any earliest memories that you could share with us from Jacksonville, from growing up, from the family home, from your childhood?

Yes. Howard and I were born on George Washington's birthday, February 22, so I'm guessing and we were, I don't know six, seven years old, our mother-- in Jacksonville in those days, on George Washington's birthday, they always had a parade. And I remember at that age, the first parade, we thought they were having a parade because it was our birthday.

[CHUCKLES] Well, it was.

Of course, we later learned it wasn't in our honor. There was a guy by the name of George Washington. And I remember our mother telling us-- of course, we lived in a basically Jewish neighborhood, a half a block away from the synagogue, it was 316 Jefferson Street.

Tell me what it looked like, your home.

Well, it's a two story house and we lived downstairs, a different family lived upstairs. I remember when our older brother Melvin was studying for his bar mitzvah, the bar mitzvah classes, which was him and three other kids, were held

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in our house. So I remember the teacher meeting there on an almost daily basis, teaching him Hebrew and preparing for their bar mitzvahs. And Jefferson Street, where the house was, the next street parallel over was Broad Street. A short distance away was where the kosher meat market was, so it was very convenient.

Was there a large Jewish community in Jacksonville?

Well, at the time, it was separated. The area we lived in were mostly Jews that came from Poland, Lithuania, Russia, that area. In a totally different area of town, which were the reform Jews, where their temple was, and most of them were more well-to-do families. They were almost entirely-- their families came from Germany. And there was a definite distinction there.

Was there?

No question about it.

How did it show itself?

Well, it showed itself in a number of ways. We all had the feeling, growing up, that they considered us the lower class, so to speak. And I remember when Howard and I were Boy Scouts and our mother, who was quite an aggressive type person, it so happened that Halle Cohen, who was a reformed Jew, owned the big Cohen department store, which later was bought out by the May company later years, but Halle Cohen, of course, was the owner, CEO, and so forth. And of course, they had the franchise to sell all of the Boy Scout uniforms and equipment. To buy it, you had to buy it there, that was it.

So I remember our mother went there to ask him, would he be willing to donate some kind of donation to troop 14, which was our troop from our neighborhood and our synagogue, and he just blew her off in a not so nice way. There again, like, looking down on our mother, because I remember my mother telling us about it when she came home and how she was just not welcome. So even though, certainly, my mother shopped there because it was the department store in downtown Jacksonville. It covered a city block.

Were most of the people from the German community, had they come over to the United States around the same time as the East Europeans did, or a generation or so earlier.

Probably a little earlier. Yeah, I think a little earlier.

And you mentioned that you lived in a Jewish community.

Oh, very definitely.

And did you speak-- what language did you speak at home?

Well, at home, our parents spoke both English and Yiddish. That's why, when I went in the army, I couldn't really speak much Yiddish, but I understood a lot. So that's why, in later years, I was able to pick up German.

A lot quicker.

Very, quite quick, when we were in Germany.

So they would speak Yiddish sometimes with one another?

Oh, yes. Well, in the store, it was Yiddish most of the time in the store, because my father opened this store in a Black business district. A black business district, in a two block area, there were like five different stores, clothing stores, of one kind or another, all owned by Jewish families. So they were all friendly competitors, but they all carried something a little different to cater to a little different taste.

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Did you and your brother or your other siblings ever help them out in the store?

If we wanted to see our father, we basically had to go to the store, because he left the house before we woke up in the morning to go to school, because he walked miles and miles and miles to get to the store.

Oh, really?

Oh, early years, he walked, closed the store 8, 9 o'clock at night, walked all those miles back home. That's how he operated the stores. I remember when we would go to the store on Saturdays, because that was the busiest day, no school, and Saturday night, never closed a store before 11 o'clock, the earliest, Saturday night.

Wow.

And you could see, sometimes, if you went outside, on the sidewalk outside the store, you'd see the other merchants also looking to see if there's any customers still walking around. And they all pretty well stayed open as long as they saw a possible customer walking on the street--

Well, this was the '30s, the depression years.

This was-- yeah, then the depression hit, so a customer was very valuable. I remember when the government declared a veterans bonus, my father had a reputation, my father and mother both had a reputation for being extremely honest. And of course, all their customers, of course, were Black customers, and I remember when the government awarded the bonuses and some of their customers, the men came in that had served in the military, they came in with their bonus checks, gave it to my father, and said here's a check, give me $50 or $100, keep the rest, and if I come back in drunk, give me maybe $10.

And that was the arrangement. And of course that's how they trusted. That certainly gave me a message that they trusted my father. I also remember in the store, we had a Black plainclothes detective. In those days, of course, the police department could not have any Black officers, strictly forbidden. But it was a little known fact, they did have plainclothes Black police officers-- most of them were detectives-- to operate in the Black areas.

Interesting.

I remember they had a nightclub in the area called the Two Spot Nightclub. And I remember this Black detective explaining like on a Saturday night-- and this was the kind of experience, growing up in that environment-- that they had maybe 100 or more people on the dance floor Saturday night, a shot rings out, somebody is killed in some way on the dance floor, couldn't find even one witness. And I learned, at that age, it wasn't-- the reason why, because if a witness spoke up and told this Black detective who fired the gun, they feared for their life. That's probably still true today in some areas. So that was the difficulty of finding the perpetrator, because a witness feared for their life, which is understandable.

Of course. And you kind of absorb all that, as you're growing up.

Oh, yes.

You know, these different worlds, these different communities. Even from this brief conversation, you've painted a world of German Jewish immigrants, East European Jewish immigrants, the neighborhood you grew up in, the kosher place, the Yiddish that is spoken. No one would have thought, as well as a little bit about Black and white America.

Right. Well, in the store, I remember we always had at least one Black salesperson. One, for some years, was a young Black fella. And then some period, there was a female salesperson. So growing up in that environment-- and when the time came in later years when things changed and segregation ended, it was no problem for us. We had no problem. It didn't create any problems for us because we were used to being with Black people. We lived with them, so to speak. In

fact, my father would not eat-- there's only one restaurant he would eat at outside the home.

My mother used to bring food to the store for him to eat. The only restaurant that I ever knew that he would eat at, either from the home or the store, was across the street. It was Jackson's Bakery and Cafe, a Black couple owned and operated it. He would eat lunches there because he knew the couple, and he knew they were very, very-- had a very clean establishment-- that he would do. Next door was Anderson's Smoke Shop, also owned by a Black entrepreneur. My father smoked cigars and a pipe, no cigarettes.

Anderson's smoke shop, the deal my father had with them, my father would prepare his tax returns for him every year. He would pay my father with a box of cigars and a can of smoking tobacco. So there again, I certainly had a lot of contact with Mr. Anderson show across the street because he owned the Jacksonville Black baseball team.

Oh, my.

So there again, as a kid, my father became a big baseball fan because of that. So I used to go over sometimes when the visiting team, Black baseball team from out of town was visiting, they would be at his-- some of them would be at his smoke shop for whatever reason-- it was also a shoeshine parlor-- and I would go over there just to see some of these ballplayers. So there again, all that was--

That was part of your growing up.

And that's another reason why, of course, Howard and I both became big baseball fans. We got that. And of course, occasionally going with our father to the Jacksonville white baseball team, too, to their games.

Did you go to public school or private school?

Went to public school. In our day, there was no such thing as a private school. The families couldn't afford it.

And was that school something that was outside of the usual community that you lived and socialized with?

No, when-- I forgot-- when we first started grammar school, we had moved to a different neighborhood where the Jewish families, as a whole, were moving to an area called Springfield. And that was why it was a heavily populated Jewish neighborhood because the new synagogue was built in that neighborhood and, of course, that's the reason why--

They moved.

--most families that we knew moved to that neighborhood, but that was definitely more of a mixed neighborhood. It probably was more like a 50-50 Jewish and non-Jewish neighborhood, but a very good, friendly neighborhood, especially with the Depression in the picture, because in those days, everybody knew everybody's neighbors. In other words, you knew everybody on your block, your street, a cross street, around the corner. The kids, we all played together, Jewish, non-Jewish, we all just played together. And that's when we went to-- well, that was, I guess, maybe the second or third grade is when we ended up at a different school in that neighborhood.

Did your father have any difficulties during the Depression? Did the Depression hit your family?

Well, that was the reason that my father walked. We had no car. And I guess, later years, when things were starting to get better, my father was against it. But my mother borrowed a little money from my uncle.

Your uncle Jack?

No, my father's brother. My father had brought him over from Lithuania, and he was in the scrap metal business. He started a scrap metal business, so he was doing quite well, considering. He also had a lot of kids. So she borrowed enough money, with the little bit she had, to buy the first car.

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That was what year?

What year was that?

Mm-hmm. Still before the war?

Oh, yes, definitely before the war. I think it was called-- well, I remember-- come to think of it, earlier before the Depression, my father had bought an Oldsmobile. The windows were canvas with buttons that you attached if you wanted to close the car. They had plastic inserts in the canvas. It had a canvas top, because I remember pictures, I could visualize if it was yesterday, when my father brought my mother and my sister home from the hospital when my sister was born. She's six years younger than my brother and I. And I remember standing outside the house when they pulled up in that Oldsmobile.

With her?

With her, brought in the baby sister and so forth, then he lost that car sometime, I think, during the Depression-- had no car. And I remember when my mother bought this new car, which was something called a Mormon-- Marman, M-A-R-M-A-N. Out of business.

Yeah, I've never heard of one.

Yeah, it was called a Marman. And at first, my father refused to ride in it. He continued walking all those miles back and forth. The only day the store closed, you see, was Sunday.

OK, well, that brings me to another question. Was your family very religious?

Well, strange you ask that question, because my father had to operate the store on Saturdays.

I noticed that. Yeah.

So he couldn't go to services.

That's right.

He closed the store on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. That's the only days that the store was closed and he attended services. I remember when Howard and I were bar mitzvahed.

1937.

And of course, my father had an aliyah, and when he came up for his aliyah, he just read right out of the Torah.

Explain to people who may not know, what is an aliyah?

A portion of the Torah. You say a blessing before they read the portion of the Torah, and after that portion is read by the reader, then you say a second blessing. So my father said the first blessing by heart. He didn't stop. He read the portion, the next portion, right from the Torah scroll itself. Of course the rabbi was quite surprised, but of course, my father had the kind of education that he had in Lithuania, and of course, as I said, he originally came to Jacksonville to be a Hebrew school teacher.

Tell us a little bit about the education he had had in Lithuania. We hadn't talked about that yet here.

All I was ever told was that after he was bar mitzvahed, there was no facility in the area that, I guess, the family could afford. I don't know, maybe in a larger city, I'm sure there was colleges, but they couldn't afford for him to go, and he wanted higher education. So that's when it was decided that he would go to London where his sister and older sister and

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brother lived.

And in Lithuania, the school he had gone to was a Jewish school?

Yes.

OK.

Yes, Hebrew school and whatever. As far as I know, that was it, that was his education.

Do you know what-- I'm just going to stay on this point-- do you know what your grandfather in Lithuania on your father's side did for business or how to keep the family?

Never really knew anything about that. I do remember in the store one day, happened to be on a Saturday afternoon, and a rather large, redheaded man suddenly walked in the store and my father greeted him like a long lost relative. And I remember being told that he came from Pusalotas because the synagogue had burned down.

There?

In Pusalotas. Howard has the whole story. But based on the historical records that he was able to find there, which is quite a story. But this redheaded man and my father knew each other from Pusalotas, Lithuania. The purpose of him coming to Jacksonville was to try and collect money to take back to Lithuania to rebuild the synagogue. Jacksonville had a surprisingly number of families that originally came from Pusalotas, Lithuania.

That is quite incredible, given that your father ended up there, not because of that, but because somebody had wanted a Hebrew teacher.

Yeah. And I remember Jacksonville, at one time, had a Pusalotas Society that was formed. Our mother was president for some years.

Really?

Because I remember the Schemer family, the Setzer family, which Benny Setzer became-- he opened a chain of grocery stores followed by, after he sold that, a food fair chain. He then opened a chain of drug stores. He became extremely successful. Well, his whole family was from Pusalotas. The Schemer family was all from Pusalotas. There were other families that all came from this shtetl in Lithuania that all ended up in Jacksonville, Florida. And a lot of the offspring still live there today.

Amazing. Tell me this. In the '30s as you were growing up, and you were still a kid, Hitler comes to power in 1933. Do you remember hearing about that and about any conversation or discussion about what this was, what this could be?

Not really. Not until probably our junior, maybe sophomore, 10th, 11th grade in high school.

And you would have been, then, around 14, 15?

Yes.

Something like that.

15, 16.

15, 16. So that's '39. Yeah, 1939 is when the war begins.

Yeah.

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OK.

And of course, that's when-- see, when we would go to a movie on Saturday afternoons, the neighborhood theater, or one downtown Jacksonville, they had the Fox Movie Tone News. So before the cartoons or the feature movie would come on, they showed a segment of Fox Movie Tone News.

That's where you got your news from?

And that's when you basically-- because we had radios in those days-- I remember, certainly remember December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor.

I was going to ask you about that. Tell me what, where were you when that all happened?

Well, as I remember it, it was a Sunday morning, when listening to the radio, President Roosevelt came on the radio and spoke, and of course, there was a shock to most families. And that was on December 7, 1941.

Pearl Harbor.

Yes. We were seniors in high school, preparing for graduation. We graduated in mid-January of '42, a little over a month later. Before that, President Roosevelt's administration had started, some years earlier, the Civilian Conservation Corps. CCC. And I remember we had a young Jewish doctor whose last name was Rose, R-O-S-E. He had graduated as a doctor from Howard University.

Oh, really?

Medical school, which in the South, he was not recognized as a doctor. He could not practice in the South. But he was a doctor in the Civilian Conservation Corps, west of Jacksonville, near Lake City, Florida, they had a town called Olustee, Florida, and they had a National Forrest in the area, so they had these members of the Civilian Conservation Corps working with the Forrest Rangers. So he was stationed there as a doctor for those that needed medical attention. So he lived at our house on weekends. So he would come in every weekend and live in our house. We had a very small house. Somehow, we all fit in. I remember we would have relatives come down and visit from Baltimore or Richmond. Somehow--

They all fit in?

--they all fit in. You know, we may have slept on the floor to give them our beds, but we managed.

I have a question, now, that kind of ties a couple of-- it may or may not tie a couple of things together, but it's chronological. Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, that's when world events really implode into your world.

Right.

Your father, nevertheless, still was corresponding with his sister in Lithuania, the one that was left there.

Yes.

Do you recall whether or not there were any letters that he received, still, before December 1941?

I just remember they corresponded. I remember he would get letters. I can't tell you if the letters were in Yiddish or Lithuanian, but I remember a number of letters that he used to get, because between him and my mother, they used to share the letters, but there was no reason for any of the children--

To really know.

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--we couldn't read the letters anyway.

The reason I bring this up is that by December 7, 1941, the Germans had been in Lithuania for half a year, and it is in that half year that almost all of the Jews were murdered.

Yes.

And so it could be that by the time Pearl Harbor happened, your aunt wasn't around anymore.

Probably not.

From a small village like that.

Howard, of course--

He might know?

Oh, he knows because he found out the reason, what happened to them in his research in Lithuania.

But your family is not aware of it?

Not at that time. They just knew the letters stopped, and that was all that they knew.

In January, then you graduate from high school.

Right.

What happens with you after that? What are you-- is the war then on your mind, or do you go forward? What happens, what do you do?

Well, certainly, the military is on our mind because everybody had to register for the draft. That was in January. We turned 18 in February 22, so we were home maybe 10 days or so and we entered University of Florida as freshmen, which was 80, 90 miles away from Jacksonville, so it wasn't that far. In those days, it was a well traveled, two lane highway between Jacksonville and Gainesville, Florida. Well, they had a ROTC unit, so Howard and I joined the ROTC unit. It was horse drawn artillery. I remember our uniforms were riding pants.

Very effective.

We had 105 millimeter Howitzers, which we both were trained as gunners. Our rifles were made out of wood. [CHUCKLES]

What value does a wooden rifle give you in training?

Just something to carry, to act like when we marched with the rifle that was made out of wood. It was nothing you could do with it but just hold it, get an idea of how to hold a real rifle, but that was it. Then I remember during our freshman year, an army officer showed up and addressed the ROTC students and explained that if we joined an Army Reserve unit, there'd be a very good chance they would let us stay and finish college, which sounded like a pretty good presentation, so Howard and I joined the Army Reserve unit.

So you weren't drafted?

No.

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You joined the Army Reserve unit. OK.

And in October of '42, late October of '42, our reserve unit was called to active duty. So much for college.

So much for college.

But they let us stick around college for another few months. We were ordered to report to Camp Blanding, Florida, April the 3rd, 1943.

So another half year?

Yeah. So he was right. They let us finish some college, not much. So a few days at Camp Blanding for indoctrination, and then they sent Howard and I to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. 13 weeks of basic training, also a 105 millimeter Howitzers, also trained additional training as gunners, but we had real live rifles.

First time, huh?

First time. Neither one of us had ever as much as held a gun, a firearm, of any kind in our hand.

What happened with the horses? Were there any horses in--

No. That was all mechanized there. The horses were at the University of Florida. But Fort Bragg, North Carolina-- so at the end of 13 weeks of basic training, we had an opportunity, we were offered the opportunity to go to officers training school, officers candidate school, they called it. We asked what's that about, and they said well you go to this particular facility for officers training, three months, you come out as second lieutenants, and those days they called them 90-day wonders. We thought about it a minute or two and said, well, if we both do that and we come out second lieutenants, they're gonna split us up.

And you wanted to stay together?

And we want to stay together. So what else is available? They said, well, next choice, the army is just starting a new Army Specialized Training Program, ASTP. What's that about? Well, they'll send you to some college to take a course in engineering because some smart person in Washington decided that whenever the war would be over, the country would be short of engineers. OK. Sounded pretty good, so we said we'll take that. So we were sent to the Citadel in South Carolina-- horrible experience.

Why?

Well, because the barracks are like a prison with a metal gate, locked.

Really?

They only unlocked the gate at certain times, otherwise, we were locked into the barracks and the parade ground, which was enclosed by the barracks. Not a good experience. Fortunately, we were only there for four or five days, maybe a week, and they assigned the two of us to Syracuse University. We stayed at Syracuse University taking classes, courses in engineering, calculus, trigonometry, everything that goes with engineering, and suddenly, they decide to transfer us to-- I think it was maybe January-- they decide to transfer us to the University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois. Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

So this is January '44 by this point?

Yeah.

OK.

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'43.

'43?

I'm sorry, '44, right. I'm sorry, yeah, '44. So now we're at the University of Illinois, maybe three months there, some smart general decided, wait a minute, we got all thousands of these young healthy army soldiers in college. We need them for active duty, so they disbanded the program, and that's when they split us up.

And this was in Illinois, probably around April '44?

I'd say early April, right.

Early April '44.

Howard was sent to the 104th Timberwolf Division in the Mojave Desert, training for the North African campaign. I was sent to the 42nd infantry Rainbow Division in Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. When I first arrived, they put me in an infantry company. I asked, all my training has been on a 105 millimeter Howitzer, what am I doing in the infantry company? Well, that's the way it is. Well, I guess, maybe a couple of months there, I got trained on an M1 rifle. There again, I qualified as an expert marksman, which was not my background before coming into the army. Then suddenly, somebody woke up and saw my military record and they moved me over to the artillery, the 390 2nd Field Artillery B Battery, and once again, I was a gunner.

Meanwhile, Howard's group, they decide to move them from the Mojave Desert to Colorado for mountain training. Well, as he told me later, he requested transfers to come to Oklahoma where I was at, because he was in the infantry and all his previous training was the same as mine, in the artillery and direct support of an infantry company. Well, Howard can certainly tell you all the details of that, but the net result was, he ended up joining me. We got lucky.

I want to pause right here. When you say that he joins you, and so you're rejoined again, twin brothers, same unit, and so on, there was a sense that we all, by this point, have seen "Saving Private Ryan," where the whole premise of that film is that there were so many boys who were brothers, who were all lost to one family--

Well, the five Sullivan brothers were lost on the same ship, went down in the Pacific, prior to that.

So that's a real story?

That's the real story.

So tell me about that.

So that's when the military said brothers cannot serve in the same combat unit.

And why did you-- did you know about the Sullivan brothers at that point?

Oh, sure. Oh, yeah. That was highly publicized. But we still wanted to serve together for several reasons.

Tell me about those.

One reason was, we both felt that if we ended up in combat and one of us met misfortune, chances would be the other one would be able to tell our family members what really happened. The other reason was, you know, when you go into a military, you're suddenly put in with guys from all around the country. You don't know them, they don't know you. If you got a brother, you got somebody you can trust implicitly, which is very important. So those were the two major reasons.

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Did your parents have misgivings about this, about you wanting to stay together, given with the Sullivan brothers?

No, we let them know we wanted to be together, and my mother, especially, decided that's what we wanted, that's what she wanted. So when my brother Howard's request for transfer, he found out they weren't going anywhere, I remember he contacted me with the idea of our mother sending writing a letter to President Roosevelt to request that we be put together. So he said, you know, we don't know, he said, whether he could come to me, I may end up with him. I said, well, we've got a 50/50 chance, so he contacted our mother, she wrote a letter to President Roosevelt.

I guess it was probably a couple of weeks later, she got a letter from the White House, not signed by President Roosevelt, was signed by his aide, some general, and it just said, as a two-star mother, her request would be granted, but it didn't say who was going where, so we didn't know until-- luckily for us, as it turned out, Howard got orders to come transfer to my division. Now, it just so happened that while Howard was on a train somewhere trying to get to Oklahoma, our mother was bitten by a rat and she became extremely ill.

She was in the hospital. They weren't sure if she was going to make it or not. The Red Cross was able to contact my unit and got me a 10-day emergency leave to go home. They couldn't locate Howard, so he didn't know nothing about it. When I got back from home-- our mother, fortunately, pulled through-- then he told me the story of what happened when he reported to my gun battery. They thought it was me coming back just a few days after I left.

Because you're identical twins?

Yes. And you know, we're in the same army uniform, made it even more so. So at the time, we were both Buck Privates, so no distinction there. So he told me that the guys wouldn't believe it when he told them that he was my twin brother. And they said, no you're coming back so quick from your 10-day furlough and now you're saying you're the twin brother, you want us to think you're crazy, and that means you're bucking for what they called a section 8. Section 8 discharge means you were discharged out of the army because there was something mentally wrong. So according to him, they gave him a lot of dirty details until he finally convinced somebody that he really was my twin brother. Because our army serial numbers, you see, is only one digit apart.

Between the two of you?

Yes. I remember, I can tell you my army serial number without hesitation.

Please.

14077366. Now I got that over 70 some years ago.

That's right.

Now, why do I remember it to this day?

Why?

Because every month to get payday, you had to stand there and repeat your Army serial number, so every month for three years, you repeat that army serial number over and over in order to get paid every month.

And did you get the same pay every month, for three years, or did it change?

We got $21 a month until we got overseas. I think, overseas, that increased, I think, to $27 a month. Either $27 or $28 a month. But we couldn't-- I mean, minus a deduction for life insurance policy, minus a deduction for money to be sent home, and what little was left, we can only spend it in a PX to buy candy bars or--

Things like that.

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Howard and I never smoked. I say we never smoked. We did when we were, I don't know, 9 or 10 years old.

Like every other kid in the world.

On one King Edward's cigar in the garage. We took a cigar. We each took a cigar out of our father's cigar box, we went in the garage and we lit up, and after we turned green and then purple and got very nauseous, we decided that's what smoking is all about. It's not for us. Never smoked again.

So he comes back to your unit and suddenly there are two of you.

Right.

What happens to you both after that? By this point, if it's April '44, or a little bit afterwards--

No, it was later.

It was later. It's like--

Oh, yeah, because it was maybe three or four months--

Summer. Summer of '44.

Oh, throughout the summer before he joined my outfit.

Oh, I see. All right, so we're talking the fall of '44?

Probably. Maybe September, October, September.

Which means the D-day had already happened in Europe.

Oh, yeah, June the 6th of 1944. I remember we were on maneuvers. Wait a minute. Come to think of it, Howard was with us on maneuvers in Oklahoma. Maybe it was after June. Might have been July or August, because I remember we were on maneuvers in the woods in Oklahoma, and two things happened that I remember very distinctly. One was Howard fell asleep on guard duty. And I remember him telling me the story how one of our lieutenants woke him up and told him if that happened in a combat zone, he would be court martialed immediately.

Wow.

The other thing that happened-- I didn't drive. I had never learned how to drive because our older brother tried teaching me when I became of driving age in high school, and he was such a horrible teacher, too excited that I said, it's not worth it with him hollering and screaming at me because I wasn't releasing the clutch properly. We didn't have automatic transmissions in those days.

You can ruin a good gearbox learning how to drive.

Yeah. You had to really know how to drive. But anyhow, so we're in maneuvers in Oklahoma in the woods, a lieutenant grabs me, he says, soldier, get in this vehicle and drive me to headquarters. Well, I didn't want to tell him I didn't know how to drive. I said, sir, I don't have an Army driving permit. He says, I didn't ask you, I gave you an order. So I got behind the wheel. I had spent enough time in the motor pool where we were supposed to be learning how to fix the engines in case, in combat, something went wrong, minor problem, you'd know how to fix it. Well, that wasn't for me. I figured I was a dead duck if that was so.

I learned enough to know that the gear shift was on a panel on the visor, and you had to double shift, so here I'm behind the wheel. Fortunately, it's a one lane dirt road in the woods, and I'm driving, and I'm looking up at the panel telling me

how to shift gears and which gear to put it in and when to put it in the next gear. While I'm doing that, I'm scraping some pine trees on both sides, but that's OK, I'm still moving. So I got him where he wanted to get to, but with that experience, I said, ah, driving is no problem. So after that, I practiced when I had the opportunities. In the motor pool, I would take a Jeep or something and just drive around, and that's how I really learned how to drive.

And no one was screaming at you.

Right.

Here's something I didn't ask before. Your brother, Melvin, did he join up?

My brother Melvin, when he was 12 years old, he had double mastoid surgery, which meant he had problems with both ears.

Oh, I see.

It affected his hearing, so when he applied to go in, he volunteered for the Army, they gave him a physical and they rejected him, so he was classified 4F. So during the war, he went to work for our uncles in Virginia in their business, which we later started the same business after the war.

After the war. OK. So D-day happens, and you're in training. Your brother joins you by September, and then what happens? How long do you still stay there before you're shipped out?

Well, I remember it was sometime in December, we left on a troop train and took off going north. Once we left the Camp Gruber area, there was snow on the ground until we arrived at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. We never saw the actual ground on that trip, and the only reason why we know the train went up north into Canada and across Canada and down through the state of New York, was because we saw the signs.

Why was that? That sounds very odd.

Well, it was wartime. Trains were going in all different directions, but that particular troop train-- I say, the only reason why we knew we were in Canada was because we saw different signs as the train moved through different areas. And then we came down the state of New York into Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and that's where we were at Camp Kilmer preparing to go overseas. I guess we must have been some time in December. I remember, we got a 24-hour pass to go into Manhattan around Christmas time, and all but-- our gun battery consisted of 100 enlisted men and officers. We had four Howitzers. Howard was a gunner on number two, I was a gunner on number three. And I remember when the 24-hour passes were up, 98 of the 100 men returned, two did not.

Who were they?

One of them was an Italian kid, Tony Faccuito, he was the bugler because he played musical instruments in a band as a youngster, so he was the bugler. And the other was a Jewish kid, name was Ben Friedman. Tony Faccuito and Ben Friedman, they failed to show up. Our captain got a telegram from them saying, too sick to travel. Next day, another telegram, feeling better, but still too sick to travel. Well, as it turned out, the day we boarded the troop ship to depart the New York Harbor, a taxicab suddenly pulls up alongside the ship. The two of them get out, come aboard the ship.

Well, as they explained it, Friedman's aunt worked for the New York Port Authority. She knew exactly when that ship was going to depart, so that's why they knew when they show up. Of course, they were court martialed. Now, they got lucky. Why? Because, for that crossing, it was a 15-day crossing to Marseilles, France, because it was in a convoy with warships around the convoy and so forth. So they were court martialed. Now, we lived way below decks. They had these hammocks, like four, maybe five hammocks high, each one of us slept on a hammock. You had your duffel bag with all your belongings in it, and you in that hammock. Well, with them, they got to sleep on the bottom hammock. One of us had to stand guard duty on them because they were supposedly in prison, in jail.

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Now, we were served two meals a day while that 15-day voyage-- breakfast and dinner-- because by the time you stood in line, there were 5,000 men on that ship.

Oh my gosh.

By the time-- because the officers had a separate area-- by the time you stood in line for breakfast, got fed, got back to your bunk, it was almost time to turn around and get back in line for dinner. The guard had to march them up to where the food was, they got served, they ate, and then they were marched back down to their bunk. They didn't have to stand in line.

The absurdity of the situation.

Right. But they were court martialed, they were sentenced, and jail. Now, to follow up on the same two guys, once we're over in Marseilles, we land, we go out in a rural area, and we had these two-man pup tents, so we line up our pup tents. Well, their pup tent, they mark off about 10 feet from the rest of our tents, and that's jail, so their tent is now jail. There again, one of us has got to stand guard duty on them. Well, the day before their sentence expires, just before we go into combat, somehow they bribe the guard or something, but they take off, they go into Marseilles. What happens? The shore patrol arrest them in a house of ill repute. So now they're court martialed again.

[LAUGHS]

True story. Now, what was their punishment this time, because shortly thereafter we went into combat? Tony Faccuito, I remember, his job was to go with the second lieutenant that was a forward observer with the infantry company that we supported, to dig a foxhole first for the second lieutenant. Once he did that, then he could dig a foxhole for himself. That was his punishment. And after the war ended in 1948, I got married. My wife and I went to New York on our honeymoon, New York City, few million people there. We're in this nice restaurant. I go into the men's room. Who do I bump into? Ben Friedman.

Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness.

Of all people. So I ask him what did he do now, what was he doing? Of course, by this time, I'm in business already. Well, he explained to me he was, what they called in those days, a gigolo. He escorted wealthy women, widows, to restaurants, theaters, wherever they want to go, he was their escort. That's what he did for a living.

Well, I mean, it's sort of like, you have the war, you have this serious stuff going on, and it sounds like you have a comic relief.

There was a certain amount-- even in combat, you had comic relief at times. Mainly during rest periods. So to continue on, now, we land in Marseilles, France. I will tell you this, we didn't know where we were going until after the ship was maybe two days out to sea, then they told us, we're going to land in Marseilles, France. Well, my brother and I, due to geography lessons in school, we said, great southern sunny France. You know, it's wintertime when we left New York, so this is great. We arrive at Marseilles-- freezing, horrible, freezing temperatures.

Who would think?

Of course, the local natives that were dock workers, coldest weather in 100 years. You know, yeah, we've heard that from the local chamber of commerce back in Jacksonville. But anyhow, so it just so happened, our infantry units that we supported shipped over ahead of us-- no support, they were put in France in what was supposed to be a quiet area, but after the Battle of the Bulge, US Army intelligence decided that the German army was not going to perform any more offenses, strictly defensive positions. So they put our infantry companies into such an area, except Hitler decided, and history books show, he made one last offensive right where our infantry companies were.

And where was that?

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When?

Where?

I can't tell you. The town we went into was a village called Wingen-sur-Moder was our first combat position, but this was a little north of where they got hit, originally. Might have been Strasbourg area, somewhere around that area.

I understand, somewhere around there.

It's all in probably in the book that Howard has, and I've got the same book plus several others. So they had casualties, killed, wounded, and captured, so our first job, they had replacements coming in, so our first job was to more or less go on light maneuvers in order for their replacements to get trained, and some of their new officers to get some experience dealing with our forward observers and so forth, so that lasted a couple of weeks, probably until the middle of January, maybe a few days later. So since we were on maneuvers, we went into gun positions maybe around midnight one night, and frankly, I know I thought we were still on maneuvers. Well, at first light the next morning, when shells started flying overhead, oh, wait a minute, this is for real now,

Well, then when daybreak got lighter, we realized we were in this town Wingen-sur-Moder which was on the Moder River-- they called it a river, we called it a creek-- we were dug in on this side. The other side was what they called a mountain, we called a high hill, the Germans were dug in on the other side of that high hill. So behind us were the 155 millimeter Howitzers, behind them were the 240s. It took a couple of days before you figured out by the sound, the difference in the sound, which shells were coming from the Germans going over our heads, and which shells were coming from behind us going towards the Germans. You just picked up the difference in the sounds where you could tell the difference, whether it was going over this way or that way.

And this is you in combat the first time.

Right.

Now, we're I say, dug in. In other words, we were dug in enough for the wheels of the Howitzer to be below ground. The barrel, of course, is up. And from there, we moved north and sometimes, our guns were quite a distance apart. Sometimes, we were fairly close together. So sometimes, Howard and I were close together, sometimes we were not, it just depended on the terrain, the situation. Sometimes we would put a camouflage net over the gun area, sometimes not. Mentioned that sometimes it was wasn't all serious. Sometimes it was a little fun and games during a quiet period, where you fired some missions and then you just stood around and waited.

Well, I remember, we had one guy in my gun crew, his name, I'll never forget him, name was Preston Ballard McDaniel the third. Mac for short. Now, he walked-- he was a tall, gangly guy-- he walked like he was always behind a plow. He told us, when we ask him what did he do in civilian life, he lived in a small town on the Tennessee, Kentucky border, and what he did, he was a lookout for revenue agents. In other words, where the moonshine still was operating, he was at a vantage point where the dirt road was, sitting there, watching. As soon as he saw a vehicle approaching, he would sound the alarm. That's what he did in civilian life.

To give you a better idea of his mentality, when we were in Oklahoma in training, they put a notice on the bulletin board in the barracks. Anybody they could speak a foreign language, write their name and, next to their name, what foreign language you could speak. So he put his name up there. Next to it, he put Spanish. Well, when we saw that we knew he couldn't speak Spanish. So I remember asking him, Mac, speak some Spanish. Si seÃ±or. Well, Mac, speak some more Spanish. That's all he knew. But as far as he was concerned, he could speak Spanish because he knew how to say, "si seÃ±or." Where he picked that up, God only knows.

With that in mind, we would have a quiet period. OK, when we would have a fire mission, the shell projectile, you had a shell casing. Inside the shell casing, you had 10 powder bags, individual powder bags, attached by like a string between each bag. We would get a fire mission. And let's say, the fire mission call--

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[PHONE RINGING]

That's OK.

Telephone?

We'll just wait.

OK, we're rolling.

We have a quiet time. So what happens with your look-out from the Kentucky, Tennessee border?

So now, we tell Mac, fire seven, which meant take three powder bags out of the shell casing. So he takes three out, another soldier gets a projectile, inserts it. Wait a minute, change. Fire five, got to take two more bags out. So Mac does that. Now we're get ready again. Oh, another change. Nine. He's got to, now, take bags and put back in. He's working like a beaver. And then, at that point, mission canceled.

Now sometimes, that would happen real, where you get a change, because a forward observer, he's seeing a target but then the target moves, so he wants to change the number of powder bags. Because normally, the way it worked, the forward observer would figure he wanted that projectile to hit just past the target, the first round. The second round, right behind it, just short of the target. Now, he's watching with his binoculars, and if he's correct, now the third round, he knows exactly how to hit that target. So that was the normal procedure.

So did Mac ever catch on?

No. He wasn't smart enough to ever catch on. Oh, we had later stories after the war where we did things for him.

So that's how, when there was quiet time, how you could kind of pass the time?

Yeah.

OK.

Howard has different stories that his gun battery did.

So this is the first time you're in real battle.

Right.

And it is late January, something like that?

Yes.

All right. What happens after that?

Well, I remember after some-- of course, the different towns in France, and then we crossed over into Germany, and let's see, I remember WÃ¼rzburg, battle of WÃ¼rzburg was one, Schweinfurt, Nuremberg. Schweinfurt, I certainly remember when we arrived there, because as we learned, first thing we saw approaching Schweinfurt was the Germans had these underground concrete bunkers completely surrounding all the ball bearing factories. All the ball bearing factories were located in that area. Anything that had wheels had required ball bearings. Without ball bearings, the wheels wouldn't go. So it's very important to the Germans.

The Germans and these concrete underground bunkers, above ground, they had these 88 millimeter antiaircraft guns. The German soldiers lived in those underground bunkers to operate those antiaircraft guns. Any time allied bombers

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came over, they were right there to get on their guns. The Germans also had early radar, so they had these very large radar pieces. They were very long, maybe 8, 10 feet long, round, and they were programmed. They could zero in on one aircraft or they could fire at individual aircrafts. That's why, before we got there, months before we got there, the US 8th Army Air Force lost 60 bombers in one day.

Oh, wow.

That was over Schweinfurt. That was the greatest single loss of bombers in one day of the Allied Air Force, because of all those 88 guns. I remember being there, and there was a US P-47 fighter plane sitting there. It looked as if a giant hand just reached up in the sky, grabbed that plane, and just set it down. Apparently, it crashed right there near one of these antiaircraft gun emplacements, but the plane wasn't really highly damaged. The pilot was sitting in the cockpit.

So apparently, he was killed before he could eject the plane, because he was still just-- he was dead, but he was just sitting in the cockpit. And of course, the retrieval units behind us hadn't got there yet. But there again, I mean, it was an unreal scene to see this pilot just sitting there in that cockpit of that fighter plane, US fighter plane. Frankly, I don't remember seeing any bombers, but that had happened many months earlier, so the Germans probably removed all those bombers to claim whatever they could, guns whatever equipment, whatever they could off those planes. I'm sure that's what they did.

I want to turn to a couple of other kinds of topics, but still staying at the scene in some ways. By this point, I have kind of like the same question from two different angles. Did it make any difference that you and Howard were Jewish and came from a very identifiable Jewish community, not one that had been really assimilated to the United States during your military service. Did that come up at all?

Not at all. We had, at Howard's gun crew, Paul Wanger, Jewish kid from Chicago. I think the three of us, out of the 100 men, the three of us were the only Jewish soldiers in that gun battery. But you know, we had like, he mentioned George DeStefano, who was an Italian kid. We had Tony Faccuito that I mentioned, the Italian kid. I remember, in my gun crew, the youngest kid in my gun crew was Virgil Zaki, his family was from Romania. You know, you had a--

You had this in America.

--you had-- yeah, you had a mixture. And then of course, you had somebody like Preston McDaniel the third that was real very rural. We had other kids from different parts. One of our friends that we developed was a kid from Kansas City. You know, we all commingled. The only incident that I ever had in three years in the Army that had to do with an anti-Semitic remark was when we were in the Army of Occupation in Austria. [COUGHS] Excuse me. And I'd say that was well after the war, and it was a fellow soldier and under different circumstances, which I can relate that later.

And the other side of this sort of same question is, by this point, when you're at Schweinfurt, I think--

Schweinfurt.

Schweinfurt, and you are taking out or trying to get into those ball bearing factories.

No, we weren't interested in that.

Oh, you weren't?

No, we were just interested in securing the area, and then we got orders to move to the next area.

OK. So by that point, then I misunderstood the goal, had you heard anything? Had you heard anything about what the Jews of Germany, or the Jews of Europe, had experienced or gone through.

We knew no details. We just knew there were a lot of atrocities and whatnot.

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But you didn't know more than--

We heard stories, but they weren't details. We didn't know anything about any of the concentration camps. We knew such camps were in existence, but we didn't know where they were at, what went on in those camps, we just had no knowledge.

And the bit that you did know, that is, in general, was that word of mouth, or was that through news sources?

Basically, through news stories, radio especially.

OK.

But you see, once we got in the Army, the only news we got was the stars and stripes newspaper, the Army newspaper, but you know, it was like a once a week affair, a few pages, printed pages, so most of that was filled with what was going on in the different battle campaigns in the different areas of combat.

Of course, that's what was relevant.

And they weren't really putting articles about what was happening to the concentration camps or anything. That was not there. Same way with Fox Movie Tone News before we went in the service. The news was about the different war areas and so forth, what was happening in the Pacific, what was happening preparing for the invasion of Europe.

So it was military focused?

Yeah. Yeah, very much so. I remember, so WÃ¼rzburg, Schweinfurt, Nuremberg, we left those areas. And the next military objective for us was Munich. So now we're riding down-- you see, we were on a 2 and 1/2 ton army truck. Each gun crew, you had a driver, a sergeant who rode with the driver, a corporal who sat in the back with the other seven gun crew members, there were 10 in each crew.

So you would be sitting in the back of the truck?

So we'd be sitting in the back of the truck. On each side of the truck, you had like a bench, and that's where we sat, that's where we slept. We learned how to sleep riding down the road, whatever. And then the truck hauled the Howitzer gun. So we're riding early, early the morning of April 29, 1945. We're riding down this two lane road headed to Munich.

Do you want to change the card now?

Sure, and that way when-- we're good.

OK. So there you are in the truck with the Howitzer being pulled behind you. It's April 29th.

Right. So we get orders to pull off to the right side of the road. So all four trucks stop, we set up our guns. It was a wooded area, but it was a clearing enough to accommodate these four guns very close together. So we set up and we fired a few missions, a few rounds towards the direction Munich, which was 8 to 10 miles away. We all smell this very distinct odor, very strong odor. One of our Jeep drivers came by and he said, on the other side of the road was another wooded area, he says, on the other side of those woods, it must be a chemical factory over there.

Well, Howard heard that and he came over to me and he said, I don't think it's a chemical factory. And he said, you know that odor reminded him when our mother used to go to the kosher meat market to buy a freshly killed chicken. She would take it home, hold it over the gas flame of the gas stove in the kitchen to burn off the pin feathers of the chicken. In doing so, it would burn the skin and some of the fat of the chicken. He said that's the odor it reminds him of. I said, well, why don't we go over there and see what is over there. He said, OK, so I told my sergeant, don't leave without us.

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So how many of you went?

Just Howard and I.

Just the two of you?

Yeah. We were curious. So we walked over through the woods. The first thing we saw was a line of railroad, we saw fence, we saw a lot of railroad boxcars. Now, we climbed over between two of the railroad cars and on the other side, some of the cars, the sliding doors had been opened by the infantry guys in front of us.

So there were infantry, US infantry in front of you?

Yes. They were there. That's who we supported. So we had a little box camera that we had liberated somewhere along the way, but we only had one roll of film. There was one roll of film in the camera when we found it, and one extra roll of film. So we didn't take many pictures because we didn't know when we could get more film, figured we couldn't get more film. But Howard took one picture of what it looked like inside one of the boxcars, and that boxcar, plus others on that train, was dead bodies, and most of them were in very grotesque positions. And of course, it was easy to see they were all dead.

Were they dressed in civilian clothes?

They were they were dressed in different kinds of clothing. You could see a lot of feet with shoes. Howard told me, in later years, that when the Holocaust Museum in Washington, before they opened, they were seeking artifacts. He sent that picture to Washington. He was told in later years that they, of course, enlarged it and it was hung, and four different copies were hung in four different places. Now, I would tell you, behind us were the Signal Corps official photographers, it was easy for them to take the same pictures of a number of boxcars that had basically the same thing.

By this point, had you seen a lot of corpses? Had you engaged in a lot of battles?

Well, let's say, we saw enough death and destruction. We saw, of course, no shortage of dead German soldiers that we saw wherever we went. Some areas, we saw a lot of dead horses, because the Germans, if they ran out of fuel, they hooked up horses to a lot of vehicles or guns, whatever, to transport them. So of course, in the Allied bombing or some of artillery bombing, shell shooting, whatnot, you know, those were all knocked out and the horses were killed and lying on the side of the roads, whatever. So when we saw something like that, especially talking, sometimes, to high school students, they'll ask the question, well, when you saw that, how did you feel?

Well, there was no sensation because we'd already seen enough dead bodies, death and destruction. It wasn't anything different. We just didn't know the story. We just saw these boxcars with dead bodies in them. We didn't know the story of what happened. So from there, we walked into through the main gate.

I want to ask one other question though about the dead bodies. Were they male and female, if you can recall?

No. All I remember seeing in two or three of the boxcars was males. I don't remember seeing any females at all. Now, I can tell you what we read in later years about the story, which was referred to as a death train, the men had been loaded into these railroad boxcars. This train, and I've read stories with pictures, that there was between 40 and 50 boxcars in this train. The first cars were like hopper cars. Howard and I did not see these. They were in the front of the train that wound around, it actually went through the gate of the SS camp, which was next door to the prisoner camp. Those were open cars, not the ones that we saw that had the sliding doors and were closed.

I read where the 45th division came in from that area, they were always on our left. The story was either-- one story was that those open cars, the bodies were killed from American planes strafing that train. The other story, which I'll tend to believe more, that when they arrived, some of them were dead already due to malnutrition and so forth, and those that were still alive, the Germans killed them. Because this train, they were loaded from one of the camps where the Russians were coming close. They loaded them into these 40, 50 rail-cars.

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It took 20 days for that train to arrive at Dachau, a day or two before the 29th. When they locked them into these closed cars, all they gave them was maybe a loaf of bread to spread between all the men that were in these cars, some raw potatoes, a porcelain pot, which was the bathroom, and the doors were locked shut. The small window was covered. It was wintertime, cold, so most of them died from-- and they were-- a lot more weak when they got in these cars, so most of them died from malnutrition combined with the cold. And that was a story that I've read about.

In later years?

In later years.

So tell me then, once you leave the box cars, what do you do next see and where do you next go?

We walked, I'd say maybe 20, 25 yards, which took us through a gate, metal gate, into what turned out to be a prisoner camp. There again, we knew nothing about the camp.

Were there any-- you said there were US infantry there, was anybody else walking around?

Just a few soldiers.

US soldiers?

US soldiers. We saw, I remember, off to one side, one area, there was, I can't tell you whether it was three or four dead German soldiers, and I don't know the story, but they were there. Now, everything was quiet. Nothing was happening. We didn't know why. We didn't know what we were seeing. There was, I'd say, maybe four, possibly five prisoners against one of the barracks walls. One or two were sort of squatting, leaning against the wall. A couple were standing. They didn't look healthy. But there again, we didn't know who they were. There was nothing spoken. We looked at them, they stared at us. We were there maybe 20, 25 minutes altogether. And we knew we had to get back to the guns because that's where we were supposed to be. So we looked around, and let's get back to our gun position, and away we went.

When did you learn that what you had seen was Dachau, and that this was a concentration camp?

After the war ended and we start getting information and reading. And then years later, when we read a lot about it, and of course--

Did you have any idea that there were Jews in that camp?

We had no idea. We knew nothing. Now after the war, and later years, we learned a lot, which now or later, I can tell you about one survivor that we actually gave him a job.

Really? From Dachau?

Yes.

Wow.

He was either from Dachau or one of the sub-camps. And that took place after the war. We finished college. We had a business. We sold housewares, silverware, pots and pans, blankets, linens, on credit, house to house, dollar down, dollar when we would find them home, weekly payments. One day, we got a call from a local Jewish agency in Jacksonville. They said they had this survivor from Dachau. He was a master watchmaker from Poland, and they couldn't get him a job because he didn't speak English. They tried all the local jewelry stores. So we said, well, we don't sell watches, but in order to give him a job, we'll start selling watches on credit, and we know if the watch has stopped working, they're not going to finish paying the bill. So we have to have somebody to fix them.

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So I remember, I contacted the Benrus watch company in New York, and we ended up buying a lot of Benrus watches, and we put him to work. We were able to come up with a full workbench for him with the tools that he needed. And our father was available. And of course, he was from Lithuania, so between the two, they spoke Yiddish, they spoke whatever European languages the two of them knew. So our father was the interpreter. We didn't discuss with him, we didn't tell him anything about our military experience. Frankly, we both felt it would be too painful to him to ask him about his experience, so we didn't.

But we did contact every jewelry store in town, explained to them that we have a master watchmaker. If they have their watchmaker that can't fix a particular watch or clock, we have the guy that can fix it, because he actually knows how to build parts, if necessary. So we actually ended up building a sizable business in addition to our own for him, for some of these local jewelry stores, too. They used to--

What was his name?

Sam Lederman.

Lederman.

L-E-D-E-R-M-A-N. Now, when I was in Dachau recently, I gave them their name. They searched their records. They said they could not find his name as a prisoner. So I said, well, apparently, he was probably in one of the sub-camps. The only time after he worked for us, with us for a couple years, his wife also was a survivor. They got married after the war. They had one daughter born in Jacksonville, lives in Atlanta, married, three children, all brilliant. The daughter turned out to be a straight A student, brilliant, children are very smart. Howard has to still stay in touch with the daughter.

But one day, I don't how it came about, but we talked that, after the war, we had the high holiday services in Salzburg, and found out that he and the woman he married-- so both survivors-- they were at those services and Howard and I were at those services because we were in the Army of Occupation. Well, the only other thing I remember that he told us was, that the only reason the Germans let him live was because they needed somebody to fix their watches and their clocks. And he said it was not unusual, especially for an SS officer, when he would come to pick up his watch that Sam had repaired, he would put his Luger to Sam's temple and say, if this watch loses even two seconds, I'm coming back to pull the trigger. It was that kind of pressure there that he lived with, but he said that was all. And his wife, they let her live because she worked in the kitchen. There again, they had to have slave labor to cook the meals for the SS officers and the soldiers and so forth.

On a whim.

Now, any additional questions before I can--

Yes, let's go back to Munich. Let's go back to Munich. You leave there, you go back to your battery unit, is that correct, did I say like that?

Yes.

OK. And what do you do then? Where do you go after that?

Well, so now, we got orders to pull out and we head to Munich and we get on the outskirts of Munich, which I say, was not that far away.

No it isn't.

And of course, you know, there's combat going on in Munich. But I will tell you, at that point, it's no longer heavy firing, some but not heavy. The Germans are retreating quite rapidly. That was April the 30th. Munich was captured.

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From that point on, April 30-- the war ended May the 8th-- from that point on, we're riding mostly in our trucks, really not firing, because by that time, with the Germans retreating, there were so many German soldiers constantly coming out of the woods with their arm-- they had thrown away their arms, their rifles-- and they were just coming out of the woods with their arms raised. So all we were doing was just motioning them, go to the rear, go to the rear, because we were moving forward and certainly, we had no interest in taking any of them over. So we just motioned to them.

And there were special units behind who were processing them as prisoners of war?

We knew somewhere behind us was interrogators, and units that would take them over, capture them, so to speak, because they were just surrendering. The war was over, as far as they were concerned, and really, the war ended May the 8th. And I think it was Kiefersfelden, Germany, right close to the Austrian border--

Kiefersfelden. OK.

--when the war ended. So we stayed there. I remember, we lived in a-- the first night, we lived in a house, we slept in a house, because from the time we landed in Marseilles until after May the 8th, we were outdoors 24/7.

During that winter.

We never stayed indoors. We slept on the ground in our sleeping bags, except when you, all night, you had to be on guard duty, two hours on during the night, took turns. But we were always outdoors, whether it was snowing, rain, cold, you name it. But that's what we put up with. That's why we felt very healthy.

And how did you change from a fighting army to an army of occupation? What changed in your duties?

Well, we moved from Kiefersfelden and we moved into Salzburg area, and they put us up in an old monastery. That's where we were living. And they had what they called details, like, one detail, some of us would have to take-- nearby they had a small army compound that, I guess, belonged to the Austrian Army before the war. Well, they turned that into an SS prisoner compound. So we had to stand guard duty two hours on and four hours off.

Did you have any contact with those prisoners?

Yes. I'll tell you how.

Tell me.

Early each morning, they split us up into different groups, so two of us would have maybe 10 prisoners. We had guns, they didn't. We would get in a truck, ride up into the mountains above Salzburg where they would cut down trees and then chop up the tree, cut up the trees for firewood. We would then haul-- other trucks would haul the firewood down to give to the civilians so they had wood to burn in the stoves for cooking and for heating. That was one of the type details that we had. I remember we still ate C-rations or K-rations, which came in little cartons, that's what we ate. Every day, they would bring the prisoners, the SS officers, they would bring them soup. Now, what kind of soup was it? It's close to what we would call matzo ball soup, similar to what the Germans call kneidlach soup.

That's right.

Kneidlach soup. That's what it was, because that was the easy thing to make. One of my details was to go with another soldier, he and I, we were driven down to Genoa, Italy, the port where they had a ship filled with grain, wheat, I think it was, it came from the US. Possibly some of it probably came from Australia, as well. And they would unload the grain from the ship into these rail-cars, these hopper cars. In the middle of the train, we had one of these boxcars with a sliding door. We each had a folding cot and we had our K-rations and C-rations, so we rode shotgun on that train to make sure it got back safe.

We went, I remember, we went through the Po Valley, through the Brenner Pass, into Austria, into Salzburg. That grain

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was then given to the local bakers to bake bread to supply, there again, the local civilians. That was the purpose of it. And I'm sure they use the army somehow. If they didn't use that grain, they had other flour or whatever that probably came from the States to make the soup.

Were you and Howard together by this point, in all your details?

We lived in the same building, this old monastery. I was on this detail to Italy. He was on a different detail riding-- which, I'm sure he tells the story, because it's a favorite story of his and very-- as far as I'm concerned, it's a very powerful story-- one of his details was to ride on a convoy of over 200 army trucks transporting about 2,000 Jewish survivors from one or more of the camps to the Austrian Alps, where there were two resort villages, Hofgastein and Badgastein. Bad, in German, is bath.

That's right.

So that's where they were transporting them to these luxury hotels. Now, I can tell you all the details that Howard told me, that Howard was riding shotgun on one of the trucks. Now, they're driving, they're riding the road up above Salzburg, headed to these two towns, and suddenly, there's a lot of noise emanating on all these trucks. Well, these army trucks have metal bodies, metal floors. If you have shoes on, in those days everything was leather shoes, there was no such thing as plastic shoes or whatever, you can stomp your feet on a metal floor, you'd make a lot of noise. So all the truck drivers stopped. Howard and others got out. All the survivors got out on the side of the road. And Howard said he went over to the ones from his truck and said, what's the problem?

And they said it's Friday, the sun is getting ready to go down. The Sabbath is going to start. They will not ride on the Sabbath. They were insistent. So the army brought out field kitchens, blankets, cooked food, they stayed. Howard had to stay there, too, all night Friday, all day Saturday, until late Saturday afternoon. They saw the sun was getting ready to set, they got back in their trucks and continued the, I don't know, 30 minutes or so, whatever it was, to get to these hotels where they had hot food, clean clothes, these health baths and so forth.

Now, did you ever have any contact with survivors while you were in the Army of Occupation?

Yes, I had two incidents. Number one, and really the main one, was the same. I was in Badgastein staying in a different resort hotel. The division had a football team and I was part of it. My roommate and I, one afternoon after practice and before dinner, we decide to walk around town. So here was a group of these survivors also walking, staying in a different hotel. So I went over to them and I had picked up pretty good German by then, based on my Yiddish experience. Some of the words are identical, some are very slight dialect difference. So I couldn't really carry on a full conversation, but I let them know that "Ich bin a Yid," and so forth and so on. And as we walked, there was a short conversation.

As we walked away, my roommate, who was not Jewish, he made a statement, something to the effect, it's a shame Hitler didn't get them all. Well, he didn't know I was Jewish. So of course, I told him that I happen to be Jewish and you just offended me. He didn't know how to react. So he just immediately walked away, and even though he was my roommate, he avoided me as much as possible and would not talk to me. And after 10 days or close to two weeks, I stopped him after dinner one evening, and I said, look, we have to talk. So I said, I'd like to know why you would make a statement like that.

He explained to me that he grew up on a farm in Nebraska, and growing up, occasionally, he would ride on the wagon with his father to go into town from the farm to buy clothing and stuff for the family members, and various provisions. So the family that owned the clothing store that he always shopped at had to be a Jewish family. And he told me that every time, riding back, on the way back to the farm, his father would tell him the same thing over and over. Those Jews got it so good. They got such an easy life. And they make nothing but money. And we're poor farmers, and we work so hard, make very little money, and they just got it so good, those darn Jews. And he said, growing up, that's what he heard over and over. He heard nothing else. He knew nothing else. So to him, it was natural to make a statement like that because of that kind of upbringing.

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Well, from there, we had a conversation, we better understood each other and we stayed friends from that point on until after the football season ended, and then, of course, we were sent back to our respective units, because he was not in my division. I mean, he was in my division, but not in my unit. He was in a different part of the division. And of course, after that, I never had any contact with him again. And I would tell you this, our division chaplain, one of our division chaplains, but the chief chaplain was a former rabbi, rabbi Eli Bohnen from Providence, Rhode Island. When he became our division chaplain, he was introduced to our commanding general, General Harry Collins.

General Collins told him he preferred to call him padre, for whatever reason, instead of chaplain. And he knew he was a rabbi. He was going to call him padre. He also told him that if Chaplain Bohnen ever witnessed or heard about any anti-Semitic incident in his division of 15,000 men, he wanted Chaplain Bohnen to immediately report it to General Collins and he would take appropriate action. And that was General Collins.

And how did you hear of this? Who told you about this?

Chaplain Bohnen, Rabbi Bohnen.

OK. Directly from him.

Right. In fact, I remember talking to Chaplain H Bohnen when I was up at Badgastein. He told me he was against the idea of transporting these survivors-- because see, this was months after they were liberated, because when each camp was liberated, certainly Dachau had close to 32,000 prisoners-- they had no place to put them. First of all, it took about a month to eradicate the typhus. The Germans had no DDT powder. The American army had DDT powder, which was used to kill the lice to eradicate the typhus. Well, it took them a month to do that. Then after that, they had no place to put them so they kept them there for several months after.

Well, Chaplain Rabbi Bohnen told me he was against the idea. Why? Because he said, he told General Collins when the idea that was brought up, here you're taking these people from the horrible conditions they have endured for a long period of time, and now you're gonna put them in these resort hotels. You know, he said, you're playing with their minds, and you're gonna put them there. You don't know how long they're going to be there. You don't know where you're going to put them next, all that is unknown at the time. Psychologically, he was against it.

Do you think it bore out, his point of view bore out? Or do you think that it was a fear that was not--

Well, it was his concern. But he was explained or told that there was no option. The orders came direct from Washington to General Mark Clark, who was in charge of the Seventh Army at the time. So that was done. Now, what the result was, I'm sure it wasn't the same for all people. And my brother Howard would tell you, when the survivors got back in the trucks and resumed the journey to these hotels, that affected him more than what we witnessed at Dachau, because here, he knew why they did what they did. They refused to ride. And he also felt that, psychologically, they couldn't practice their faith, but they hung onto their faith, they had something to look forward to. And possibly, that helped them survive as opposed to giving up. Because I certainly have read stories where some prisoners did give up.

Yes.

And they gave up and we know the result.

What I find also kind of amazing, that when you did walk into Dachau together, that all-- if you say it was 32,000 people in there, that they were all in the barracks except for these few that you saw again the wall.

OK, because what we learned well after the war was, the day before, a Swiss Red Cross representative, Victor Mauer was his name, he arrived there, couple of truckloads of supplies, whatnot. He talked to the SS general in charge and told him, the American army is coming close. He had a decision to make. He could fight against overwhelming odds or he could arrange a surrender of the camp and save a lot of lives. So the SS general, as I read the story, decided it would be best for him and most of his men to go defend Munich. So they left a cadre in charge, and they left a junior SS officer, Lieutenant Wickert, in charge to arrange the surrender. Our assistant commanding general, Brigadier General Henning

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Linden was ordered to arrive there with his bodyguards and so forth and a few reporters to accept the surrender, which took place around 2:00, 2:30 that afternoon.

That would have been the 29th or the 28th?

29th. The afternoon of the 29th. I would also tell you that, a few years ago, I was put in touch with a guy, the soldier that was in a tank in the 20th Armored Division. And I spoke to him on the phone and he told me that his tank was approaching Munich on the 29th when they received orders to turn around and go back to Dachau. He doesn't know why. He said they arrived at the camp, the prisoner camp, about 4:30 that afternoon. That was, of course, after the surrender had occurred. He said they arrived there. He was given a Army camera to take pictures, combat pictures, as the tank was operating-- take whatever pictures. So he said he took pictures, which the pictures were later sent to the Holocaust Museum, so I have those pictures. He emailed them to me.

Wow.

I have used a few of them on a slide show when I speak to organizations, churches, synagogues, high schools. Last week, I spoke to one of the Emory adult education classes here, showing those same slides and explaining some of Howard and my experience.

How would you put-- can you put-- when you mentioned that 2:30 in the afternoon was when the actual surrender took place, 4:30 is when he arrives-- how do you place about what time of day you and your brother were there?

We were there early that morning.

That's what I thought you said.

Yeah, early that morning.

So when it's kind of no man's land?

Exactly. You see, at Dachau, and I've learned every prisoner camp, the Germans appointed like barracks leaders. Most of them, I think they call them kapos, K-A-P-O, so that they would deal with them. They didn't have to deal with individual prisoners in a barracks. They dealt with the barracks leader. So if a barracks leaders were told the night before that the camp was going to be surrendered the next day-- so tell the prisoners, stay tight. Now, on this recent trip to Munich and Dachau--

And we're talking now 2014, '15?

'15. This year. April the 29th of this year, we arrived in Munich, myself and family members. April 30th, they had the opening of the new museum. In fact, they told us-- those few that were there from a 42nd Division-- that we were honored guests because we liberated Munich. Of course, I said, well, wait a minute, the moment it happened, we thought we captured it. No, you liberated it from the Nazis. OK. So one reason I wanted to go on the trip was because I was told there would also be some survivors from Dachau there, and I wanted to have the opportunity to speak to them.

So one woman that I met on May the 1st of this year, at the camp, her daughter came over to me-- they had me in a wheelchair because it was raining and it was muddy, holding my umbrella-- she came over to me with her mother. She introduced me to her mother, who was a survivor of Dachau. I asked her the same question that I asked several other survivors. Where were you at and what were you doing early the morning of April 29, 1945? Her answer to me was she was so ill with typhus, she didn't know what was happening in the barracks, outside the barracks. She was just too ill to know. And she leaned over and she kissed me on both cheeks and she said, if you guys were a couple of days later, I wouldn't have made it. Well, quite emotional.

And probably quite true. She wouldn't have.

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Probably not.

Another person that I spoke to, he and his wife live in Montreal, Canada. By accident, I was introduced to them via email through Howard because Howard knew them, and he found out they were going-- the husband, Jerry Convoy, who was survivor of Dachau-- so I made up the email to meet them. We met at Dachau, and I asked Jerry the same question. He said, I wasn't in the camp on the 29th. I said, Jerry, I don't understand. Where were you? He said, early the morning of the 28th, the day before, he was one of close to 6,000 Jewish prisoners that some SS officers and soldiers took them on a forced march. They wanted to end up in the Austrian Alps above Salzburg.

That's a ways away.

Oh, yeah.

So he said they, of course, the SS officers and soldiers were all riding in vehicles. He said they got as far-- I forgot what German town it was, the name of it, but it was right close to the Austrian border. I have it written down at home. I just don't remember it. And he said, when the SS officers realized that our division and possibly some tanks were coming close, they all took off in their vehicles and just left the prisoners. Those were still standing, they just left them there. So he said that's when he was liberated by the American Army, and that's why he wasn't in the camp.

There was another prisoner. The morning of May the 3rd, in the camp where they had a lot of activities-- he's a tall, slender fellow, he lives in California. He's in-- there was a movie made, it's going to be shown by the History Channel or the A&E channel-- I think the History Channel-- will be shown on Veterans Day on TV. He is in it. His last name is Kaufman. I sat next to him Sunday morning. I tried to talk to him before that, the evening before, and I tried to talk to him again, but he just acted like he just didn't want to talk to me. So he's very talkative in the movie. The movie lasts a little over an hour. I have it on my computer because I was able to get it sent to me as an email.

But you weren't able-- when you were there at this commemoration last April, it were these two other people that you were able to find out where they were that morning.

Yeah, exactly. I spoke to another one. I asked him the same question. He said he was the youngest survivor. He claimed that he was on that death train. He claimed that when that train arrived he was the youngest of 16 still alive prisoners.

In those boxcars?

In those boxcars. I asked him, when he told me that, I said, well, I've read where there was a second train that ended up in the Dachau rail station. It didn't get to the camp. It wasn't that far apart, but maybe you were in that train? He said, no. And he said he was the only one that survived of the 16. There again, he acted like he really didn't want to talk, and under the circumstances, I could understand. So I thought, well, I'll ask him one more question. The question I asked him was, well, did you get inside the camp? He said, yes, because I survived. So I said, well, do you remember approximately how far it was from the boxcar you got out of to the main gate? He thought a second, and he said, probably about 25 yards. Well, that jived with my experience. So I said, well, that certainly was true of my experience, so I took his story as fact.

Clearly those 20 minutes, 20, 30 minutes, when you were in Dachau and didn't know what it was that you were seeing have played a major role since then.

Well, the only thing I can attribute it to, a few years ago when I was at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, and we had the guide with about maybe six of us that he was taking us on a tour, and when we got to where they have a boxcar on exhibit, of course, the ones we saw were very old and dirty looking. This one is attractive looking. But to get to the other part, we had to walk through the boxcar. So when I walked inside that boxcar, emotionally, I broke down. Now, I cannot explain it except that I have to relate it to when I was in the camp itself 60 something years earlier. Something up here reminded me of that camp because, emotionally, I just broke down until I got outside. Once I got outside, and after a few minutes, I was fine again. That's the only thing I can relate it to.

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Is there anything else you'd want to add to what we talked about today that you'd want people to understand about what you saw, what you experienced?

Well, I'll make a note of this. I said, when we walked in, everything was quiet, nothing was happening A couple or three years ago, my brother and I were speaking here in Atlanta to 100 and something people. It's an organization called the World War II Veterans Roundtable. During the question-- and we talked about our experience-- during the question and answer period, there was a guest present. He got up. He said, he didn't have a question. But he explained, he was a bomber pilot in the US Air Force. His plane was shot down over Germany. He was captured, put in a prisoner of war camp. He said he understood why we said when we walked into Dachau, everything was quiet, because he said, in a prisoner of war camp, when they got the word also, from his barracks later, that the Russian army was going to accept the surrender of the camp the next day, they were instructed to stay in the barracks, be quiet. I mean these were not slave labor, so physically, they were OK. So he said, when the Russian army soldiers first walked into the camp, nothing was happening, everything was quiet, just like what we witnessed at Dachau. So he says he understood when we said what we experienced, the same thing happened at that POW camp. Of course, he said the difference was, when the Russian army came in with there officers, and the prisoners were all in the barracks, they immediately ordered all the prisoners to come out of the barracks and hug and kiss the Russian soldiers, because they had Russian army photographers with them taking pictures for home consumption. He said that was the only difference. But that explained the difference.

Thank you. Thank you very, very much for a very moving--

My pleasure.

--and very personal description. It's much appreciated.

Thanks. Thanks for inviting me.

And with that, this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's interview with Mr. Hilbert Margol on October 20, 2015, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Thank you and godspeed.

Thank you again.

Safe journey home.

Thank you so much.

OK.

Now, I'll tell you one quick story, now that--

The camera's off, yeah.

Now that we're off camera.

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