

**RG-50.091.0098**

**Summary**

William McKee Sr., born in New Rochelle, NY on 18 February 1924, describes being drafted into the US Army on 17 February 1943, being the sole supporter of his mother before being drafted and working beginning in 1941; working as a Special Army Courier at NY Port Embarkation at Ft Slocum island off of the NY Harbor; traveling to Savannah, Georgia around the first two weeks of November 1943 training in Heavy Bombardment as a first armorer for the B17 operating as a gunner on a 10 man crew plane; being sent overseas by ship from the NY Harbor, being assigned to the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomber Group, which lost 197 planes; travelling to 8<sup>th</sup> US Air Force base in Basingbourn England, 50 miles Northwest of London (an RAF permanent base); serving in two raids in Berlin before his plane, piloted by Edgar Downing out of Rome, NY and co-piloted by 2ndLt Tennanbaum, was shot down on 29 March 1944 around 16:00 hours over Brunswick; landing in the North Sea with the plane and all crew members surviving the crash; being picked up by the German Navy who treated his head wounds before taking him to the pens at Rotterdam; being then transferred to solitary confinement in Amsterdam; being continually searched without interrogation; being taken to a train terminal in Amsterdam and onto the interrogation center in Wetzlar, Germany; being beaten by guards; the guards having picture of him from a few months prior during his interrogation; driving through Frankfurt and onto a padded cell at Homerk and being kept there for several days before staying in the area for two more weeks; being returned to Wetzlar; being transferred to Krems, Austria and spending almost 13 months there before leaving in April of 1945; spending a total of 14 months as a POW and being assigned POW tag 106246; his compound Commander, Herr Hoffmann Milacobra (a WWI veteran with a wooden leg); having teeth removed without an anesthetic; spending his time digging tunnels; receiving three hours' notice to get out of camp; leaving in an RAF uniform; marching west picking up other civilians including Jews along the way; arriving at Mauthausen after 3 or 4 days; marching from 500 to 600 miles in a zig zag motion; returning home unable to eat due to a poor digestive tract; selling war bonds upon his return home despite needing to be hospitalized; spending one month in a hospital in Atlantic City; being ordered to Middletown Field in Harrisburg, PA and then 24 hours later being sent to Camp Atterbury in Indiana; being discharged from the US Army as a SSgt on 5 November 1945; receiving the Flying Medal, Air Medal, European Victory Ribbon with two bronze stars, Purple Heart, Army Good Conduct Medal, and the Air Medal Ribbon; his records being destroyed in the Archive fire in 1973; fighting for his VA disability; going to a Crisis Intervention Clinic in 1971 after suffering a nervous breakdown once being hurt at work in Chrysler; sustaining back injuries at work at Chrysler in Twinsburg, Ohio; having 3 children and no longer working at the time of the interview having service connected disabilities and receiving disability and Social Security.