

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

BERNARD S. HARMAN

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Philip G. Solomon
Date: September 12, 1995

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Gratz College
Melrose Park, PA 19027

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BERNARD S. HARMAN [I-I-1]

BH - Bernard S. Harman [interviewee]

PS - Philip G. Solomon [interviewer]

JF - Josey G. Fisher

Date: September 12, 1995

Tape one, side one:

PS: Philip Solomon, interviewing Mr. Bernard S. Harman, for the Holocaust Oral History Archive of Gratz College. The date is September 12, 1995. Mr. Harman, can you tell me when you entered the armed service of the United States, the approximate date?

BH: November of 1941.

PS: Did you enter the Army or Air Force or...

BH: I enlisted in the Army Air Force.

PS: Right. And you were sent then for training, flight school, or?

BH: I was sent to Atlantic City for my basic training. And in Atlantic City I took my test, and they sent me from Atlantic City to radio school in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. That was the category they put me in.

PS: And you then became a radio operator for flight service?

BH: I attended radio school in Sioux Falls for about six months, and then I graduated as a radio operator and then volunteered to go into gunnery school so I could participate in B-17 flying in bombers. And I went, I got sent to Las Vegas, Nevada, for gunnery school, which lasted for eight weeks. After gunnery school, then I was sent to Ephrata, Washington. No, I was sent to Salt Lake City, where I was sent to Ephrata, Washington and put on my B-17 crew. Do you want me to keep going?

PS: Well, was that a usual combination, radio and gunnery? Or navigator/gunner? Was it usually a combination like that?

BH: Well...

PS: With, say with gunnery, would it be either...

BH: The radio operator who actually operated the radio is on the ship, and they wanted the flying experience. So you had to become a gunner to get flying experience in an airplane. Because that was the first time I ever went up in an airplane. I was never up in an airplane before, until I got to Las Vegas, Nevada, which at that time was a small little town of nothing.

PS: You volunteered to go into the Air Force?

BH: Into the Air Force, and also into gunnery, yeah.

PS: And had never been in a plane, and it was war time.

BH: That's right.

PS: That took a lot of guts. Then your training continued until what date, before you, what, became actively involved in combat?

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BH: No, well, after I graduated, I told you, after I graduated from gunnery school, I was sent up to Salt Lake City, and then from Salt Lake City I was sent to Ephrata, Washington, where I met my permanent crew members for the first time, and also my pilot, my navigator, my bombardier, and my co-pilot.

PS: And what kind of plane...

BH: And we became a crew. That was in the, in the B-17.

PS: The B-17. Also known as the Flying Fortress.

BH: Right, right. And we flew into Ephrata. Well, I guess we got together in Ephrata, Washington for about six or seven weeks, that we flew together to get used to each other, and also to get used to flying. And after six or seven weeks we were told we were to go overseas, and we got a furlough to go home.

PS: It was still the same crew?

BH: That was my permanent crew.

PS: Yeah, permanent crew.

BH: The ten of us.

PS: Was that crew and plane part of a squadron?

BH: Not at that time.

PS: Not at that time.

BH: Not at that time.

PS: It was to later be assigned to a group.

BH: That's right.

PS: Now, when you finished your flight training, did the crew in its entirety volunteer to go overseas? Is that the way...

BH: None of us volunteered.

PS: Oh.

BH: We were just told we were going overseas.

PS: Oh you were, I thought you said you had asked to go.

BH: No, I volunteered at the beginning.

PS: Yeah, right. And this...

BH: [unclear] the crew...

PS: At what, what date was this in, Bernie?

BH: Well that must have been in '42, I imagine. I don't know the exact date. But it was after we got our...

PS: It was well after Pearl Harbor. We were actively...

BH: Oh yeah.

PS: ...in the war at that time.

BH: Yeah.

PS: Prior to the invasion of...

BH: Of Germany.

PS: Oh, oh.

BH: Way before.

PS: Way before.

BH: Yeah, way before that.

PS: The invasion was June, 1944.

BH: Yeah, we went in '42. And when we got our shipping orders that we were going overseas, I got a furlough for ten days. We were in Washington state at the time. And I think I came home by train because I couldn't get any airplanes at that time. And it took me three days to get home and three days to get back. So actually, I...

PS: And that was all part of your ten days?

BH: Ten-day furlough. And I actually had four days at home with my friends and my relatives, my family. And I didn't tell them I was going overseas. But I knew when I went back that we were starting to. So anyway when I went back to Ephrata, and from there we started to hedge-hop. What they call by hedge-hop, we'd go into town, a different town, we'd fly from Ephrata to Pendleton, Oregon stay at the base maybe three or four days, then fly to Grand Rapids, Nebraska, to another Air Force base. We called that hedge-hopping, from state to state or from airport to airport, airfield to airfield, until we got all the way across to Bangor, Maine, which may have been maybe a month later. And then from Bangor we went up to Newfoundland, up to Gander Bay. And then we flew B-17s out from Gander Bay straight over to Prestwick, Scotland.

PS: During this period your crew was a permanent, probably a...

BH: A permanent crew.

PS: Yeah. And all this was with the permanent crew.

BH: With the 10, eh, 9 fellow members.

PS: And all in a B-17.

BH: All in a B-17. Yes, sir.

PS: Was it necessarily the plane that you were going to go into combat with?

BH: No, no. We just, we'd fly a different plane when we got into an airfield.

PS: You were ferrying?

BH: It was like ferrying a plane around.

PS: Yeah, yeah. I see. Then you became part of flight training in England, out of...

BH: Well after we, after we flew over from Gander Bay, we flew right over to Prestwick, Scotland. And they had that big air base over there. And we landed on our ship there, with hundreds and hundreds of ships. That was like a boarding place for the B-17s so that when they needed them in England, they'd get a call to fly them in. But we got off and left our ship there. Also there must have been maybe 200 or 300 other ships flying in with us at that time. And we all landed. We got on a train into England, from Prestwick, Scotland. And from there we went into our permanent base in England, with the 388 Bomb group. And we got stationed in our bunk. We had a bunk. And from there we started getting training in England.

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PS: Yeah. And this was to be your permanent base?

BH: At that time, yeah.

PS: Yeah.

BH: Yeah.

PS: Bernie, your...

BH: My [unclear] you want me to go?

PS: Yeah, sure.

BH: On the last statement I made about a bunk...

PS: Right.

BH: Well that was actually our little, we had a hut. And actually our bunks were in the hut. They had six huts, eh, six beds in the hut. And the six enlisted men were in that hut. That was our permanent home while we were in England, flying together.

PS: Yeah. Now during that period, Bernie, were there--you were not making any combat, there were no combat missions?

BH: Not for us. There were no...

PS: No?

BH: Not for us. From the same...

PS: From the same base?

BH: The squadron was making bombing trips, but we were in training.

PS: Yeah.

BH: When I say training, we went up around the base. We flew, we'd practice our guns, shooting the guns, and we also took some refresher courses about Germany. You know, different places in Germany we may be bombing, and different instructions they gave us at the time. And I would say we were there about four or five weeks before we actually went on our first bombing trip.

PS: So you did within four or five weeks get into actual combat bombing missions?

BH: No, no, not before five weeks.

PS: Oh, oh. Why?

BH: We were training in the camp.

PS: Yeah.

BH: Just around the camp we flew. And we took individual lessons on, about Germany. We had big maps. They showed us different pictures of Germany, different places we'd want to hid [hide] for...

JF: Excuse me, how about parachuting? [unclear]

BH: And actually we didn't go into our first bombing session until like four or five weeks later when we made our first bomb run.

PS: Yeah. During, getting away from the actual flying experience and training for just a moment, Bernie. During this period, of course the war was going on and what later became known as the Holocaust--which we didn't know too much of at that time--but

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at that time, Bernie, were you, did you hear anything at all of German atrocities against the Jewish people, against political enemies and Gypsies and so forth?

BH: Not at that time, no.

PS: You didn't hear anything at all about...

BH: Not at that time.

PS: ...concentration camps?

BH: Not at that time.

PS: You knew nothing of gas chambers, crematoria?

BH: Not at that time.

PS: Okay. Now getting into your flying experiences. You were on a number-- eventually you were shot, we're interviewing you, Bernie, for one thing, as a prisoner of war. Now, before you were captured you had many, many missions, I believe, correct?

BH: We only had, we, well we had missions, yeah. We had about seven missions.

PS: How many?

BH: Seven.

PS: Seven? Up until you were shot.

BH: We were shot down.

PS: And those missions were over?

BH: Over France, then into Germany.

PS: Yeah. France at that time of course was...

BH: Was Germany, yeah.

PS: ...German-occupied.

BH: We were mostly within France and Germany, the outskirts of Germany.

PS: Now during that period also, you were, when you started to go on flight combat missions, you were flying from the same air base.

BH: Oh yeah, yes sir.

PS: During the period that you were there, Bernie, did you experience any German bombings? The Germans certainly were, at that time the Germans were still pretty much in command of the air, were they not?

BH: They were in command, we heard, we had some raid there and I remember, and I remember that because I used to go into town.

PS: Yeah.

BH: See, we were allowed to go into town every fourth day. We had what they called three days on and one day off. So the fourth day I'd go into town. And while we were in town we went through quite a few bombings, in Cambridge and so-called Hemel Hempstead. That had to do with towns near us.

PS: This was in southern England? When I say southern England...

BH: I don't really know if it was southern. I guess it was. I guess it was southern England.

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PS: I think they, were you very far from London?
BH: Yeah, we were pretty far away, close to Cambridge.
PS: At that time the Germans were doing a tremendous amount of bombing, weren't they?
BH: Oh they were bombing. Oh we were, everything was blacked out [unclear].
PS: Yeah, yeah.
BH: Everything was blacked out. We went out at night when we were in town, and you didn't know who you were talking to.
PS: So that one point they started to hit very, very heavily the British and American air bases.
BH: Well, that might have been after I got shot down.
PS: Yeah, it probably was.
BH: See that might have occurred after I got shot down.
PS: Oh, okay. Your targets mostly were, do you remember? The seven [unclear].
BH: I remember, I remember Emden.¹ Schweinberg I remember, because that's where I got shot down.
PS: Okay. Now you were flying, were there any other--you are Jewish, right?
BH: Yeah. I'm Irish by blood.
PS: You carried a, your dog tag.
BH: Well, yeah, my [unclear].
PS: It had the letter "H."
BH: "H," yes.
PS: Of course for Hebrew.
BH: Right.
PS: Were there any other Jewish pilots, fliers, in your crew? Any other Jews in your crew?
BH: No. Very, very, very few. I don't think I met, maybe two. Because all [unclear].
PS: Was there anything said to you about disposing of your dog tag if shot down and captured alive?
BH: I don't think it was mentioned. You just thought about it.
PS: Yeah.
BH: I would thought, after I was in a couple raids, and I realized what was going on, I said to myself, "Why, if anything happens, I'm getting rid of them tags." Because then I started to hear about the Germans, what they were doing to prisoners and the Jewish prisoners.

¹Mr. Harman identifies Emden, later in the interview, as being near Frankfurt, Germany.

PS: Although you didn't hear about concentration camps, you did know of their treatment of Jewish...

BH: Yeah, I didn't hear too much about concentration camps.

PS: Okay, getting up to then the point of your being shot down and captured, Bernie. Do you want to go into that a bit, to relate the experience?

BH: Well, first of all I'll tell you this. Let's say all of my training was a joy ride. What do I mean by that? We were flying in the States, and we flew from city to city in America, and naturally it was a joy ride. There were no bullets or anything being shot at you at all. We didn't realize what we were going into. And after we got down to England and we went up on our first mission and the bullets started coming at us and the flack, then we realized that, what was happening. And then we started seeing airplanes going down and parachutes coming out and the ships going down. And then we said to ourselves, "Boy, what do you call this?" And we were glad to get back to the base. And then our feelings were that some of the guys didn't come back; we could be next. You know? So what we'd do, we'd run into town and try to enjoy ourselves the best we could, and then we'd come back and we'd fly again. And every mission was the same way. You just got, I wouldn't say, I mean you know I think we were scared. All of us were scared and we didn't want to get shot down. And it's a funny feeling.

PS: I guess you did see every day flights that left the air, the field, and on the return there were not as many...

BH: Yeah, what happened there, naturally we'd take off, and I'd say after about our second or third flight, when we'd come back, after we flew, I'd, let's say that we flew around 17 hours by the way. We used to take one about 3:00 in the morning and then we'd come back like 7:00 at night, you know? And if the crew was shot down, let's say in the next hut over, and they didn't come back, by that same night there was another new crew in there to replace him for the next day bombing. So it got to be a, not a habit but a, just a ritual that some guys ain't coming back, see?

PS: How many B-17s were in a, what would you call it, a flight group?

BH: A squadron.

PS: A squadron.

BH: Well, I'd say, five, four, about twenty. But then you formed a group.

PS: Yeah.

BH: See there was 20 in a squadron. Then when you got up, upstairs, you'd form a group, a bomb group. And that might be like five or six squadrons. And you'd go in to bomb all at the same time. The navigator and the pilot got you through while you take the ship up.

PS: Now we're talking about a period of time prior to the Allied invasion of the continent.

BH: Oh yeah.

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PS: So you were flying, from the time you left England, across the Channel, you were flying over enemy-held territory.

BH: Absolutely.

PS: You were over the enemy...

BH: Enemy territory all the time.

PS: Practically the entire, regardless of how short or long your flights were, they were all really, after the first few minutes over England before you hit the coast.

BH: Yeah, now, now, what occurred there, we had at the time the P-38 fighters. And at that time their range was just to go with the Channel into France. So they would accompany us all the way over to France. They crossed the Channel, till we hit France, and then they would turn back.

PS: Then you were on your own.

BH: And after that we were on our own.

PS: No fighter protection at all?

BH: None even. Nothing. We just went in and that was it.

PS: And at that time the Germans were still very, very strong. And in fact at that time I believe they still had pretty much control of the air.

BH: At that time the Germans were winning the war.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And England, Mr. Winston Churchill was ready to evacuate England at that time. And when the worst, I think it was the worst time of the war at that time, at that period.

PS: This was prior to the evacuation of Dunkirk, do you recall?

BH: No, this was before that.

PS: Before?

BH: Yeah, this was before Dunkirk.

PS: Before Dunkirk, yeah.

BH: This was before that.

PS: Were you captured, shot down, prior to the German offensive that caused the British evacuation at Dunkirk? I can't recall the date.

BH: No, I don't think. Now I know what happened on that day. I still remember that day. We got called into the briefing room. We had what they called a big briefing, and all the squadrons that were going up would be in the big room. And there was a big map up on the wall, maybe, well, I would say roughly, maybe 12 yards long. A big map of the continent. And at that briefing the commanding officer would tell you what the target was for the day. He'd say, "Fellows, we're going to hit Schweinberg today." That was the target for that day, October the 14th, 1943. And at that time that was the most protective part of Germany. It was in the Ruhr Valley, where all the ball bearing plants were.

PS: The industrial heart.

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BH: Everything was in that valley. And they told us when we took off, he said, "Ninety percent of you aren't going to come back from this raid. But it's going to shorten the war." And at that time you could feel, you could feel the tremor and emotion in us at that time. We were all scared. You know, these kids. And anyway, we took off, at 3:00 in the morning, and we headed out. And we got all the way across the Channel. We got into France. Nothing, we didn't feel anything, till we hit the, right before the bombing. We hit two-, we went all the way into Germany with nothing. No flack. No guns. No fighters, nothing. And as soon as we got into our bomb run, as soon as we started to go into the bomb runs, to drop our bombs, all hell broke loose. Fighters came out like ants from the sky. They just, in and out, in and out. Flack came out. Ships started to go down. And we went into our bomb run, I still remember. And during the bomb run, the pilot pulled back. He said one, one engine had been knocked out. And he still went in, and we dropped our bombs and we turned around and we started to head back to our base. On the way back, we started to get hit again. And one time [unclear] we got two engines out. Then all of a sudden you'd feel flack coming all over, you see fighters all over. And in the turmoil, the pilot finally hollered, "Everybody get into ditching procedure; we're going to crash land." Now ditching procedure is you get in the radio room and one fellow puts his feet against, up the wall. The second fellow puts his feet around him, and the third fellow props himself against the other wall so when you hit you've got a little stability. The other three, the waist gunners, the two in the back, they just stayed in their position. And the tail gunner was in his position. He couldn't move. And the ball gunner was in his position. Anyway, you could feel the ship going down and while you're going down you're just thinking, everything comes to you.

PS: There's no, sort of...

BH: No, everything starts coming back to you.

PS: No sort of jumping?

BH: Well we couldn't jump there. We couldn't jump. It was going into a spin.

PS: Oh, oh.

BH: We were going down, like you see it in the movies pictures. And, while you're going down, well all you do is, everything, your life passes in front of you. Actually you don't know, you just see everything pass in front of you. Your mother, your father. Your relatives. [weeping]

PS: But...

BH: Then finally, we could feel that it jolt; we hit the ground.

PS: It hit the ground level, fairly level?

BH: Yeah, well we hit a field, we were on a farm.

PS: You couldn't see, could you?

BH: The only one who could see was the pilot, the co-pilot. And then finally we felt the ship hit the ground. And it felt like it slid. And then we stopped, and Craig was in front of me. All of a sudden [unclear] my arm was on him. And we stopped.

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PS: Who was hit?

BH: Craig was the engineer.

PS: Oh.

BH: He was sitting in front of me, and I had my legs wrapped around him. And then I remember that the pilot, [unclear], "Get out of the ship! Get out of the ship!" So we started to run, and we pulled Craig down from the ship, because he had legs, both of his legs here. And I think he had them amputated. And I had my ankle broken. But we ran away from the ship and the next thing we knew the Germans were on us, with a gun, you know.

PS: Ground troops.

BH: Ground troops, whatever they were. By the time we ran away...

PS: Do you recall, Bernie, about, whereabouts this was? It was in Germany, [unclear]

BH: It was right outside of Schweinberg.

PS: Oh.

BH: It was Schweinberg, Germany. We had, well we must have been near, I would say that we were near Frankfurt. When we were coming back, we were coming back from Frank-, we came off the bomb run. And I would say we were somewhere near Frankfurt. Now the reason I say that is because we went from Frankfurt. But anyway, after they captured us, they put the guns on us and they captured us. And they took us to a camp, maybe a couple miles from there, like with a, I guess a military base. But we were actually all in a fog for [unclear]. Like in a dream. And I do remember a German officer questioned me, took me in a room and he wanted to give me a cigarette. He talked very good English. And they started in, "Where are you from, and what were you bombing? What's your name," and all that, you know. And different questions. I only gave him my name and my serial number, and my dog tag. That's all I gave him. But they did that to all of us, individually. And the ones they kept in solitary confinement for about five or six days.

PS: At what point did you throw your dog tags?

BH: Oh, I guess while we were coming down from the ship.

PS: Oh, oh.

BH: I even don't know how we did it, just, it seemed like when we were going down in the ship I just [unclear] took them and threw them away.

PS: Did, were you questioned about the fact that you were missing your dog tags?

BH: No, no.

PS: They didn't...

BH: No, they didn't ask me. All they asked me is what I was and I said, "I'm American." And after that it was it. And luckily I don't look Jewish. Luckily.

PS: Right.

BH: But if you look Jewish, they took you for Jewish. See that's why I say I have a couple of friends of mine [unclear] they look Jewish and...

PS: At that point your initial interrogation, was there anything at all said about religion or did you see...

BH: With the Germans?

PS: With the Germans.

BH: No.

PS: About, this was of course the...

BH: No, no point made about religion.

PS: Initial [unclear].

BH: No.

PS: Initial processing.

BH: All they said, "What are you?" And I said, "American," and that was it.

PS: Then from there, Bernie, you were...

BH: Well, from there...

PS: They kept you in a group? The...

BH: Well, there was ten of us there, and they had rooms.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And they interrogated all of us. And I would say we were there about six or seven days. Don't forget this is a long time ago; it's a dilemma to a point. And the next thing I knew [unclear]. We had very little to eat, by the way, also. Very little. We existed like we're in a, in a utopia. I don't know, we were [unclear], you know?

PS: Yeah.

BH: Food didn't even worry, we didn't even think about eating.

PS: Were you house-billeted in a, was it something of a prison that...

BH: Well, I wouldn't say, no, it was a base, a military base.

PS: Oh.

BH: And the SS put us in a, a room like this, I'd say, and put us in there, dark, no lights, nothing like that. And after about six or seven days they got the ten of us together and they put us on a box car. And they told us we're going to go to our prison camps.

PS: Now what time of year was this?

BH: This must have been in, the middle of October the 14th. It must have been October. Real, yeah, October or November when the...

PS: Yeah.

BH: Well I got shot down October the 14th. So I would say five or six weeks later. So it would be November of '43. They told us, they put us in the boxcar and said, "We're going to get you to the prison camp." But they didn't tell you what prison camp. So we just sat in the boxcar, hundreds and hundreds of prisoners, besides our crew. They put you in like cattle.

PS: All Air Force, do you know?

BH: All Air Force. No window, nothing, just three in the box car, and locked you in there, and then you started riding. So the next thing we knew we wound up in Frankfurt, Germany, which we didn't know at the time till we got out. And the train stopped. On the way the only thing they gave us was water. Nothing else, just water. And...

PS: Now how long were you in that boxcar in transit before they...

BH: Well I would say two or three days [unclear].

PS: Do you remember any stop for...

BH: I know we stopped, we stopped for water. They had a stop and they had that big, big wooden buckets full of water and you'd go and to get a drink of water.

PS: But no food.

BH: No food, nothing. No food at all. And then finally we wound up, we found out we were heading for Frankfurt, Germany. Why, we didn't know. But then we got off at Frankfurt, the ten, we were still together, the ten of us, plus our rear man. But our ten naturally, we knew each other and we stayed together. And we had [unclear] German guards around us. And we still had to march through Frankfurt, to go to the Frankfurt Railroad station. It was a very big station, whether you know it or not. And we finally would get into the station. There was multitudes of people there. Thousands and thousands of people were there, hollering Jew-haters and murderers and, "We want to kill you," you know? And they start throwing the stones, and other things at us. And we thought it was the end. And we had these guards around us, luckily. Finally they got us up to the train, and the train was so full they had them on top of the train, on the sides of the train. Everything was full in, even the car. So there was no room to put us. So finally the German guards, a couple of them jumped on the train, and they had like compartments in there. It was something like this in the train. Well, it would seat six or seven people. They managed to, first the compartment. And they ordered all the Germans off. And they got them off. And finally we got into the train with all the guards around us. And they shoved us into this compartment so we wouldn't get killed, see? So we stayed in there with the guards. The guards they went from, they wouldn't, some of them didn't get near us. And we were afraid we were going to get killed. And finally the train drove off.

PS: Now the people, Bernie, in the station were just transient?

BH: Yeah, they were civilians.

PS: Civilians, ordinary people.

BH: Right.

PS: Business people?

BH: Yeah, business people, plain working people.

PS: And they showed tremendous hatred?

BH: Oh, awful hatred. My God, we thought it was the end. Curses, swearing, hollering, "Rosenfeld." They called Roosevelt, "Rosenfeld." Yeah, you know, that he was Jewish.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And like I said, we were just thinking this was the end, you know, with all this jeering and all going on.

PS: So the German guards...

BH: Oh actually helped us out.

PS: Really were your protectors at this time.

BH: Absolutely, yeah. So then from there the, after we got the train moving and they told us we were going to go to Krems, Austria, in a camp.

PS: It's a long trip.

BH: It was. Well anyway we drove it over there. I don't know how long, actually, but I would say another few days.

PS: It must have, yeah. It had to be quite a few days.

BH: Yeah, because time didn't mean nothing to us, you know. I mean it was, time just went. We didn't know anything about time.

PS: Did the train make many stops?

BH: No, we went straight through pretty good. Pretty good. But anyway, we pulled in, I remember we was pulled into this town. We didn't know it was Krems then. We pulled in to this dark area and it was raining cats and dogs, pouring. And finally the train stopped and they ordered all of us down out of the train. We had about, I don't know, I'd say maybe a few hundred guys. I don't know how many were in there.

PS: Did it make many stops from the time you left Frankfurt?

BH: Well, it made stops, just to let people off. A lot of people got off.

PS: Oh, it was a pa-, you were...

BH: It was one of the...

PS: Boxcars within a passenger...

BH: No, that wasn't a boxcar then.

PS: Oh, you were...

BH: We were on the train.

PS: Oh, oh. And there were...

BH: [unclear] in there.

PS: All, also passengers?

BH: Yeah. They were on the train.

PS: Civilian passengers.

BH: Yeah. So, when they left their [unclear], by the time we got to where we were going, we were practically the only ones on the train, see? So I don't know how many prisoners it was. It must have been quite a few hundred prisoners on that train. It was in Krems, Austria. Well anyway when we stopped it was pouring. It was raining so hard you couldn't believe it. Oh, awful, awful. And they stopped the train, and they made all of us get out in the rain, you know, and...

PS: During the trip, Bernie, from Frankfurt to Austria, were there, was there food at that time?

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BH: I don't remember any food at all.

PS: Now there was at least what, two or three days?

BH: Easy, easy. Like, see, a lot of it is a dream now to me, you know? But there was no, I don't have any recollection of food. The only thing they might have given us was bread maybe, maybe. But I don't even remember that. But after we got off they landed some-

Tape one, side two:

PS: This is tape one, side two, Philip Solomon, continuing the interview with Bernard Harman. To continue, we were speaking about your arrival in Austria, and the train being transported.

BH: My last statement, we got off the train, in the rain. It was pouring cats and dogs. It was a real heavy, heavy rain. And it was muddy, it was like in the farmland. There was mud and everything on the ground. And we still had the same clothes that we were shot down in. We never changed clothes or anything.

PS: Yeah, I was just going to ask you about whether you had been given...

BH: No, we never changed clothes. We had the same clothes that we were shot down in, all the time that they had us there.

PS: Well, let me ask you this, Bernie. Up until this point, had you been processed as a prisoner? By "processed," I mean, was there any interrogation?

BH: Well at the beginning I mentioned that, yeah, with the...

PS: Yeah, well would you call that any kind of...

BH: Briefing.

PS: Intense interrogation?

BH: No, that was the only one.

PS: Make, they made no demands on you for information or...

BH: Well, they asked us questions but we refused to answer.

PS: And they did not press...

BH: They did not press it, no.

PS: For the answers?

BH: They offered us cigarettes. They were very hospitable and very friendly. The one officer, yeah an officer was on, there was only one officer. And he was well-groomed in English. He talked English better than I did. And they were pretty diplomatic. "Hey, do you want a cigarette? Do you want something to eat?" Or something, you know.

PS: So you would say that up to this point, which was then, what, about two weeks into your capture?

BH: Well it was roughly four weeks or so, I guess three or four weeks.

PS: So those four weeks, Bernie. Would you say that the Germans were adhering reasonably well to the agreement of the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war?

BH: Yeah, except for the food and the...

PS: Yeah.

BH: Eating thing, yeah.

PS: Oh. So you arrived and you were on your way to the...

BH: Now, at the time, I didn't mention to you, I, when I crashed, when we crashed I broke my ankle, I, on my left leg. And we had what they called the Air Force

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boot. Now, the boot was on my foot, and the, it got in there so tight it just spread. My foot swelled up and I couldn't get my boot off. That's how tight it was. So I started to walk up the road with the rest of these prisoners. You know, we just--when we got off the train, a German officer made a speech. He said, "Look, we've got about two or three miles to go up the road. You're going to have to walk there before you get to your prison camp." So, I started to walk and then one of my fellow, one of the fellow fliers saw I was limping and tried to help me. But luckily it was a truck, a German truck, following us. And the German guard came over to me and put me in the truck, because I couldn't walk.

PS: You were wearing flight boots rather than in...

BH: Flight boots. In my regular flight, my army, Air Force [unclear].

PS: Which were not made for walking.

BH: No, no, it was not that. It swelled. My foot swelled up so much I couldn't get the boot off.

PS: Well weren't they more for warmth than for walking?

BH: Well we were flying over, yeah. Yeah, yeah, it was the flying boots.

PS: Yeah, that's what I mean.

BH: Yeah, they were wool inside.

PS: But did you also carry your regular walking, your regular shoes or combat boots?

BH: No, no. That's all we had for flying.

PS: You always had your flight boots.

BH: Just the flight stuff. Until we got off the ship, you know, when we got home.

PS: Yeah, right.

BH: When we got into our home base. But anyway, we, yeah, only there was hundreds and hundreds of guys walking up to the camp in the mud. And I was in the truck, German truck. And finally, I don't know how many hours they were walking. Finally, I would say maybe an hour-and-a-half, we saw lights in the distance, because it was late at night. It must have been, maybe I would say roughly two or three in the morning. You know? And suddenly we saw lights, you know, coming up. And one of the German guards hollered, "That's it. There it is. There's your camp." And we looked, you know, and then they came up to the camp. And they had a big, big doors that swung open like a regular, you know, they had fence around the camp. And they opened the gates up. And some American prisoners were in there already, and they were waiting for us. You know, an American prison; they were inside already. And as we came up to the gate they started hollering, "Anybody know where Joe Schmoe?" or, "Does anybody know Ralph Green?" You know.

PS: This was all Air Force?

BH: All Air Force.

PS: American only or was it...

BH: Only Americans. Only Americans.

PS: No British.

BH: Only Americans. And we looked and it was so gloomy and we almost died when we saw it, when we saw what it was there, you know, in that ten barracks. And they had the guards, just like you see in the movies. Guard towers all around with machine guns. And they had the gates open up with the German guards with the guns. And we started to march through. And we were very, very haggard, very haggard looking. And, you know, I mean, most of us were in a fog. I should say all of us were in shock. I still say we were in shock.

PS: All in shock. I'd say so.

BH: And finally, after we got into the camp, they start, "You go here into this barracks." And they shove you in this barracks, then they shoved, they had about ten or twelve barracks, until they had all the men in there. And naturally when you got in the barracks, the other American prisoners were in there. So they helped you out to a bit, you know, and they were old veterans. Let's put it that way. And I remember the first night we slept on the floor. We were just so tired we just laid on the floor, just to sleep.

PS: I'm just curious, Bernie, at what point were you separated from your officer crew?

BH: When we were on the train from Frankfurt. When we left Frankfurt, all of us were on that train.

PS: Including your, the officers.

BH: The officers, yeah, the officers. Now when we got off, that was for the, the camp for the enlisted men.

PS: I see.

BH: That was the *Stalag* XVII-B. And the officers stayed on. They were going to *Dulog* [*Luft*, interrogation camp], to *Luft* III [German prisoner of war camp for pilots], somewhere I think it was in Poland, I think, for the officers' camp. So that's when we actually, we got separated, at that time. And we didn't see each other after that until the end of the war. See, but anyway, we got into the barracks and I said before, and we just laid on the floor and fell asleep. We were just pooped.

PS: Yeah.

BH: Fatigued. And the next morning, you know, we start talking with some of the fellows. And somebody brought like, hot water or something. There was no food. Just like hot water and something like that. Maybe, there might have been a cup of coffee. They might have had coffee there. I'm not sure. And then the, they took us out, lined us up outside the next day, and they gave us the dog tag, took a picture check, took a picture of you, gave you a dog tag number, and then they told you which barracks you were going to be in. They, so, luckily the six of us were in the same barracks, the six enlisted men.

PS: But up till this point there had still been nothing more in processing or interrogation?

BH: No.

PS: By processing I mean getting all your identification...

BH: Well, when we came into the camp, maybe it's not coming, after we came, no, up until then, no. After we got into the camp, and we got into our barracks, which happened to be mine with 34-B, so they had an A barracks in front and a B barracks in the back, and they had a little latrine and--not a latrine; they had a washroom in the middle--and the latrine was all the way in the other end. Each barracks had a latrine. I mean every few barracks had a latrine to go to in the back. And there they took us in for interrogation and they took our names and serial number. And they were supposed to contact the Red Cross...

PS: Oh.

BH: ...with your name and serial number. And that's how I imagine the Red Cross got my name. And my folks then found out where I was about a year later.

PS: A year later, you say?

BH: It took them a year to find out where I was. I was missing in action for a year before they found out.

PS: But the Red Cross was notified at what point, Bernie?

BH: Well, it was, I would say, what was it, five or six weeks after we went down.

PS: But I always thought it was the responsibility of the Red Cross to transmit the information of the, regarding the identification of prisoners so that those who had been listed as missing in action could be listed as still living.

BH: Well, the only thing I could say is this, I must have been in a, by the time we were shot down, and by the time I got to my camp, permanent camp, must have been roughly six weeks or several weeks of turmoil, I mean just running around and we didn't know where, didn't know what was happening. Just actually it was an episode, you know, that, unforgettable. And I would say about six or seven weeks later, right after we got into the prison camp, then when we gave the German, the Germans who were in charge, our name and serial number, I would imagine a few months already did pass by. Now I don't know how long it took the Germans to contact the Red Cross with our names and serial numbers. That I don't know.

PS: Well during that period were you permitted to write?

BH: Well not right away. Not right away. We didn't know anything about writing at that time. And I would say--I'm trying to figure when the Red Cross came in there--I think the Red Cross came in about a month or two months later, a representative from the Red Cross. And then they were given, we read orders, rules that we had to follow about writing home and all that.

PS: Oh.

BH: And then we received, we could receive a Red Cross parcel, it was supposed to be one every month. And we could send letters home. Well I think it was one or two a month; I'm not sure now. And then we had a form, a sort of form in there. We had the

regular form from the Germans to write on, and then they would censor it, I guess, or read it. And then my folks would send me a letter back and they could also send me...

PS: But this was about a year after your capture?

BH: Well this happened, no, now, my folks didn't know it till a year later.

PS: Yeah. So you received no mail...

BH: What I didn't, the Red Cross didn't come until about two months, I would say, after I was there. Now, that's when they told me I could write home. Now I believe at that time I wrote a letter home. I believe sometime during then I wrote a letter home. Not knowing I figure they knew.

PS: Yeah.

BH: See now, I don't know if they got my letters. I don't think they got my letters. Now what happened to the letters, I don't know, because the first letter I got from my parents was over a year. And my sisters, my brothers and my parents, it was over a year. And I was there and they told me that they didn't know anything from one year.

PS: So they were not receiving your letters or they would...

BH: That's the way it sounded. Now what happened to the letters I sent, I couldn't tell you. Because I'll tell you when I opened the Red Cross parcels--we would always get one a month--and you were lucky if you got one every six months. What would happen, when it came time for the parcel to come in, the Germans would holler, "They bombed last night."

PS: Yeah?

BH: "And they bombed out the trains, and your parcel was in there."

PS: They tell you in the meantime...

BH: That was their boot, so, like I said we got a parcel once every, I would say, every four to six months if we were lucky. And then it got to a point towards the end we got one parcel for two guys to split. You know, when it started to tighten up and Germany was losing the war. But they were very lax on getting stuff in to us.

PS: But the rations you were receiving, was it adequate, would you say, for subsistence?

BH: Now all we got was one hot meal. And the hot meal was soup at night. And the soup had cockroaches and worms, and anything they could throw in there.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And you had one, you had about a quarter of a loaf of bread maybe, like that, for two guys. They'd give you one slice. You know, that was the meal.

PS: That was...

BH: Now in the morning all you got was hot water, if you had something to make the hot water with, see? And so you had to...

PS: So all you got was water, cold water.

BH: If you had the Red Cross parcel, if you were lucky, you got coffee in there, you know, instant coffee. And you would have to stretch it, see? But otherwise all you got

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was hot water. In the morning the water was on for one hour. It was, mostly I would say, let's say 60, maybe 120 guys in the barracks, maybe more, 150 guys in a barracks. And they had this little box in the middle, maybe as big as this, for a hundred, all we had to, to wash for here and to wash, you know, to get washed. And for one hour you had to get washed. Everybody had to run in and get washed, bathe, or fill a can up with water or something like that. Then there was no water again until at night, 7:00 or 6:00 at night. And everybody would rush in there and to either get a can of water, you know, or something like that, see? No windows. There was no windows, only, there was no window panes.

PS: In the building.

BH: Everything was open. And when it got cold, that wind came right in. No heat.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And when it rained, we'd go out and we'd take a shower. We'd jump out the window and take a shower.

PS: That was your only method?

BH: Well, after we were there a while, every six months they gave us what they called us a delousing. It's just like they sort of took the Jewish people into the...

PS: Yeah, the rooms.

BH: And then the water came down but over there it was gas. Over here we were lucky that it was water. Because they'd get about 100 of us into the room, strip us all down naked, and then they'd pour the water down. And then you'd walk out of there one at a time in the line, and they'd give you a baldie. So every six months you got a shower and a baldie, while we were there.

PS: Now during this period, Bernie, were you, there were what, about 200 men in your barracks, is that right?

BH: In the barracks.

PS: There were other barracks buildings. So you were able to observe the treatment of many other fellow prisoners.

BH: Yes.

PS: Was there any cruelty?

BH: Well, the only cruelty actually I could see was when the bombings came, naturally they bombed homes and they bombed people.

PS: Yeah.

BH: A lot of the guards were from this town, in Krems, you know, surrounding towns. And when they would come after a bomb raid, let's say, they would come in because their houses were bombed out or their parents were bombed out or killed, and they'd come in with the guns and they'd start hollering, "We're going to kill you! We're going to kill you!" You know--"My house got knocked down! I lost my house! I lost my parents!" You know? And it was bedlam. You know, a lot of times we actually thought they were going

to shoot us, you know? Luckily, they just walked through. They had like, they had two police dogs.

PS: Were you witness to any acts of cruelty besides the...

BH: Well, the only one, I didn't witness any of them actually, to a point. But I did see, after we got out, after we were freed, in Camp Lucky Strike, a couple of my friends...

PS: I was there.

BH: Were you there?

PS: Yeah.

BH: Yeah, well a couple of my friends, they were these skeleton cases.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And one of them I was very close to, Larry Press, I don't know if he's still around today or not, I really don't. But he was...

PS: Friends, when you say friends, from your *Stalag Luft*?

BH: No, he lived two or three blocks from me.

PS: Oh, oh, you knew him from home.

BH: I didn't know him that well, but I met him in the army. And we were around two or three blocks away and we got friendly because we were in the same neighborhood, you know? And we talked about different things and where we think we live, and we became real friendly after that. But then we got separated. He got, it so happened he got shot down over there too and I didn't know it. And then when I got back, or when I got to Lucky Strike I met him there, and he, they brought him in on a stretcher, and then they sent him right back. You've probably seen some of the pictures, when they brought prisoners in that were skeletons. He was actually a skeleton.

PS: Yeah. Now were you aware of any other Jewish prisoners during this period?

BH: No, I don't think so.

PS: So you were not...

BH: I seen a couple in Lucky Strike. I didn't know all of them, but I seen quite a few of them that were skeletons, you know, Jewish boys.

PS: Yeah.

BH: But I didn't actually know, you know, personally. But I spoke to them after I seen them in Lucky Strike.

PS: But here in the *Stalag XVII-B* that you were in, either you were not aware of any other Jewish prisoner, American-Jewish prisoners, or if there were, you were not aware of any--separation, you were not separated from the other prisoners?

BH: No, not at that time.

PS: You would say that, were you treated any differently, do you think?

BH: No, but they didn't think I was Jewish.

PS: Yeah.

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BH: They...

PS: You had never been identified?

BH: Not that I, now I'm not ashamed of being Jewish. Now don't get me wrong.

PS: But you were [unclear]...

BH: But I didn't want to get killed.

PS: Yeah.

BH: When the gun's on you, you can't be brave.

PS: You never ever...

BH: They never asked me, they never asked me if I was Jewish, and I never told them I was Jewish. And I never denied I was Jewish. All I said, I was American. And they let it go at that.

PS: Bernie, we've gone into quite a, quite length. Your personal treatment at the hands of the German guards, were there any, you said in general they were reasonably, well, you were reasonably well-treated. Were there any individual guards who were cruel or themselves antisemitic?

BH: All right, I know what I'll, I'll mention something here. See, the people back here don't understand. The German guards that we had on the camp were what we called the--they were the older, the older gentlemen, the ones that couldn't serve in the army.

PS: Right, non-combatant.

BH: Let's say, it was anywhere from 65 to 75, see? And they were the ones that were guarding us, see? They, I don't think they ever went into combat, and like I say, I think you could have talked to them more than you could have, you could talk to them better than the soldiers that would have been in combat. Because there it was dog eat dog. You know that. And when I got my Red Cross parcel, whenever I did, luckily I didn't smoke. And I think I got five packs of cigarettes in that carton. You got five packs of cigarettes, you got a coffee, instant coffee, you got margarine or oleo margarine, in the can.

PS: Yeah, yeah.

BH: And I think I had Spam, a can of Spam. And maybe some crackers. And you had milk, the, what do you call that milk? Powdered milk.

PS: Powdered, yeah.

BH: See? Now, I'd take my five packs of cigarettes, and the Germans couldn't get any cigarettes. And they loved the American cigarettes. And so I'd go out and I'd walk around the compound and I'd pick up an old German Herr, as I called them then. And, "*Kommen sie hier*," you know. We learned a few German words at home. I told him I have a few cigarette. "Food, food." So then once in a while I'd get an egg, or I'd get sausage, you know, bread. And I'd trade my cigarettes for food with the German guards. Now like I said, the German guards were older men, and they were more casual. You know, they walked around with a gun but I think they were just there as a stationary measure, you know. So, actually, most of the German guards were pretty, pretty gentle with us to a point. But you found a few that weren't, that were hollering. They'd pull their, like in the morning

they'd come in and stick a bayonet up your rear to get you up. They'd walk in with police dogs in the morning, "*Raus!*" And if you didn't get up, they shoved that bayonet right up your behind, you know, because it was hay. We didn't have, we just had hay there. We didn't have a mattress or nothing like that, you know.

PS: Can you give us an idea, Bernie, of your physical and mental condition up to that point? You must have lost an incredible amount of weight.

BH: Oh, I lost about 30 pounds at that time. But when you're all together in the same situation you never notice it. You get used to each other.

PS: But, was there much in the way of sickness, disease?

BH: Well, we had colds, a few colds around. I only knew one case of pneumonia that I knew of in there. And see, we were all, all in pretty good shape when we went there. Touch wood.

PS: What was your, to bring out, well, we're speaking here as 50, more than 50 years after the fact.

BH: Much after the fact, yeah.

PS: 55 years, really. And we sort of lose perspective of the fact that we were more or less kids at this time.

BH: We were kids.

PS: 18, 19, 20, 22, 23.

BH: I was 19.

PS: You were 19 at this point.

BH: I was 19 at that time, yes sir.

PS: A lot of times...

BH: Like I say, you don't realize what it was...

PS: Yes.

BH: ...until we got over there and...

PS: Right.

BH: ...and we started to get into action.

PS: A lot of times people listening to this don't think of the transitional period of aging, that we weren't then what we are now, that we were kids.

BH: Absolutely.

PS: A bunch of kids.

BH: There's no doubt about it.

PS: We weren't men. We always talk of men in our outfit. But we weren't men.

BH: No, you were kids. If you wouldn't have been a kid you couldn't have went through with that.

PS: You're right, right. We were physically able...

BH: You couldn't have went through that.

PS: So your physical condition, you were all more or less the same.

BH: We were all [unclear].

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PS: Up until this point you were able to meet the hardships, physical...

BH: Absolutely.

PS: Now how about your mental state?

BH: Well...

PS: Well, you were not...

BH: I, see and that didn't happen to me, touch wood. I was able to, I was always a pretty optimistic person. That was always my attitude, and, positive, you know. I was always positive.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And I always thought sooner or later I'd get the hell out of there, you know.

PS: Right.

BH: My own feelings. Then, most of the fellows I talked to, we all had the same feeling, and we helped each other out. Now there were quite a few cases where fellows went, met me, off. They just went nervous breakdowns. I've seen a guy jump through a window, you know, he jumped through the window thing and landed up on the ground and went actually crazy. I've seen quite a few of them. But I would say 90% of us were strong enough, strong-willed, to overcome, you know, that waiting period. We were just waiting to get out.

PS: Yeah.

BH: You know...

PS: Now were there any in a physical condition that required medical attention? If so, was there medical attention given?

BH: No. No, the only thing we had, we had a, maybe a, a guy with a, what do you call that, one of those that was trained for medicine.

PS: Eh, oh...

BH: You know, they weren't doctors.

PS: The medical aids.

BH: The medical aids or something, you know, and [unclear] you know.

PS: Aids.

BH: But we had a couple of those guys.

PS: The corpsman, medical corpsman.

BH: Well some way we had a couple of those fellows.

PS: Yeah.

BH: And they called it the little infirmary.

PS: They were American POW's?

BH: They were the doctors. Yeah, POW's.

PS: No German doctors.

BH: There were no German doctors, none. No medicine. No aspirins, nothing. In fact, if you got hurt, I mean, you just had to lay there and just recover yourself, if you got sick. You know?

PS: Yeah.

BH: Luckily most of them were in very, very, well all of us were in very, very good shape, and most of us came out pretty well.

PS: Now, at this point, had you yet heard from home? Did you have at this point reason to believe that your parents knew where you were, that you were alive and...

BH: Well, I thought they knew after I was in there three months.

PS: Yeah. But you still had not heard from them.

BH: I didn't know. I hadn't heard from them from after a year. I didn't get any letters or anything from them, for a year. I guess it was more, more than that. It was at least twelve or thirteen months before I got a letter. Then I realized that they hadn't heard from me till then.

PS: And then suddenly the shock that, knowing that all this period they thought you probably...

BH: All they knew was I was missing in action. My mother got a bad heart from it, you know.

PS: And missing in action, probably they thought, you know, [unclear]...

BH: You might have been dead.

PS: You were dead. You had just been killed.

BH: Yeah. Well I didn't know at that time. I thought they knew. Like you thought. I thought the Red Cross had contacted them after a few months. They were, the way it turned out, they didn't.

PS: You know, before we started this interview, Mr. Harman, Bernie, showed me a war time log that he kept that is, as far as I'm concerned, is just beyond description. It's incredible. It's, well maybe, Bernie, if you want to describe it. It's a log that he kept with, oh, numerous photogra-, poems. One is entitled, "Last Flight."

Big birds filled with eggs of death.

Dark in the sky one day.

And enemy guns all blew their breath

To take their light away.

It is just an incredible book that's beyond, to me is beyond any words of description that I could give. It's a book that during this period, Bernie, to introduce the book, you were not forced to work.

BH: That's right.

PS: And saw no reason to bo-, did they offer any kind of work for those who might volunteer to work?

BH: Well, they couldn't, they didn't offer it, but the camp, we had a camp leader. We elected a camp leader of the camp. And he communicated with the German commander of our camp, anything between the prisoners and the Germans. He was the in between man.

PS: Yeah, like liaison.

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BH: He represented us. And also you could volunteer for the shows, to put on shows. Anybody who was musically inclined or an actor, or who wanted to be an actor or was an actor, could volunteer for those kind of shows and participate in them. Also, if you're a medic, you could have volunteered to go into the little hospital room we had. And actually, even for a chow detail.

PS: Were you able to socialize and meet with the PWs in the other barracks?

BH: Oh yeah. During the, during the day, now what would happen, we'd get up. I'd say they'd wake us up about 6:00 in the morning. And then we would have to be, that's when the water was on, from 6:00 to 7:00. And then we would have to be outside, lined up, every morning at 7:00, where they'd take a picture check, and check your serial number to make sure nobody escaped. So that would go on for maybe an hour, hour-and-a-half, maybe two hours. Rain, shine, snow. It didn't matter what it was. You had to be out there. Now they did that three times a day--morning, noon, and night. So that means actually you were standing out there maybe anywheres from five to seven hours, just taking picture checks and number checks, to make sure that nobody escaped. Now, in between that time, you were on your own. You could walk around the compound. You could just walk and talk or you could do whatever you wanted to do. Or you could get your book and hide under on and start working on your book, or you could read, you know? As long as the picture check was over. Now, like I say, they had, we had some baseball games there. You know, we had a big compound. And if you wanted to play baseball you could, you know, on the off hours. Then I imagine supper was sometime between 6:00 and 7:00 at night.

PS: Your plate of soup with all the worms and...

BH: And they brought in the bucket of soup. They brought in the bucket of soup with the germs and the cockroaches, whatever you want to call it. And that was our supper.

PS: It's just miraculous that there wasn't serious illness.

BH: Well...

PS: Now you went through an Austrian winter, right?

BH: Yeah.

PS: That was, to my experience...

BH: We went through two Austrian winters if I remember, two Christmases.

PS: And they were not exactly down, being down south.

BH: No, they're something like here.

PS: Yeah.

BH: Right near, near the Alps. Near the mountains.

PS: And you had no heat in the barracks?

BH: No heat. And we'd just stay in the bed sometimes. We'd stay in the bed.

PS: And no covers?

BH: Well we had a cover. We had a GI blanket...

PS: Yeah.

BH: That the Red Cross supplied.

PS: Your clothing, was there anything issued to you as PWs?

BH: Shoes, and then the Red Cross would send in GI pants once in a while. But they always sent it and we wouldn't get it.

PS: By and large you still were wearing some of your flight clothing?

BH: No, I would say I wore them for a good eight or nine months, and then finally I got a new pair of pants and a new pair of shoes.

PS: But as far as your upper jacket, anything like a jacket for warmth, or a coat for warmth?

BH: No, we didn't have any coats.

PS: No coats?

BH: We had the, I think I had my old Air Force jacket, if I remember right. We had that small Air Force jacket with a wooly collar.

PS: And there was no possibility...

BH: Oh I kept that.

PS: Of getting anything at all?

BH: Unless the Red Cross sent it in.

PS: Oh. Did they send in clothing?

BH: But they sent it in very rarely.

PS: Yeah.

BH: Now luckily, this book that I wrote here, or I carried, I was looking for something to do. So I was in clothing. My civilian occupation at that time. And I sent in through them I wanted a book on clothing, you know? And they sent me this back. They sent me this log. That's what they sent me that, through the Red Cross, when I had asked for a book on clothing. So when I saw that I figured, "What the hell am I going to do with that?"

PS: But what you did with that...

BH: So then, after I started looking at it, I said, "What the heck can I do?" Maybe I can do something with this here and start writing or something. Next thing I knew it, I'm talking with somebody else and the guy said, "Well let me put a picture in there for you." And they start drawing pictures, and poems. So what I did is start going around the camp and I let each of the fellow prisoners do something, participate in the book. And that's why it's so original. Everything in there is done with the prisoners of war, see?

PS: There are things in here, Bernie, you did at the time to sort of wile away your time.

BH: Yeah.

PS: There was nothing to read, to write, no recreation.

BH: Well, I had other things I had done. I didn't do this all the time.

PS: Yeah.

BH: But at night like when, before the lights would go out, let's say. You know, I'd sit there for an hour or so and just jot down, you know. But during the day I'd walk

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around the camp and I'd get, meet some other fellow prisoner and he said, "I'm an artist. I'll write you, I'll draw this in for you." Now this isn't all from one barracks. This is from all the prisoners in the camp.

PS: Now this, page 11, re-