We appreciate you coming down, Mr Lerman, to be interviewed this afternoon. Anyway, we would like to know where you were born, possibly when you were born.

I was born in Poland in 1920-- September the 15, 1927.

The name of your town?

Zambrow.

What a large city is it near?

Bialystok was the main-- like the state.

Can you give us the names of your parents?

My mother's name was Sarah, and my father's name was Isaac.

Lerman?

Lerman.

Did you have any sisters and brothers?

I had four older sisters, and one older brother.

Do you recall their names?

Well, the sister name was Miriam. Next to her was Goldie, and then Bessie. And Shanarena And my brother named David.

David. Any of them survived?

Nobody survived.

Were your grandparents nearby, or were they living at the time?

Only my father's mother was living with us at that time. Because when the border was separating between the half of German occupation of Poland and half of Russian, so she moved in with us where the Russian occupation was.

Your grandmother?

My grandmother. She was almost, I would say, 100 years old-- close to it. Late 90s.

How did your father earn a living? What was his occupation?

My father had a carpentry place and wooden lathe. Make kind of wood, round wood. The farmers used to bring wood and used to make the hub for the wheels, and so forth. Anybody wanted some work done, so they brought it to us. He used to make chairs, tables, manufacture anything we could.

When you say we, were you participating in some of the work?

Well, as I recall, we didn't have electricity in those days. And you had to manufacture your own power by the treadle. We had a big wheel on the wooden lathe. It was pretty big, about-- the whole machine was probably 12 to 14 foot long.

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So you had to help keep them pumping with a foot pedal to get up to speed so you could use the tools.

So you helped. As a kid, I remember-- as a kid, I remember I always worked. Very seldom had time to play.

Did you-- were you able to go to school? Did you have any schooling?

Not too much. In those days, I think maybe my total schooling with three or four years in grammar school.

And did you have any parochial-- any Jewish learning?

Not too much of that. I remember my father used to teach me. Would say probably those days during the Depression, with no money to send to any kind of school. So whatever they could, they taught you at home.

When did you feel the first effects, or can you remember when you felt the effects of the war?

Yeah, I do remember. It was 1939. I don't remember the month, maybe September, maybe earlier, or July. The first German army came in, and I went down to the bridge. And I seen a lot of motorcycles-- everything motorized-- trucks, cars, motorcycles. And while they stopped, I did ask him what they're going to do with the Jews. And picked up the hand and showed me just like that, they're going to cut their throats. This was my first encounter with the Germans.

You actually asked the German soldier?

That's right.

What did you-- how did you react? What did you do?

Well I was 12 years old at the time, and I don't remember exactly my reaction. But it wasn't too good. And I went home and told my parents. I went to the bridge, and I did talk to one of the soldiers. This was my first encounter.

Did your parents take any precaution, or were they able to take any?

I don't think anybody was able to do anything much.

So this was actually they occupied--

This was the beginning of the war in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. But the German army did not stay there too long. I don't remember days or weeks because the border-- there was an agreement between the Germans and the Russians to divide Poland, and the Germans retreated about 30 kilometers from our home town.

And the border was established near big river. It was called the Bug. And the name of the town was Ostrow. It was the main border near our town.

So this is where Poland was divided?

Between Russia and Germany.

Did your part fall into the Russian sector?

Our part in those days fell into the Russian side.

So did this give you a reprieve for a while?

Definitely.

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Yeah. How long?

From 1939 to about '41. Almost two years.

You were under the Russian occupation?

Yes.

How was life going on during that period?

Well, was a shortage of everything. But there were no killings, as far as I know.

And you had freedom?

And freedom, yes.

And you were still intact, the family?

Family was still intact, yeah. A lot of people were escaping from the German side of the border, whether Jews or non-Jews. And our town was crowded with people.

Refugees.

Refugees escaping from the German side.

The German side.

And Russia took a lot of them by train or-- deep into Russia to work-- slaves or whatever. I don't remember that well. So what I can recall.

And you as a 12 or 13-year-old youngster, what were you able to-- were you able to do anything, or--

At that age, I don't remember much. And you do whatever your parents tell you to do, or whatever you're able to do. That's all I can remember.

But life was going on at a fairly normal pace.

Whatever I can recall, it wasn't too bad. We weren't persecuted as Jews, and it was close to normal except the regime changed from Polish management to Russian management. And a lot of military. In our hometown was a lot of military because before the tsar, they built big army barracks about 2 or 3 kilometers from the middle of the town. So there were thousands and thousands of Russian soldiers.

And life was close to normal as far as I remember.

Yeah. So when did the situation change, then?

The situation changed when the Germans invaded Russia when the war started in 1941. So things started all over again.

What happened to you and your family at this stage?

Well, a lot of killings, beatings. At that time, my-- one day, there was an order for everybody to come to the marketplace. And at that time, most of my sisters were married living on their own. Two of them still in the same city. And at that time, only my youngest sister worked for the telephone company. And she left with the Russian on trucks when they evacuated everything. So she wasn't in our house anymore.

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But me and my brother were still home. And the next day, we were supposed to go to the marketplace. And I told my parents that I am not going.

And they asked me why. And I said, because nobody can catch me. So I'm not going to listen to them, and I'm not going.

Kept on arguing about it, and I decided I'm not going. My father, and my mother, and my brother, they went, and they never came back. They marched them about 15km out of town and they killed out about 90% of the people. And I was on my own since then.

Were you in hiding most of the time, or--

You do whatever you can. You run, you stay there, you stay here a few days.

Just managing to survive?

That's right.

Were you able to work during any of this?

I was lucky. I mean, it was no work to begin with, I mean, under German occupation. Hardly any work.

Was there any period where the local farmers helped you out with food, or--

Sometimes they did, and sometimes they chased you. But whoever survived, so they built a ghetto in our hometown. They took up quite a few streets with barbed wire around it, and they formed a ghetto from the surrounding towns, too. I don't recall how long we were in the ghetto. Could be maybe six months to a year.

And my two older sisters with their children, they were--

In the ghetto?

Yeah. I was the youngest in my family, so my sisters were at least 20 some years older than me. So they had their own families already. So I stood with them, and it was rough. Not hardly any food.

And then there was the winter's cold, you know. No wood, nothing to heat with. And we heard rumors there they'd go and they evacuate the ghetto. So whoever able to get out, I run away into the woods where for weeks we were hiding out in the woods.

You escaped from the ghetto?

Yeah.

Was the ghetto guarded at all times?

Yes, it was guarded.

How did you manage to escape?

Well, I was pretty skillful, fast, and was able to escape. But then they caught us in the woods anyway. And after that, they gathered all the Jews from all small towns and cities around there into the army barracks because they could easier isolate us and keep an eye. We were there for I don't remember how many months.

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From in there, they took us to a railroad station-- farmers with horse and wagon, and from then in the cattle trains. And then they took us to Auschwitz.

The horse and wagons actually took you to the railroad station?

Because it was probably 15 or 20 kilometers from our hometown.

So this when they captured you in the woods, they brought you back to the ghetto?

I don't remember. I think the ghetto was dissolved already. So they took us to the army barracks.

Now in the army barracks, were there are a lot of people, or just--

Quite a bit.

Quite a few. Mostly people that they--

From all surrounding--

Areas.

--areas.

And naturally, when you were put into the railroad wagons, how were conditions there?

It's like cattle. Put you in there for days. They didn't feed you. And many people died on the cattle trains. Was no facilities for anything. It was pretty bad-- cold at night.

This was could be at the end of 1942 or the beginning of 1943. It was in the wintertime, and the winters are very cold in this part of the country. So it was rough.

So you arrived in--

And my two sisters were on that cattle train with me at that time.

And where did you arrive to?

Auschwitz.

Auschwitz. Have you seen any of your sisters since that point, or--

Well, when we arrived, it was Birkenau, which is a subsidiary of Auschwitz. And a lot of SS officers with German shepherds screaming and hollering and big trucks with big wheels were standing there. And they were loading-- they're selecting older people, children on those big trucks, pushed them on the trucks.

And they were selecting younger people, and it looked like the ghetto always used to select younger people for work. And I was pretty small kid at that time. I was already selected on those trucks, and I was already on the trucks. So I managed-- and the German officers were walking back and forth to keep an eye that nobody gets--

Out of the line.

--gets out of the line. So I managed to get from the truck down under the truck wheels, and I watched him as he turned his back. I ran to the people who were selected for work.

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Were you-- you already had this feeling that that's what they're doing?

I always had the instinct. Whatever they say, whatever they do, I have to do the opposite. And as I say, I was pretty fast. I figure I'll take my chances.

I said, I didn't trust them, and it's an instinct I developed. And those trucks were going to the crematorium.

So here you found yourself in the line with the working people.

That's right, and I ran in the middle. And they backed up, and at that time we came in. The younger people went into-- the able bodies went into camp.

And the process when you went into the camp, what was the process of-- you were going through the showers, or--

Yeah. And lousing, you know, and so forth. And took away all your clothes, and gave you different junk. I was small. I got-- the jacket was falling down on me, you know-- pants, you know. But I was lucky. The inmate they were working there, they couldn't believe how I managed to get in there.

And I told him that I ran away from the truck and went into the other people. And I was one of the youngest in Auschwitz. In fact, there was a block for the youth. Quite a few managed to do probably the same as I did or whatever, and I was in that for a few weeks, a few months.

How was the treatment?

Same as anybody else. I don't think we had any better treatment.

Did you stand at appell the appell in the morning?

Oh yeah. This was bad. You had hardly any clothes on, and here it was below freezing-- in fact, below 0 at times. Those winters were harsh. They let us stay especially long, no clothes on hardly, and very little food. And people were dying because they were staying for hours. So it was rough.

And after a while, going to work, they dissolved, I think, that particular block and everybody went to work. Or did they whatever work there was.

What kind of work detail were you in?

It was different kind what-- eventually, I wound up working with dynamite. They called it [GERMAN] kommando. And there were 30 people in it, and our job was to demolish all the buildings around Birkenau so people couldn't hide. Level all the ground.

Were these abandoned buildings?

Well, it was farmhouses, single houses here and there. And this was our job, to dig about 24 inches wide near the foundation all around, and with 10 pound hammers and chisels. One used to hold the chisel. One used to hammer and make holes in the cement foundation. And there was a SS officer that he was in charge of the dynamite. And that kommando I worked for a long time.

Was there-- were you able to sometimes find something in these homes for your own use?

No, it was-- the homes were empty. But at times, I recognized leaves from certain vegetables that were grown like horseradish. And even it was bitter, it was still better than nothing.

So at times, I was able to-- you know, we're not allowed to bring anything to camp. I was able to bring a couple of small

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pieces and exchange with somebody else for something else. Do anything to survive.

Was there any other means? Were there any other means for you to get a little extra food, or--

Well, sometimes if somebody had an extra ration of bread or something, that we used to be able to organize some other sources. You're able to get a potato. Maybe somebody working outside brought in a potato, you helped him with-- I helped him with horseradish. I exchange it for potato, this and that.

I mean, that's how you survived. You did the best you could. But I was also lucky that this particular SS officer that was in charge of this dynamite, one time while we were working there in the cellar, he sort of liked me since I'm sort of interpreter. I spoke a little bit German, you know.

And he told me, he says, I'm not one of them. He said, they gave me a uniform, and I have to do a job. He says, I'm going to always holler like hell, he says, but I'm not going hurt you. He says I'm not one of them. So I was lucky.

One time I had fever. I was sick. And he seen it, and he brought me some aspirin. But he says, don't let anybody-- don't even tell your friends. He says, nobody's supposed to know, or else they going to kill me.

So he was a compassionate man.

Yes. And also, one time I came to him with a problem. And I told him, every day they picking people for the crematorium from the inmates because new ones are coming in. So the weaker one they're picking, and the stronger one coming for work. So I told him that I don't know how long I'll be here with you, said, they're picking so many of them.

So he did ask me who is doing the picking, and I told him. He says, that son of a gun. He says, I'm playing cards with him every other night. He says, I have to see him play cards with him tonight. I'll talk to him. He says, tell him that I need you.

So the next day, he came and he told me that he spoke to him. And he says, I'm the only one that can help him on the job that I know how to do things. So he told me that we used to carry the detonator and leave it at the gate where the SS officers were counting everybody. This was their hut, you know?

And he told me the darn thing was so heavy that I wasn't able to carry it. He says, at least carry it through the gate so he'll know who you are because he's the main guy in charge of that particular-- he was the worst one of them all. Just after he counts you, take in the detonator with SS. When you came out after they count you, go back inside, and get it, and bring it on the job so he knew who I was.

As soon as he started picking people, he called me out. He says, you get inside. So just lucky.

Were you aware of the selection all the time while you were in Auschwitz, what the people-- where they were going that were selected?

Oh yeah, because I knew their crematorium were right in back of us. We seen the tall chimneys, and we did see them all burn. The fire coming out the chimney because they burned so many people.

At one time, there couldn't burn so many, so they used to throw them in the ditches with wood to burn up people. That's how busy it was.

Did you actually see this?

Yes. Because I was working all over-- close by or passing by there, walking to work. So always did see them.

Were these usually people arriving on a new transport?

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Yes. From Hungary. From multiple other countries, too-- Czechoslovakia.

In those years.

From Greece. Was a lot of people Greece. Thessaloniki was one that I remember them telling me they were from Thessaloniki, which is a seaport in Greece.

Were you ever able to exchange a few words with these transports that were coming and--

Not-- I was never there. But once they got into camps--

Shortly after--

--from the working detail inside the camp, I was able to talk.

When you told them or discussed the fact what's going on as far as this destruction, did they believe you, or they--

Most of them did not.

Did not believe.

They thought-- I mean, things are going to happen. But like anything else, people of different countries-- they knew in a way, but they didn't see anything like that factories-- special factory to burn people. Killing factories.

As far as you can estimate, how long were you in Auschwitz?

In Auschwitz, probably around a year and a half. I don't remember the dates.

And always working with the dynamite?

Most of the time.

Most of the time.

Other time, other jobs doing different things. But most of the [? rides ?] I can recall was the dynamite.

Was your treatment any better because you were with this group of people working? Was your treatment any better than the rest of the camp, or--

Well, when we were out on this particular detail, it was only a small group of 30. And each time we went, there were about two SS officers with us on the job to keep an eye on us that we don't run away. Because the camp itself was guarded with the electric wires and I forgot what they call them, the high--

Towers.

--towers. But once we got out on jobs, each group had so many SS officers keep an eye on us. So the bigger the group, they had more SS officers. The smaller our group, I think was only two that were guarding us. Was in open fields.

And one of the officers was the one that was kind of a kind, compassionate man?

No. He was the dynamite expert. He was not the one that took us from the gate to the job. He just arrived on the job.

Oh, he wasn't a guard?

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To supervise the dynamite and tell us where to place everything, where to make holes, or how to do the thing. And he was actually-- he did actually--

The detonation.

--detonation.

Was he wearing uniform?

Yeah, he had an SS uniform. But he was an older guy, maybe close to late 50s. Something like that. He says they put him on a uniform, and they brought him here on the job. Maybe he was in the 60s. I don't remember.

Yeah, hard to tell. What happened as the war effort was failing and the Russians-- were the Russians the ones that invaded your area where you were liberated?

Well, just later on-- at that time, they started-- probably since the Russians were doing so much better and probably getting deeper into Poland, so when the Germans started on the retreat, they started probably liquidating the Auschwitz because it was in Poland. And they took a lot of people in transports.

So I went in one of the transport to Oranienburg. We wound up there. We didn't know where we were going. So again cattle trains, and we wound up which is Oranienburg, near Berlin someplace.

And with the bombing all over, took us hours or a day to get out the railroad station before they moved us out. And they put us into big hangars for airplanes. We were supposed to go to work in the factories building airplanes.

Each time we starting to go to work, the sirens were all over. And we never made it to the factory. So we stood at weeks, a month in those hangars. Can't recall exactly. It's been a long time.

Were you getting the piece of bread ration and some soup, or were you--

Once in a while we did. But in that particular barracks, I remember there were other nationalities, too, besides Jews. Because they were working the factories. And they were getting parcels from home.

Once in a while, you were able to get some crumbs, but they didn't let us mix with them. So I remember we organized about four of us younger guys. And while the others were sleeping, we were able to lift up the pillows little by little, and open up a box, and steal a piece of bread or whatever so we could survive.

It was going on for quite a while. You took a chance. If they caught you, of course, they would shoot you. But you had no choice. So that's how we survived.

Were these possibly Red Cross parcels that they were getting? No?

No, they were not inmates, those people.

Oh, they weren't. They were paid-- they were salaried--

I don't know if they were salaried. They didn't pay them anyway. Lucky they just probably fed them. I don't think the Germans paid anybody foreigners in those days.

Or they were possibly political prisoners, or--

I don't remember. It was not strictly [INAUDIBLE], but that particular hangar that we were in, they kept-- maybe there were prisoners, too. But I cannot recall exactly, but I remember they weren't dressed same as we were. They were dressed differently, and they had food. And they had much better than we did.

So how long was this going on in the hangar?

Wasn't too long. Because since we were not able to go on work details, so one day they-- we went on a march from Oranienburg to Sachsenhausen. I cannot recall how many kilometers it was, but we marched from Oranienburg to Sachsenhausen.

Was this still in the winter months that you recall? Was there any snow on the ground no?

No. It was not in the winter, no. Could be in the fall. Could be September, October. It wasn't real winter.

Did you receive any food on this march at all?

No. The March wasn't too long. Maybe half a day, a day, I cannot recall. It wasn't like days and nights. Probably wasn't a long distance.

And in Sachsenhausen when you arrived, what was it like there?

We didn't stay there too long. I don't remember it was days or weeks again. It wasn't long. I cannot recall that camp at all, so it could have been just days.

And from then, they did load us again on cattle trains, and we went to transport to Dachau. Also, it was not the main camp of Dachau, but it was called Dachau. It was subsidiary.

And this was-- I don't know how far it was, but it wasn't far away from Landsberg. There were a lot of woods, I remember. Now a camp they called camp 11. And they built bunkers on the ground just a little bit dirt on top. You went with straw, and dirt, and wood, and that's where we were sleeping.

And from there, they took us on daily marches deep in the woods. The Germans were building factories-- big round covers with cement so they can hide inside the woods since they were bombing a lot of the towns.

Were they like bunker--

I mean, real big. You're talking about huge hangars on the ground with big, round cement structures-- just around. There's no walls, all round and big. You could drive cars and trucks and stuff.

And we put dirt on tops and built trees on top, they shouldn't-- the airplanes probably shouldn't recognize--

Camouflage.

Camouflage. That's what I can recall. And in those days, for my first job was loading cement. And the dirt from the cement used to clog up your throat and everything else. It's a rough job.

So one of the engineers on the job came and asked for carpenters. So I thought to myself, anything's better than loading cement. Since my father was a carpenter, I knew how to hold a hammer and a saw. At that time, remember, was 12, 13 years old, as I said when i helped my father. I mean, I didn't know much.

But anyway, nobody was answering, so I figure-- I held my hand up and I said, [GERMAN]. So he didn't pay attention. After asking again, nobody's answering. Was a big tall man with a leather jacket, you know. And a rough guy. People were afraid.

Again I told him that I'm a carpenter. After a while, he starts cursing me. He says, [GERMAN]. I say, [GERMAN]. So he called me midget. Since I was a kid, they called me midget.

Well, he says, since nobody else is answering, OK, he says, you have to get some helpers and I have a job for you. So I tell him, let me see the job, then I'll know how many people I need.

So he starts hollering. He says, I'm the engineer on the job, and you going to tell me you want to see the job to see how many people. So after a while he says, come on, let's go. Took me to the hut where he worked out from, and he had other helpers there. And this was mostly civilian engineers or foremen, I would say mostly foremen, that they kept an eye on the job-- supervisors.

And they brought in special food for them. And he told me how everything has to be fixed in the shuffle, the pigs, and this and that. I say, little by little, I'll do it whatever I can. If I need any help, I'll tell you, and we'll go and get some more help. In the meantime, I'll start working.

He says, all right. You got a job. And I was lucky because I didn't have to load cement. Over there, I did leisure, whatever I could. I learned as I went along. I had no idea how to do it, but you look at it. When a handle breaks, so you cut it. You cut in a piece, you put at an angle, you knock, you know, and you fix things.

I remember at home, you never made everything new at home. You fixed the old stuff in the old Depression days. Anyway, took a liking to me.

One time, since I'm left over from other people, so he says, lay down. He says, I saved you some food. He says, but I'll keep an eye nobody comes. He says, if I knock with my foot, he says, you start sweeping the place.

He says, but don't greet me. Don't talk to me. Nothing.

So he put one up for quite a long time that I was working with him, and he had another helper engineer on the job. The guy must have been 80 years old. So one time he passes by, and he shows me a hole in the tree.

He says, every morning, he says, look inside it. He says, you might find something. He says, but you don't know me. Never ever look at me.

So once or twice a week, maybe he left a piece of bread there. So this job helped me a lot. Due to that job, I survived the war. An extra bite a day, it helped.

Sure. Were you liberated in this place? This was in Dachau, right?

This was in Dachau. We were not liberated there in that camp. Was another incident in that camp that the camp commander, our lager 11, was about maybe a dozen bunkers, you know-- 2,000 or something. It wasn't a big camp. He happened to be an SS officer, but he came from Czechoslovakia.

And two of the inmates were brothers, and they went to school with him in Czechoslovakia They knew him. And we were lucky. He told them we'll do anything possibly that he can.

To help--

To get extra food into the camp. So he used to bring in extra potatoes.

Did he share it with all the inmates, or--

I mean, for the camp-- for the camp itself.

Oh. So because of the two brothers, he helped?

Yes. Because he's seen already the war is coming to an end, and he wanted probably have some friends. And due to him, I think the majority of that particular small group that we worked-- it wasn't too many of us, maybe 1,000 people in that

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particular, in that barracks. It wasn't a big separate camp that we went to work in this particular place.

They came from other camps to the work-- other barracks, other places, but everything was small. And we were there for quite a long time until almost to the end of the war in that particular-- we worked for [GERMAN] a big company, German corporations. They were building those--

Oh, those shelters.

--shelters.

I see. Were you-- you didn't remain with the carpentry all that time, do you?

Most of the time, I worked--

As a carpenter.

I mean, wasn't much carpenter, but worked from that particular place. So I was luckier than a lot of other people.

But due to this camp commander, there was-- conditions were a little better.

Conditions were much better than the other camp, from what I heard other people that went through. He did not actually kill or beat. I mean, he was not the sole--

Guard.

Guard. Yeah, I mean, there were other guard, but he was in charge of it. But probably whatever he says, goes. And it wasn't as extreme, as bad as other camps.

Because we were able to organize a potato here and there, or whatever, and bring. And we used to have a small Scandinavian stove in it because-- so to get a little bit heat, everybody brought a piece of wood with them from work. So it was cold, you know, in the winter. So we were able to have some heat at times.

So when did liberation occur in your case?

Well, we started-- closer to the war end, we started marching toward--

From Dachau and then?

From Dachau, in that particular camp that I was in, subsidiary. Started marching towards Wolfratshausen. They were talking about closer to the Italian border. I don't remember exactly now, but that's where they were talking about. Because the American army was close and closing in right on them.

We were marching for weeks. And then this same commander, some other officers wanted to take over-- take over our march. And he didn't let go because he was one guy from Auschwitz, a real, real bad guy. He was one of the roughest guys, and he-- he killed out so many people in the marches. And he wanted to take over our command, too.

But since he was a higher ranking officer, this commander, he didn't give up our outfit. He says, he started it. He'll finish it. And lucky enough that few guys tried to run away from our marches, and some of the soldiers shooted at them. And they got wounded, you know?

Who got-- the commander got--

No, not the commander. The inmate.

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Oh, the inmates.

Because they tried to run away. And he made sure that they got them to a hospital. And they even survived.

And one time on the march, we did see airplanes scooping down, and taking pictures, and looking at us that we were marching. And we were waving to them. So since we were waving to them and we didn't run away-- we couldn't run away because the guard were--

Watching.

--watching us. And they were circling around us, stopped us from marching, and they're shooting up everything around us. They probably knew we were inmates. They went down so low they could see. We didn't have any arms, or no trucks, no cars, just marches.

And we were just laying there on the grass and watching how they were shooting everything.

Could you tell if they were American planes?

I think it was British. British markings, I remember. Maybe Americans, too. I don't remember. But everybody saw that this was British markings and the color.

So what about the SS men? Were they protecting themselves?

They were asking-- they were borrowing our jackets to hide their uniforms. This was the first time that we've seen that the war is closing in, coming to an end.

On the march, were you receiving any food or anything?

Luckily, we got some food because he stopped in all the small towns. We were able to get a little bit of something. I say he was looking out for us. So it was a high ranking commander, he probably was able to do it.

I mean, he was trying to work in our favor. And after the liberation, he stuck with us. And we all signed papers that he helped us through the whole time. So we don't know what happened to him, but probably he got off scot free.

Were you liberated by the American or The British army?

No, the American Third Army.

American Third Army.

See, every night as we were taking a rest, more and more of our guards were disappearing. So one morning, we didn't see any guards at all. We were on our own. This was not far from Wolfratshausen.

And we were hiding out wherever we could. I mean, you didn't see too much of the military. They were around.

Of the German military?

Yeah, we didn't see-- anyway, they probably had their own problem. We did see them, but they didn't bother. Because I think they were trying themselves-- they were disorganized themselves.

To save themselves.

To save themselves. Because we already heard a lot of shooting going on, but we didn't know where. So about 4 or 5 of us, we are hiding out in the woods. All of a sudden, we see a high ranking officer with three aides. And they came

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across us.

American officer?

No. German officer with 3 aides, or 4. I can't recall exactly. And they came across us. We thought they were going to shoot us. So he says, [GERMAN].

Which means?

You don't have to be afraid. They did ask us if we know where the Americans are. He wants to surrender his army. So we told them we hear shooting going on all around. We are hiding out. We don't know what else to do.

He says, try to hide out for another day or so. Says he wants to surrender the army, but he's looking for the Americans. He was walking around with a white flag.

And the next day, we seen in the main highway German vehicles with soldiers and everything else surrendering, driving to surrender. And the shooting stopped. This was the end of the war. And then the

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