

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,100

2  
00:00:01,100 --> 00:00:01,670  
OK.

3  
00:00:01,670 --> 00:00:04,640  
Just so I can hear your  
voice on the microphone,

4  
00:00:04,640 --> 00:00:07,230  
tell me where you live.

5  
00:00:07,230 --> 00:00:08,210  
Oh, where do I live?

6  
00:00:08,210 --> 00:00:11,790  
Webster, New York, six  
miles east of Rochester.

7  
00:00:11,790 --> 00:00:12,710  
Uh-huh.

8  
00:00:12,710 --> 00:00:13,870  
You came a long way.

9  
00:00:13,870 --> 00:00:15,750  
Yeah.

10  
00:00:15,750 --> 00:00:17,670  
How many hours it  
takes to drive?

11  
00:00:17,670 --> 00:00:20,160  
I left there a  
quarter after 7:00.

12  
00:00:20,160 --> 00:00:20,970  
AM?

13

00:00:20,970 --> 00:00:22,440  
Got here, yeah.

14  
00:00:22,440 --> 00:00:23,580  
Yeah.

15  
00:00:23,580 --> 00:00:24,840  
Got here about 2:30, I think.

16  
00:00:24,840 --> 00:00:26,230  
If I hadn't gone and  
turned the wrong way

17  
00:00:26,230 --> 00:00:28,522  
when I got off the freeway,  
I'd have been here earlier.

18  
00:00:28,522 --> 00:00:44,840

19  
00:00:44,840 --> 00:00:45,560  
OK.

20  
00:00:45,560 --> 00:00:46,760  
Here we are.

21  
00:00:46,760 --> 00:00:52,850  
This is Neenah Ellis  
interviewing Mary M. Wood.

22  
00:00:52,850 --> 00:00:55,490  
It's July 14, 1995.

23  
00:00:55,490 --> 00:00:59,060  
We're in West Park, New York.

24  
00:00:59,060 --> 00:01:02,090  
Please tell me,  
where were you born?

25  
00:01:02,090 --> 00:01:03,500  
When were you born?

26  
00:01:03,500 --> 00:01:05,960  
And where did you grow up?

27  
00:01:05,960 --> 00:01:09,530  
September 5, 1917,  
Alexandria Bay, New York.

28  
00:01:09,530 --> 00:01:12,050  
And I grew up in Alexandria  
Bay till I went away

29  
00:01:12,050 --> 00:01:13,640  
to nurse's training.

30  
00:01:13,640 --> 00:01:15,230  
Where did you go to  
nurse's training?

31  
00:01:15,230 --> 00:01:17,900  
Syracuse, New York,  
Crouse Irving.

32  
00:01:17,900 --> 00:01:18,980  
Hospital?

33  
00:01:18,980 --> 00:01:20,330  
Crouse Irving Memorial Hospital.

34  
00:01:20,330 --> 00:01:21,470  
Uh-huh.

35  
00:01:21,470 --> 00:01:24,480  
Did you always  
want to be a nurse?

36  
00:01:24,480 --> 00:01:25,950  
I really don't know.

37  
00:01:25,950 --> 00:01:27,050  
That's just how it was.

38

00:01:27,050 --> 00:01:29,960

My sister was one, so  
then I sort of followed

39

00:01:29,960 --> 00:01:31,850

in her footsteps.

40

00:01:31,850 --> 00:01:37,682

And when and why did you  
decide to go in the service?

41

00:01:37,682 --> 00:01:39,718

Well, when the war  
started, I thought

42

00:01:39,718 --> 00:01:40,760

that's where I should be.

43

00:01:40,760 --> 00:01:43,680

44

00:01:43,680 --> 00:01:46,200

Did you have other members of  
your family in the service?

45

00:01:46,200 --> 00:01:47,880

Oh, my father had  
been in the service.

46

00:01:47,880 --> 00:01:50,430

His brother had  
been in the service.

47

00:01:50,430 --> 00:01:51,420

But that's all.

48

00:01:51,420 --> 00:01:53,805

But it was just the thing that--

49

00:01:53,805 --> 00:01:57,850

Thing I thought should be done.

50

00:01:57,850 --> 00:01:59,320

And where did you--

51

00:01:59,320 --> 00:02:00,730

when did you go in?

52

00:02:00,730 --> 00:02:03,880

July 8, 1942.

53

00:02:03,880 --> 00:02:06,760

I was going to NYU, so I waited  
till the semester was over

54

00:02:06,760 --> 00:02:09,340

before I went in.

55

00:02:09,340 --> 00:02:11,800

You finished your  
nurse's training?

56

00:02:11,800 --> 00:02:13,210

And then I was--

57

00:02:13,210 --> 00:02:14,980

I did postgraduate work.

58

00:02:14,980 --> 00:02:18,970

And then I was working  
and going to NYU at night.

59

00:02:18,970 --> 00:02:21,130

Working as a nurse?

60

00:02:21,130 --> 00:02:22,540

In the city?

61

00:02:22,540 --> 00:02:27,280

In Queens, out in Jamaica.

62

00:02:27,280 --> 00:02:31,900

And then you did basic

training starting in July?

63

00:02:31,900 --> 00:02:33,580

No, you don't do basic anything.

64

00:02:33,580 --> 00:02:34,475

I didn't.

65

00:02:34,475 --> 00:02:37,300

I got away with it.

66

00:02:37,300 --> 00:02:38,080

How come?

67

00:02:38,080 --> 00:02:39,220

I don't know.

68

00:02:39,220 --> 00:02:40,550

Don't most people have to?

69

00:02:40,550 --> 00:02:41,272

Usually they do.

70

00:02:41,272 --> 00:02:43,480

But they just sent me down  
to Fort DuPont in Delaware

71

00:02:43,480 --> 00:02:45,140

and that was it.

72

00:02:45,140 --> 00:02:47,260

And how long were you there?

73

00:02:47,260 --> 00:02:51,692

Let me see, was there in July,  
I was there till November.

74

00:02:51,692 --> 00:02:53,390

1940?

75

00:02:53,390 --> 00:02:53,890

Two.

76

00:02:53,890 --> 00:02:55,520

Two.

77

00:02:55,520 --> 00:02:57,030

And then tell me--

78

00:02:57,030 --> 00:03:02,530

In '42, we went  
to Dix and Kilmer.

79

00:03:02,530 --> 00:03:03,760

And then I went to Africa.

80

00:03:03,760 --> 00:03:08,980

And I was in Africa from  
January till November of '43.

81

00:03:08,980 --> 00:03:11,470

November, I came home.

82

00:03:11,470 --> 00:03:16,360

And where'd I go next?

83

00:03:16,360 --> 00:03:17,760

Camp Dix, I think it was.

84

00:03:17,760 --> 00:03:21,990

You were in North Africa  
with the Third Army?

85

00:03:21,990 --> 00:03:28,230

30-Second Station Hospital  
in Clemson, about 100 miles

86

00:03:28,230 --> 00:03:30,420

outside of Oran.

87

00:03:30,420 --> 00:03:31,260

Outside of what?

88  
00:03:31,260 --> 00:03:32,220  
Oran.

89  
00:03:32,220 --> 00:03:34,770  
Oran, a-ha.

90  
00:03:34,770 --> 00:03:37,470  
That was the first  
time you were overseas?

91  
00:03:37,470 --> 00:03:39,580  
What was that like?

92  
00:03:39,580 --> 00:03:42,660  
We had a station hospital, so  
we got the boys directly back

93  
00:03:42,660 --> 00:03:49,140  
from the aid stations  
and what have you.

94  
00:03:49,140 --> 00:03:51,300  
So that's what we  
took care of there.

95  
00:03:51,300 --> 00:03:53,430  
And then they were  
going home from there?

96  
00:03:53,430 --> 00:03:55,230  
Most of them home.

97  
00:03:55,230 --> 00:03:58,680  
Badly wounded.

98  
00:03:58,680 --> 00:04:06,120  
Some were flown back, some went  
by ship on the hospital ships.

99  
00:04:06,120 --> 00:04:09,480  
Well, when did you meet up  
with this group here now?



100  
00:04:09,480 --> 00:04:23,280  
That was in-- must have  
been November of '44.

101  
00:04:23,280 --> 00:04:24,160  
November '44.

102  
00:04:24,160 --> 00:04:28,410

103  
00:04:28,410 --> 00:04:29,560  
In England?

104  
00:04:29,560 --> 00:04:30,270  
No, no.

105  
00:04:30,270 --> 00:04:32,355  
Met them in Charleston.

106  
00:04:32,355 --> 00:04:34,980  
I think it was Charleston, North  
Carolina, if I remember right.

107  
00:04:34,980 --> 00:04:36,890  
Oh, you came back after Africa.

108  
00:04:36,890 --> 00:04:39,450  
Yeah.

109  
00:04:39,450 --> 00:04:42,140  
And then you went over  
with them to England?

110  
00:04:42,140 --> 00:04:48,070  
Yeah, England, France, Austria,  
Germany, what have you.

111  
00:04:48,070 --> 00:04:52,950  
Well, tell me about the  
experience at Mauthausen.

112  
00:04:52,950 --> 00:04:54,650  
What do you remember  
when you arrived?

113  
00:04:54,650 --> 00:04:58,500  
Well, the smell.

114  
00:04:58,500 --> 00:05:01,397  
The bodies, the smell.

115  
00:05:01,397 --> 00:05:02,730  
And I was in the operating room.

116  
00:05:02,730 --> 00:05:04,438  
And we had to repair  
the damage that they

117  
00:05:04,438 --> 00:05:06,810  
had done experimenting  
on different people.

118  
00:05:06,810 --> 00:05:07,770  
Really?

119  
00:05:07,770 --> 00:05:11,430  
They used to-- well, they said  
they delivered babies, and held

120  
00:05:11,430 --> 00:05:13,870  
them up, and killed them  
in front of the mothers.

121  
00:05:13,870 --> 00:05:16,560  
They would maybe cut  
off a leg for practice.

122  
00:05:16,560 --> 00:05:20,760  
And we got some of  
those to take care of.

123  
00:05:20,760 --> 00:05:23,300  
But mostly, they were

nothing but skin and bones.

124  
00:05:23,300 --> 00:05:27,910  
It wasn't too much to  
do surgically for them.

125  
00:05:27,910 --> 00:05:31,740  
We didn't have too  
much to do there.

126  
00:05:31,740 --> 00:05:34,770  
Were you able to talk with  
those people who'd been?

127  
00:05:34,770 --> 00:05:36,858  
No.

128  
00:05:36,858 --> 00:05:38,400  
See, the girls were  
out in the wards.

129  
00:05:38,400 --> 00:05:40,525  
I wasn't in the wards, I  
was in the operating room.

130  
00:05:40,525 --> 00:05:45,570  
So I really didn't get  
to talk to the people.

131  
00:05:45,570 --> 00:05:48,240  
How did you know what  
had happened to them?

132  
00:05:48,240 --> 00:05:50,250  
Well, from things we heard.

133  
00:05:50,250 --> 00:05:56,050  
Mostly from the men that  
worked in the offices and some

134  
00:05:56,050 --> 00:06:00,510  
that worked up in at Mauthausen,  
where the POWs were--

135  
00:06:00,510 --> 00:06:05,910  
not our POWs, the Germans,  
the SS troopers, and that type

136  
00:06:05,910 --> 00:06:07,020  
of thing from them.

137  
00:06:07,020 --> 00:06:08,190  
The stories we got from.

138  
00:06:08,190 --> 00:06:12,050

139  
00:06:12,050 --> 00:06:14,420  
What was a typical day  
like for you there?

140  
00:06:14,420 --> 00:06:16,430  
That was in June of '45.

141  
00:06:16,430 --> 00:06:17,750  
Or May of '45?

142  
00:06:17,750 --> 00:06:20,010  
May of '45, yeah May and June.

143  
00:06:20,010 --> 00:06:23,050  
You arrived shortly  
in early May.

144  
00:06:23,050 --> 00:06:25,575  
Am I right about that?

145  
00:06:25,575 --> 00:06:27,320  
You know, I can't  
remember the dates.

146  
00:06:27,320 --> 00:06:29,600  
We went to Germany first.

147

00:06:29,600 --> 00:06:32,540

Then the men--  
after the war ended,

148

00:06:32,540 --> 00:06:36,710

the men, the officers,  
and enlisted personnel

149

00:06:36,710 --> 00:06:40,070

went over to Camp  
Gusen and liberated it.

150

00:06:40,070 --> 00:06:42,770

And we were a couple of weeks  
later before we went over.

151

00:06:42,770 --> 00:06:44,503

They didn't want us at first.

152

00:06:44,503 --> 00:06:46,670

So it was a voluntary thing  
whether you wanted to go

153

00:06:46,670 --> 00:06:49,860

or didn't want to go.

154

00:06:49,860 --> 00:06:51,390

Was it much of a choice for you?

155

00:06:51,390 --> 00:06:52,432

Did you have any?

156

00:06:52,432 --> 00:06:53,640

No, we all said yes, we'd go.

157

00:06:53,640 --> 00:06:54,720

There wasn't any.

158

00:06:54,720 --> 00:06:57,210

I don't think-- nobody  
backed out, everybody went.

159

00:06:57,210 --> 00:07:00,500

160

00:07:00,500 --> 00:07:03,170

And what would a typical  
day like be for you?

161

00:07:03,170 --> 00:07:05,120

Do you remember?

162

00:07:05,120 --> 00:07:09,980

Getting on the trucks, going  
to work, being sprayed with DDT

163

00:07:09,980 --> 00:07:10,970

for bugs.

164

00:07:10,970 --> 00:07:11,720

Every day?

165

00:07:11,720 --> 00:07:12,740

Yeah.

166

00:07:12,740 --> 00:07:16,870

Every day we got sprayed.

167

00:07:16,870 --> 00:07:19,630

Down your pants, up your  
shirts, down your shirts,

168

00:07:19,630 --> 00:07:22,840

every place they sprayed so you  
wouldn't get any fleas or bugs

169

00:07:22,840 --> 00:07:24,640

or what have you.

170

00:07:24,640 --> 00:07:28,030

In the operating  
room, repairing things

171

00:07:28,030 --> 00:07:31,330

that they had done to the people, that type of thing.

172  
00:07:31,330 --> 00:07:35,050  
Long days, were they long days?

173  
00:07:35,050 --> 00:07:36,880  
I don't think so, 12-hour day.

174  
00:07:36,880 --> 00:07:39,490

175  
00:07:39,490 --> 00:07:41,590  
And then you would go back?

176  
00:07:41,590 --> 00:07:42,640  
Oh, we had a house.

177  
00:07:42,640 --> 00:07:43,990  
We lived in a house.

178  
00:07:43,990 --> 00:07:45,770  
There's three or four houses.

179  
00:07:45,770 --> 00:07:49,180  
And everybody was split up into a different house.

180  
00:07:49,180 --> 00:07:51,040  
And we lived there.

181  
00:07:51,040 --> 00:07:52,552  
We ate in the mess hall.

182  
00:07:52,552 --> 00:07:55,150

183  
00:07:55,150 --> 00:07:58,900  
And we met a lot of nice people, made a lot of nice friends.

184

00:07:58,900 --> 00:08:04,450  
What was it like for you  
women in the evenings?

185  
00:08:04,450 --> 00:08:05,620  
What would you talk about?

186  
00:08:05,620 --> 00:08:10,030  
What would you-- you'd  
already been to Africa.

187  
00:08:10,030 --> 00:08:12,065  
But a lot of the  
women had never.

188  
00:08:12,065 --> 00:08:15,400  
No, that was their first trip.

189  
00:08:15,400 --> 00:08:17,980  
What kinds of things did you  
talk about in the evenings?

190  
00:08:17,980 --> 00:08:19,065  
Gee, I don't remember.

191  
00:08:19,065 --> 00:08:20,065  
I really don't remember.

192  
00:08:20,065 --> 00:08:26,210

193  
00:08:26,210 --> 00:08:29,070  
When were you discharged?

194  
00:08:29,070 --> 00:08:33,440  
Oh, December 12, '45.

195  
00:08:33,440 --> 00:08:35,690  
That was the official date,  
but we left in September

196  
00:08:35,690 --> 00:08:38,419



because we were in  
Camp Polk, Louisiana.

197  
00:08:38,419 --> 00:08:40,039  
We were discharged there.

198  
00:08:40,039 --> 00:08:42,380  
Did you spend the  
whole summer in Europe?

199  
00:08:42,380 --> 00:08:44,810  
Yeah, we got back in August.

200  
00:08:44,810 --> 00:08:48,770  
Were you at Mauthausen  
the whole time?

201  
00:08:48,770 --> 00:08:51,410  
No, when we first went in,  
we went over to England.

202  
00:08:51,410 --> 00:08:54,380  
We went to France,  
we went to Germany,

203  
00:08:54,380 --> 00:08:55,910  
and we went to Austria.

204  
00:08:55,910 --> 00:08:57,950  
Then we went to the camp.

205  
00:08:57,950 --> 00:09:00,410  
We had a tent  
hospital in Austria

206  
00:09:00,410 --> 00:09:03,260  
before we moved to the camp.

207  
00:09:03,260 --> 00:09:05,300  
Mauthausen, you  
mean by the camp.

208

00:09:05,300 --> 00:09:06,150  
No, Gusen.

209  
00:09:06,150 --> 00:09:07,200  
Oh, Gusen.

210  
00:09:07,200 --> 00:09:07,700  
There's two.

211  
00:09:07,700 --> 00:09:11,390  
Gusen and Mauthausen.

212  
00:09:11,390 --> 00:09:13,400  
They're very close together.

213  
00:09:13,400 --> 00:09:15,080  
And you worked at both?

214  
00:09:15,080 --> 00:09:16,220  
No, Gusen.

215  
00:09:16,220 --> 00:09:17,300  
Only Gusen?

216  
00:09:17,300 --> 00:09:18,500  
Oh, I'm confused then.

217  
00:09:18,500 --> 00:09:20,190  
I thought you were  
at Mauthausen.

218  
00:09:20,190 --> 00:09:21,240  
No.

219  
00:09:21,240 --> 00:09:23,150  
Well, as I remember,  
Mauthausen was only

220  
00:09:23,150 --> 00:09:25,130  
where the-- there  
was an infantry

221  
00:09:25,130 --> 00:09:27,530  
group that was in  
there, men, and they

222  
00:09:27,530 --> 00:09:30,920  
had the prisoners there.

223  
00:09:30,920 --> 00:09:32,755  
I don't think there was  
a hospital up there.

224  
00:09:32,755 --> 00:09:34,130  
I don't remember  
it if there was.

225  
00:09:34,130 --> 00:09:37,240

226  
00:09:37,240 --> 00:09:42,790  
And were they bringing, then,  
the survivors, the patients

227  
00:09:42,790 --> 00:09:45,250  
who'd been in Mauthausen?

228  
00:09:45,250 --> 00:09:48,340  
Were they bringing them down  
to where you were in Gusen?

229  
00:09:48,340 --> 00:09:52,710

230  
00:09:52,710 --> 00:09:55,680  
I don't remember camp--

231  
00:09:55,680 --> 00:10:00,300  
as DPs, what have you.

232  
00:10:00,300 --> 00:10:02,790  
No, that's displaced person.

233

00:10:02,790 --> 00:10:05,400  
But I don't remember them  
bringing anybody down.

234  
00:10:05,400 --> 00:10:07,860  
If they did, I  
don't remember it.

235  
00:10:07,860 --> 00:10:10,350  
So the people that  
you were caring for

236  
00:10:10,350 --> 00:10:11,410  
had all been at Gusen?

237  
00:10:11,410 --> 00:10:11,910  
Mm-hmm.

238  
00:10:11,910 --> 00:10:16,210

239  
00:10:16,210 --> 00:10:20,507  
And what became of  
those people over time?

240  
00:10:20,507 --> 00:10:22,840  
I don't know because they  
were still there when we left.

241  
00:10:22,840 --> 00:10:24,340  
Because when we went in--

242  
00:10:24,340 --> 00:10:27,578  
when the men went in, the  
Germans had released them.

243  
00:10:27,578 --> 00:10:29,245  
And they were out in  
the fields and they

244  
00:10:29,245 --> 00:10:31,300  
had to go get them  
and bring them back.

245  
00:10:31,300 --> 00:10:34,030  
Because I remember, they  
were digging in the fields

246  
00:10:34,030 --> 00:10:35,110  
and ate raw potatoes.

247  
00:10:35,110 --> 00:10:37,060  
And it made them  
deathly ill because they

248  
00:10:37,060 --> 00:10:38,830  
weren't used to eating.

249  
00:10:38,830 --> 00:10:41,920  
And when they did feed them,  
they'd always save part of it

250  
00:10:41,920 --> 00:10:46,270  
under their pillow for fear they  
wouldn't get anything anymore.

251  
00:10:46,270 --> 00:10:50,020  
And there were some  
musicians there.

252  
00:10:50,020 --> 00:10:52,360  
And they used to  
play at mealtime

253  
00:10:52,360 --> 00:10:55,780  
up on the stage, the ones that  
were able to play while we ate.

254  
00:10:55,780 --> 00:10:57,930  
But I don't remember  
eating in that dining room.

255  
00:10:57,930 --> 00:10:59,500  
We're talking about  
a lot of things,

256

00:10:59,500 --> 00:11:01,104

I remember that  
I don't remember.

257

00:11:01,104 --> 00:11:03,850

258

00:11:03,850 --> 00:11:06,440

Were you ever able to have  
conversations with those--

259

00:11:06,440 --> 00:11:06,940

No.

260

00:11:06,940 --> 00:11:07,670

--people at all?

261

00:11:07,670 --> 00:11:10,390

I never did, no.

262

00:11:10,390 --> 00:11:13,450

Because, see, the  
operating room was here,

263

00:11:13,450 --> 00:11:17,740

and we looked out the window  
and the mess hall was there.

264

00:11:17,740 --> 00:11:20,050

I did go around in some of  
the wards to see the people.

265

00:11:20,050 --> 00:11:21,383

I never talked with any of them.

266

00:11:21,383 --> 00:11:23,770

267

00:11:23,770 --> 00:11:25,363

And there were only men there?

268

00:11:25,363 --> 00:11:26,780  
You didn't see  
women and children?

269  
00:11:26,780 --> 00:11:27,947  
Yeah, there was women there.

270  
00:11:27,947 --> 00:11:29,440  
I didn't see any children, yeah.

271  
00:11:29,440 --> 00:11:32,440  
Because I operated on women.

272  
00:11:32,440 --> 00:11:33,310  
Because you what?

273  
00:11:33,310 --> 00:11:34,930  
We operated on  
some of the women.

274  
00:11:34,930 --> 00:11:35,520  
Oh, you did.

275  
00:11:35,520 --> 00:11:37,900  
Yeah.

276  
00:11:37,900 --> 00:11:43,000  
And they had suffered  
the same kinds of things?

277  
00:11:43,000 --> 00:11:45,220  
Did I tell you?

278  
00:11:45,220 --> 00:11:49,660  
Nearby, there was a munitions  
factory in the mountain,

279  
00:11:49,660 --> 00:11:55,452  
inside the mountain,  
where the people used

280  
00:11:55,452 --> 00:11:56,410

to go in there to work.

281  
00:11:56,410 --> 00:11:57,827  
So long as they  
were able to walk,

282  
00:11:57,827 --> 00:11:59,260  
they had to go there to work.

283  
00:11:59,260 --> 00:12:02,590  
They went there from  
the camp to work.

284  
00:12:02,590 --> 00:12:07,570  
And there was also places where  
they actually made lampshades

285  
00:12:07,570 --> 00:12:10,060  
there out of human skin.

286  
00:12:10,060 --> 00:12:14,698  
And the big furnaces  
were there, where they--

287  
00:12:14,698 --> 00:12:16,642  
whew, it's hot.

288  
00:12:16,642 --> 00:12:17,620  
Want to take a break?

289  
00:12:17,620 --> 00:12:20,950  
Where they burned the bodies.

290  
00:12:20,950 --> 00:12:24,694

291  
00:12:24,694 --> 00:12:26,100  
The layout.

292  
00:12:26,100 --> 00:12:27,210  
Oh, I can't even remember.



293

00:12:27,210 --> 00:12:29,795

All I can remember seeing that  
big oven with the doors open.

294

00:12:29,795 --> 00:12:31,170

There was, if I  
remember rightly,

295

00:12:31,170 --> 00:12:33,120

there was three of them.

296

00:12:33,120 --> 00:12:37,980

Did they tell you about the  
SS trooper that they killed?

297

00:12:37,980 --> 00:12:42,000

We had natives, or what do you  
want to call them, natives.

298

00:12:42,000 --> 00:12:45,060

299

00:12:45,060 --> 00:12:47,550

People who lived in the town  
came into work afterwards.

300

00:12:47,550 --> 00:12:49,950

They worked in the kitchens,  
and in the dining room,

301

00:12:49,950 --> 00:12:51,370

and what have you.

302

00:12:51,370 --> 00:12:54,060

And there was one German SS man.

303

00:12:54,060 --> 00:12:58,080

And those prisoners who were  
nothing but skin and bone

304

00:12:58,080 --> 00:13:00,960

killed him and hung

him up on a fence.

305

00:13:00,960 --> 00:13:02,370

I have a picture  
of that at home.

306

00:13:02,370 --> 00:13:03,540

Did you see it happen?

307

00:13:03,540 --> 00:13:05,620

No.

308

00:13:05,620 --> 00:13:12,207

And then there was the  
chaplain, his assistant doing

309

00:13:12,207 --> 00:13:13,290

all the burials, you know.

310

00:13:13,290 --> 00:13:17,325

And they had big, long  
trenches with bodies

311

00:13:17,325 --> 00:13:18,915

in long, long lines.

312

00:13:18,915 --> 00:13:22,040

313

00:13:22,040 --> 00:13:25,050

And they were doing that the  
whole time you were there?

314

00:13:25,050 --> 00:13:25,550

Every day?

315

00:13:25,550 --> 00:13:27,055

See, a lot of them  
died at first.

316

00:13:27,055 --> 00:13:29,180

And matter of fact, you

couldn't tell the live ones

317  
00:13:29,180 --> 00:13:31,075  
from the dead ones.

318  
00:13:31,075 --> 00:13:32,200  
That's how bad they looked.

319  
00:13:32,200 --> 00:13:35,360

320  
00:13:35,360 --> 00:13:38,910  
Before you went in there, had  
you heard about that at all?

321  
00:13:38,910 --> 00:13:39,590  
No.

322  
00:13:39,590 --> 00:13:40,311  
I hadn't.

323  
00:13:40,311 --> 00:13:43,020

324  
00:13:43,020 --> 00:13:45,600  
They just said we were going  
to a concentration camp.

325  
00:13:45,600 --> 00:13:48,840  
The colonel said, you can  
go or you don't have to go.

326  
00:13:48,840 --> 00:13:51,280  
It's up to you,  
whatever you want to do.

327  
00:13:51,280 --> 00:13:53,843  
Did he tell you what it  
was going to be like?

328  
00:13:53,843 --> 00:13:55,010  
If he did, I don't remember.

329  
00:13:55,010 --> 00:14:00,070

330  
00:14:00,070 --> 00:14:01,720  
Were you shocked  
when you got there?

331  
00:14:01,720 --> 00:14:02,380  
Oh, sure.

332  
00:14:02,380 --> 00:14:04,473

333  
00:14:04,473 --> 00:14:05,890  
When you don't  
know the difference

334  
00:14:05,890 --> 00:14:12,160  
between a live person and a dead  
one, it's pretty awful, grisly.

335  
00:14:12,160 --> 00:14:20,370

336  
00:14:20,370 --> 00:14:26,450  
When you got out of the  
service, and in your later life,

337  
00:14:26,450 --> 00:14:30,660  
what do you think has been  
the impact of that experience

338  
00:14:30,660 --> 00:14:33,070  
on your life?

339  
00:14:33,070 --> 00:14:37,620  
I remember, I was in Atlanta  
going down to see a friend.

340  
00:14:37,620 --> 00:14:39,510  
And we went to the movies.

341  
00:14:39,510 --> 00:14:41,988  
And there happened to  
be, remember-- well,

342  
00:14:41,988 --> 00:14:42,780  
you don't remember.

343  
00:14:42,780 --> 00:14:45,270  
There was newsreels then.

344  
00:14:45,270 --> 00:14:48,810  
And one of the newsreels  
showed the concentration camp.

345  
00:14:48,810 --> 00:14:51,730  
And a guy behind us said,  
it's all propaganda,

346  
00:14:51,730 --> 00:14:53,850  
that never happened at all.

347  
00:14:53,850 --> 00:14:56,980  
An American guy?

348  
00:14:56,980 --> 00:14:59,573  
And that, you know, that  
disturbed me a little.

349  
00:14:59,573 --> 00:15:01,240  
They had to hold me  
in my seat because I

350  
00:15:01,240 --> 00:15:04,660  
was ready to get up  
and punch a person.

351  
00:15:04,660 --> 00:15:07,580  
And then even now, you hear  
people say it didn't happen,

352  
00:15:07,580 --> 00:15:08,700

but it did.

353  
00:15:08,700 --> 00:15:14,000

354  
00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:14,710  
Very much so.

355  
00:15:14,710 --> 00:15:17,770

356  
00:15:17,770 --> 00:15:20,320  
Do you have family members?

357  
00:15:20,320 --> 00:15:21,280  
Do they ask?

358  
00:15:21,280 --> 00:15:25,840  
I have one son in the Air  
Force, and one son the Army,

359  
00:15:25,840 --> 00:15:29,020  
and one son is working for  
Uncle Sam as a park ranger.

360  
00:15:29,020 --> 00:15:32,740  
He was in the Air  
Force in Vietnam.

361  
00:15:32,740 --> 00:15:35,530  
Do they ask you about  
your experience a lot?

362  
00:15:35,530 --> 00:15:39,910  
Well, they've seen my  
pictures and what have you.

363  
00:15:39,910 --> 00:15:42,500  
You took a lot of pictures  
while you were there?

364  
00:15:42,500 --> 00:15:44,300

I had a lot, real lot.

365

00:15:44,300 --> 00:15:46,410

And somebody said, well,  
I'll print them for you.

366

00:15:46,410 --> 00:15:48,770

I'll have them printed for you.

367

00:15:48,770 --> 00:15:51,290

I never saw them.

368

00:15:51,290 --> 00:15:53,540

I lost about six rolls of 36--

369

00:15:53,540 --> 00:15:56,060

35 millimeter film.

370

00:15:56,060 --> 00:15:58,090

Before you got back?

371

00:15:58,090 --> 00:16:00,550

Yeah.

372

00:16:00,550 --> 00:16:03,070

I had to go on an  
inspection trip in France.

373

00:16:03,070 --> 00:16:06,700

While they were setting up the  
hospital getting things going,

374

00:16:06,700 --> 00:16:09,640

I went on an inspection  
trip with two or three

375

00:16:09,640 --> 00:16:11,860

other officers.

376

00:16:11,860 --> 00:16:14,602

And I took a lot  
of pictures then,

377  
00:16:14,602 --> 00:16:16,810  
all through Germany, all  
the devastation that was on.

378  
00:16:16,810 --> 00:16:18,970  
That was before  
the war was over.

379  
00:16:18,970 --> 00:16:24,990  
As a matter of fact, I was  
in the hospital in Brussels.

380  
00:16:24,990 --> 00:16:27,990  
What was the name of the place?

381  
00:16:27,990 --> 00:16:28,800  
Can't remember now.

382  
00:16:28,800 --> 00:16:30,810  
But I'm sitting down to  
eat in this dining room.

383  
00:16:30,810 --> 00:16:33,150  
Woman next to me said,  
that you are Margaret Wood?

384  
00:16:33,150 --> 00:16:33,720  
Yes.

385  
00:16:33,720 --> 00:16:35,460  
She was one of my  
teachers in school.

386  
00:16:35,460 --> 00:16:38,640  
She was a Red Cross worker.

387  
00:16:38,640 --> 00:16:40,590  
Another time in  
France, walking down

388  
00:16:40,590 --> 00:16:45,360



the street, a boy I went  
to school with was there.

389  
00:16:45,360 --> 00:16:46,488  
Twice I ran into people.

390  
00:16:46,488 --> 00:16:47,280  
I mean three times.

391  
00:16:47,280 --> 00:16:48,000  
Once in England.

392  
00:16:48,000 --> 00:16:52,670

393  
00:16:52,670 --> 00:16:54,680  
When you look back  
on that experience,

394  
00:16:54,680 --> 00:16:59,520  
was it a good experience  
or a hard experience?

395  
00:16:59,520 --> 00:17:00,770  
Or how do you characterize it?

396  
00:17:00,770 --> 00:17:02,050  
It was good and it was hard.

397  
00:17:02,050 --> 00:17:06,200

398  
00:17:06,200 --> 00:17:07,607  
What was good about it?

399  
00:17:07,607 --> 00:17:10,349

400  
00:17:10,349 --> 00:17:13,920  
The things you saw, the people  
you met, the things you did,

401  
00:17:13,920 --> 00:17:15,030  
your experiences.

402  
00:17:15,030 --> 00:17:18,230

403  
00:17:18,230 --> 00:17:21,040  
Your friends.

404  
00:17:21,040 --> 00:17:24,730  
We've all been back  
and forth for years.

405  
00:17:24,730 --> 00:17:27,165  
You've kept in touch  
with a lot of the women

406  
00:17:27,165 --> 00:17:28,040  
that you served with?

407  
00:17:28,040 --> 00:17:33,340

408  
00:17:33,340 --> 00:17:36,340  
When you say the  
things you saw--

409  
00:17:36,340 --> 00:17:38,200  
one of the good things  
about your experience

410  
00:17:38,200 --> 00:17:40,208  
was the things you saw.

411  
00:17:40,208 --> 00:17:41,250  
What do you mean by that?

412  
00:17:41,250 --> 00:17:46,200

413  
00:17:46,200 --> 00:17:48,750

Maybe other cultures  
and the way other people

414  
00:17:48,750 --> 00:17:52,440  
live, and the things that we  
have that they don't have,

415  
00:17:52,440 --> 00:17:55,305  
that type of thing.

416  
00:17:55,305 --> 00:17:56,930  
The beautiful buildings  
that were left,

417  
00:17:56,930 --> 00:18:00,080  
the beautiful  
cathedrals that you saw.

418  
00:18:00,080 --> 00:18:03,860  
I remember going to mass--  
and this was back in Africa.

419  
00:18:03,860 --> 00:18:06,502  
We went into mass  
and we sat down.

420  
00:18:06,502 --> 00:18:08,335  
But you don't do that  
because everybody just

421  
00:18:08,335 --> 00:18:08,930  
has their own pew.

422  
00:18:08,930 --> 00:18:10,425  
Their own chair, they  
bring their own chair,

423  
00:18:10,425 --> 00:18:12,226  
and their own kneeling  
bench, and so I

424  
00:18:12,226 --> 00:18:13,450  
was in somebody else's seat.

425  
00:18:13,450 --> 00:18:14,242  
They just sort of--

426  
00:18:14,242 --> 00:18:16,670

427  
00:18:16,670 --> 00:18:17,920  
it wasn't the same in England.

428  
00:18:17,920 --> 00:18:21,710

429  
00:18:21,710 --> 00:18:25,550  
I don't remember going to church  
in any place else except there.

430  
00:18:25,550 --> 00:18:27,582  
We went in churches and  
saw the cathedrals, some

431  
00:18:27,582 --> 00:18:28,790  
of the cathedrals and things.

432  
00:18:28,790 --> 00:18:30,470  
Those were beautiful things.

433  
00:18:30,470 --> 00:18:33,260  
Did they hold  
services every week?

434  
00:18:33,260 --> 00:18:35,277  
No.

435  
00:18:35,277 --> 00:18:36,360  
We didn't have a chaplain.

436  
00:18:36,360 --> 00:18:37,250  
Oh, you didn't.

437  
00:18:37,250 --> 00:18:38,390

Not a Catholic chaplain.

438

00:18:38,390 --> 00:18:40,610

We had the Protestant minister.

439

00:18:40,610 --> 00:18:48,530

And if I remember correctly,  
they had a mass in Gusen

440

00:18:48,530 --> 00:18:51,350

that they hadn't  
had one in years.

441

00:18:51,350 --> 00:18:52,730

And everybody went that could.

442

00:18:52,730 --> 00:18:56,168

All the inmates went.

443

00:18:56,168 --> 00:18:57,710

Never can think of  
what to call them.

444

00:18:57,710 --> 00:19:01,340

445

00:19:01,340 --> 00:19:03,160

Patients or survivors.

446

00:19:03,160 --> 00:19:10,470

447

00:19:10,470 --> 00:19:12,780

Is there anything  
you want to say?

448

00:19:12,780 --> 00:19:14,970

I can't think of anything.

449

00:19:14,970 --> 00:19:20,160

What do your kids ask you  
about from that period?

450  
00:19:20,160 --> 00:19:21,923  
Well, they look back  
at my scrapbook,

451  
00:19:21,923 --> 00:19:24,090  
and the pictures I have in  
the scrapbook, and things

452  
00:19:24,090 --> 00:19:25,372  
like that.

453  
00:19:25,372 --> 00:19:31,540  
Ma, did you look like  
this 50 years ago?

454  
00:19:31,540 --> 00:19:33,320  
Hard to think you  
changed that much.

455  
00:19:33,320 --> 00:19:37,270

456  
00:19:37,270 --> 00:19:40,960  
I think the only person  
hasn't changed is Sherry.

457  
00:19:40,960 --> 00:19:42,160  
I would know her any place.

458  
00:19:42,160 --> 00:19:45,970  
But the rest-- oh,  
maybe Doddie, too.

459  
00:19:45,970 --> 00:19:46,720  
And Feldhusen.

460  
00:19:46,720 --> 00:19:47,470  
The three of them.

461  
00:19:47,470 --> 00:19:52,270  
The rest, you don't recognize.

462  
00:19:52,270 --> 00:19:53,680  
Time does strange things.

463  
00:19:53,680 --> 00:19:56,410  
Doesn't it?

464  
00:19:56,410 --> 00:19:57,320  
Good.

465  
00:19:57,320 --> 00:19:57,880  
OK.

466  
00:19:57,880 --> 00:19:58,420  
Great.

467  
00:19:58,420 --> 00:19:58,920  
Good.

468  
00:19:58,920 --> 00:20:03,022

469  
00:20:03,022 --> 00:20:09,600  
Oh, this is the end of the tape  
one, side B. Has been Mary M.

470  
00:20:09,600 --> 00:20:10,635  
Wood.

471  
00:20:10,635 --> 00:20:12,010  
You want the serial  
number there?

472  
00:20:12,010 --> 00:20:13,660  
Do you take the  
serial number or no?

473  
00:20:13,660 --> 00:20:15,460  
10, seven, two, three,  
four, six, three.

474

00:20:15,460 --> 00:20:17,793  
Don't ask me my social security  
number, but that I know.

475  
00:20:17,793 --> 00:20:19,180  
Oh, you remember that one.

476  
00:20:19,180 --> 00:20:20,680  
Well, you had to  
write it every time

477  
00:20:20,680 --> 00:20:22,900  
you wrote a letter or anything.

478  
00:20:22,900 --> 00:20:28,300  
This is July 14, 1995,  
West Park, New York.

479  
00:20:28,300 --> 00:20:32,000