

-TITLE-FRED ROTH
-I_DATE-11/24/89
-SOURCE-UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION HOLOCAUST CENTER - PITTSBURGH
-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-IMAGE_QUALITY-EXCELLENT
-DURATION-1 HOUR 25 MINUTES
-LANGUAGES-ENGLISH
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
-PERSONAL_NAME-
-CORPORATE_NAME-
-KEY_WORDS-
-NOTES-
-CONTENTS-
00:00:40 Fred Roth was excellent in Jersey City on October 8, 1921. He belonged to the orthodox temple in his community with his family.

00:01:52 He enlisted in the Army in 1942 as an American soldier.

00:02:35 His parents were from Austria and he discusses that they came to the United States with no money and worked very hard until they accumulated enough wealth to raise a family. However, they never were wealthy at all.

00:05:20 His parents were considered radical because his father would give the money that he had left to different charities. Fred's father was not wealthy, but gave what he could to the needy.

00:07:08 When Fred was growing up, he considered himself to be a radical because he had a lot of non-Jewish friends as a Jew himself. Most of his best friends were Jewish though.

00:08:29 He attended a Jesuit university in New Jersey called St. Peters. Fred majored in accounting, but left after the 5th year out of 6 years and enlisted in the Army.

00:10:46 When Hitler came to power in 1933, Fred's family sent money to different relatives that he had in Berlin so that they could leave and come to the United States. They sent as much as they could, but had very little money in which to send because of the depression. At one time, his relatives lived with them in a small two bedroom apartment. There were over ten people for 2 bedrooms.

00:13:52 Fred learned four languages before he learned English.

00:15:43 Fred discusses his strong relationship with his father who died thirty-five years ago.

00:21:30 On May 20, 1932, he enlisted in the Army, although he tried to enlist earlier on the day after Pearl Harbor. He had thought about joining the aviation cadets, but before Pearl Harbor, he was considered too young. When Pearl Harbor occurred, he was allowed to join the aviation cadets in California. There he got his formal pre-flight training.

00:23:00 Fred was moved to various states to learn how to fly different planes. He was a very successful pilot in training for the Air Force.

00:24:22 He qualified as a twin engine bomber pilot and got his training on B25's and B26's, which were twin engine planes. He was training over the Pacific.

00:26:04 He graduated in September 1943 from the Air Force.

00:27:45 He was sent over to Europe in June, 1944, shortly after D-Day. He flew supplies into France for Patton's troops. D-Day was on June seventh. Frank arrived a week later.

00:30:00 On September 13, 1944, Market Garden(ph) occurred. It was the invasion on Holland. The plan was to hold five major bridges in Holland so that the U.S. troops could go into Germany through Holland. Montgomery, the allied commander, never got there and Fred was shot down. Fred has a lot of resentment for Montgomery.

00:33:21 He felt confident that he would be rescued from the Germans within the month that he was held captive after he had been shot down.

00:36:20 After he dropped his troops on Holland during his mission, he was shot down. The German bullets hitting his plane sounded like a typewriter. They tried to escape by crossing the English Channel, but were continually being shot at.

00:40:11 When Fred got to the shore, his plane was shot down by anti-aircraft shells. His plane landed in the ocean with his engines cut off and at a very low speed. There were four men in his plane and none were hurt. The four of them got on the top of the plane and got into their escape raft and headed towards England.

00:43:43 There was wind heading back towards Holland and they were eventually blown back to the Germans in Holland. They quickly decided to surrender to them.

00:46:12 Fred and his crew kept a diary on any pieces of paper that they could find during their imprisonment. They were sent to a prison camp after being captured.

00:47:50 They were interrogated thoroughly by the Germans, but Fred was trained well and he did not reveal anything important. Fred only gave his name, rank and serial number.

00:53:17 They were first sent to Dulogluf(ph) were they were separated based on military rank. Fred was the highest ranking officer in the group.

00:55:09 Fred and his crew were next sent to Stalaglager which was a larger prison camp north of Berlin in Germany. It was at first an officer prison camp, but as the allies took command of Europe, the camp had some enlisted men as well.

00:57:36 Fred got to the camp in October after he was shot down. In January, the Jews were separated. Fred was put into the Jewish sector.

01:00:13 He had the opportunity to be put with the non-Jewish officers, but accepted his fate because he did not want to feel guilty for living while other Jews were killed.

01:02:21 Stalaglager was liberated by the Russians on May 1, 1945. This is when Fred finally got out of the prison camp.

01:07:00 They went to sleep the night before and discovered that the camp was abandoned. Russians came in with machine guns. The Russians came in and the officers that were Jewish spent time with the allied Jewish officers. Since neither spoke each others languages, they spoke in Yiddish. They drank vodka and celebrated their liberation.

01:09:48 The Russians took great care of the Jews in the camp because of the fear of Himler's threats against them.

01:10:11 The Russians then liberated the Tomof Brough (P.H.)

01:12:56 Fred and the other liberated prisoners were under the care of the Russians for eight, nine days.

01:14:20 Five miles away was a labor camp. Fred entered the camp and to examine it. Next, they went in and liberated the small camp. The prisoners were mainly Jews. It was a labor camp, not an extermination camp. Many of the prisoners had died. When the Russians liberated the prisoners from the camp, they found that the Germans had locked them in and left.

01:19:30 Half of the prisoners in that camp had died. Fred describes the terrible stench in the labor camp. There were feces on the floor. It was one of the most horrible things that Fred had ever seen. The Russian quickly moved all of the prisoners out of Germany.

1:21:41 Fred was discharged on October 28, 1945.

1:23:10 During Fred's occupation, he lost over fifty pounds. When the Russians tried to feed the Fred and the rest of the freed prisoners, they couldn't eat. If they did, they would could not hold down the food.

1:24:20 Fred feels very strong as a Jew now and believes strongly in the state of Israel. He does not feel that his sense of religion has changed because of the incident, although he has reformed Jewish practices a lot since his orthodox upbringing.
.END.