

**David Wolnowitz  
Veteran**

**Michael Russert  
Wayne Clarke  
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on February 27, 2003  
Commack, New York**

**Q:** Could you give me your full name, date of birth and place of birth please?

**DW:** Okay, the name is David Wolnowitz, W-o-l-n-o-w-i-t-z, the day of birth is March 9, 1923, and I was born in the Bronx, New York.

**Q:** What was your educational background before you went into the service?

**DW:** High School.

**In:** You finished High School.

**DW:** I was short a year.

**Q:** What do you remember about Pearl Harbor, where were you when you heard about it and what was your reaction?

**DW:** Well, I don't think too many people my age at that time knew where Pearl Harbor was, unless you were in the Navy or something like that. I was with some friends, we were [unclear], we heard about Pearl Harbor, then we tried to figure out where it was until we heard on the radio that it was in Hawaii. But after hearing that we didn't know how important it was. And later on, we found out how important it was, and then everybody got excited.

**Q:** Did you enlist or were you drafted?

**DW:** I enlisted.

**Q:** Why did you pick the Air Force, or Air Corps at the time?

**DW:** Well I always liked airplanes. I had never flown. I used to go to Floyd Bennett Field and watch the planes, but I had never flown.

**Q:** So, could you tell us where you went for basic training?

**DW:** We didn't have much basic training. We went to Atlantic City and we marched up and down the boardwalk. They took us to the rifle range, I think we were.....5 shots, I'd say old Springfield 30-06. And that was basically the basic training that I had.

**Q:** Where did you go for any specialized Air Force training?

**DW:** I went to mechanics school. Well to begin with I had taken different tests that they gave you, and I was color-blind. I wanted to fly, but they said I was color-blind and I couldn't. So, I was sent to mechanics school. From mechanics school I went to- which was in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Then I went to Schiller Field Illinois, and I became a propellant specialist. From there I went to, I believe it was Fort Dix, and we shipped over on a boat.

**Q:** Did you go over on a convoy?

**DW:** [ponders] To Fort Dix?

**Q:** Oh no, from- you said you shipped over.

**DW:** Overseas.

**In:** Yes. Did you go over in a convoy of ships?

**DW:** Oh yeah. In fact, it's funny, they took us over there and they placed us around a.....the ship, I still don't know what they call it, as spotters, if you see anything, call it out. Doesn't matter, you see anything call it out. And there was a number of ships, and I happen to have very good eyes, I may be color-blind, but I had good eyes. I was looking, and I see something all the way out there and I can't make it out. They gave us a mic, so I pressed the mic and I said, "I see something out there", They ask "Where are you?", I said "I'm over here in the middle of the ship", They ask "Which side? Port or Starboard?" I said, "I don't know which side, if you go for the head, I'm on the right side of the ship in the middle". About that time, you hear "beep beep beep" and they're all Army Personnel going by, and the destroyers or whatever they were, cruisers, they start scooting all around over there. An officer came over, and I thought he was gonna take me down because I didn't know what I had seen. He says "You've done the right thing. What it was, was a box you've seen all the way out there. And sometimes the subs will put their periscope in a box. So apparently, I had done the right thing, but you never saw a kid more scared in your life. When you see all those ships going, everything was scooting around. I was scared. Now you wanna know what I did after that right?

**Q:** Yes sir.

**DW:** Okay, after that I went to High Wycombe in England. We went into Scotland, we took a train down to High Wycombe, which is not really too far, it's like in the outskirts of London. We were briefed over there, if there's an air raid you jump into these trenches, you know, bomb shelters, they were not covered or anything, they were just trenches and they were like, I don't think it was cinderblock, I think it was concrete. And sure enough that night, the whistle went. For an air raid we were told that's what would happen you jumped into them. I don't know if anything came over, but it was pitch black. Well, the next day, they got us together and they said "look, don't go into the air raid shelter, stay in your area", the reason for that is some of these guys fell into the air raid shelter, and it cut their heads, broke their arms, and everything. It was the first night, we had been told that we were being bombed, so the guys would run like crazy and they got hurt. So, they said that we were safer where we were than any air raid shelter. From there

I was shipped to the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group and that's Bassingbourn, the name of the area and in fact the base is in Royston, not too far from Hitchin and Cambridge. But the town was Royston, we must have been about 5 miles outside, something like that. I really didn't do too much while I was there. I went out to the line, I think I was assigned at that time to the 322<sup>nd</sup> Squadron think, but I hadn't really done anything. And I went out to see the planes out there, and there was a guy standing out there and I told him "You know I never flew in a plane". I worked on the engine, in fact I had never seen a B-17, we worked on single engines and fighter planes and stuff like that in mechanics school. And I was looking at a B-17 and I said, "boy I sure would like to take a ride". And he said, "I'll fix you right up, just come with me", and he fitted me with a parachute, and he said, "there's a pilot and a copilot going up, the copilots can become the first pilots [unclear], he's gonna make 3 landings and he becomes the first pilot." Great you know. So, I went in, and it was fun, I stood behind the pilot and copilot for the first landing, the second landing I went up to the nose where the [unclear] was [unclear] I made the 3 landings. And it was great, I enjoyed it, I really liked it. And when I got down, this guy, I don't know who he was, of course he was in a flight suit, he said "how did you like it?" I said "I loved it" he said great. So, he took my name, says he has to put on a sheet you know, fine. I gave him my name and everything. I went back to my barracks and about 3, 4, or 5 days later I got a 7-day pass. Which, I just landed on the base, how do you get a 7-day pass? I figured they made a mistake, and in the Army, you don't ask, you take and run. And I did, I ran to London, and I thought I was the greatest guy there because as you're walking down the street, one woman grabbed you here, another woman grabbed you there, and I had met a couple of guys, it was the greatest thing you know. Anyway, I went back, and I went to my barracks, which was basically a room, because this was a permanent RAF Base that we took over and they had rooms. They were 2 guys to a room with a fireplace. And I go up to my room, and my stuff is not there, nothing is there. So, I asked what happened, he says that they moved it over to the combat barracks. Some guys came over, took your stuff and moved it over to the combat barracks. So, I go over to the combat barracks, and sure enough, my stuff was all laying over in a corner, and by this time we're running around, and I didn't really have anybody to ask, and I found the bunk because I was tired, I had just come back from London, and at about 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning the lights go on, "up and at em" you know. I laid in bed, because I don't know what the heck is going on. And most of the guys went out, some didn't but most of them did. I figured, it's 2-3 o'clock they got some place to go, I'm going back to sleep. And about half an hour later or something, I hear the name "Wolnowitz", and he says, "what are you doing in the sack, you're flying today". I say "you gotta be kidding me, I never flew. I told him I just went up about a week ago, I made 3 landings, and that's the extent of my flying. He said, "come with me" I went with him, he says "you missed breakfast", and he brought me over where all the guys were suiting up, well not suiting, they're taking their stuff, and he brings me over to an officer and I said, "Sir I never flew before, I don't know what's going on here". He didn't say a word, he just slapped the oxygen mask on me, gave me a heated suit and the leather outfit and a helmet that he fitted me with, and I'm standing there, and I'm scared because I don't know, and it's pitch black. And I hear my name again and- most of the other guys were not suited up, here I am

walking around like this and I'm hot. I hear my name again and the guy says, "you're flying with us today". I say, "look I never flew, I don't know what's going on", he said "don't worry about it". So, I jumped in the truck, and like I say it's pitch black out at that time, and I see them stop, most of the guys go out and they come back with....it was like a broomstick....that's what it looked like to me. And we go out to the plane, and by this time it's just about getting a little light, and I was told to go into the waist, I'm gonna fly a waist gun, the right waist. You had a 10-man crew at that time, and the guy who was flying left asked "how many did you pull?" I asked, "pull what?" he said, "how many missions did you make?" I said, "I didn't make any". He asked, "where did you take your training?" I said, "I didn't take any training". He says to me "have you ever fired a 50?" I said, "I've never even seen them", but I knew what it was because you gotta be an imbecile not to know. He said, "I'll show you how to load it up, and I'll tell you what to do", he goes over to my casing, he says "where's your gun?" I said, "I don't know, I thought this was the gun" he said, "that's only the casing". The broomstick is the gun that goes into the casing. He calls up because I didn't have a gun, tells the pilot, the pilot calls up, gives the coordinates, and a jeep comes out with an officer, and he's got the gun over there, and I was told to wait by the [unclear], he pulls up and he gives me the gun, he says "if and when you come back, I want to see you". I swear that's what he said. Well anyway, the guy showed me, put the gun in there, close it up, told me how to work the oxygen and everything. We didn't run into much trouble at that time, because we were still bombing France. I was there fairly early, and as I said we were still bombing France which was occupied. I didn't know what flak was and I'm looking at these bursts coming up, these black bursts and like a white burst, they told me it was pink but I'm color-blind. Anyway, I see it and it looked nice, and they told me that was flak. And we got a couple of holes in the plane, but nothing much.....and we landed. On the second mission I went up, and I never got any training, and we had some fighters come in on us, I flew and think I burnt the barrel out, nobody told me that you're supposed to fire in short bursts, but I got so nervous that I held the trigger down. And I think they must have [unclear] in the [unclear] room and they told me that you gotta fire in short bursts. Anyway, I pulled 3 missions, and I was a Corporal when I went over. I think it was the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, I made a Sargent, the first of the month, I'm made a Staff Sargent, and by my third mission I'm made a flight engineer, which....basically flight engineer is third in command of the plane. I learned what to do by the third mission, and like I said I was made flight engineer and so I became a Technical Sargent. The Auditors didn't even come fast enough, I was told by operations that this is my rank. I went out on a mission and got hit by fighters and like I said I burnt the gun out, but by that time it was running pretty good. You learn fast, let's put it that way. And that's one story, how many more do you want? [chuckles]

**Q:** What happened after that first mission when you went back?

**DW:** I didn't go see him. Well I wasn't gonna be chewed up. He didn't remember I'm sure. But he must have been the ordnance officer. See when we bring out guns, and when we get through with a mission, you take them out and you bring them in, and the truck brings you back, you drop off your guns, the ordnance guys clean them up, some guys wanted to clean their own guns, I didn't know how to clean the thing, so I dropped it off

and went. And that's basically my beginning in this thing. I understand they were very short of gunners. All you had to do was look at it and they'll put you on it. And the fact that I had gone to mechanics school, so I was a candidate for flight engineer. The rank was good, the pay was good, because we got 50% extra flight pay.

**Q:** Did you get any sort of wings to wear?

**DW:** Yeah. In fact, I didn't have wings, so the guys in the barracks were kidding around and I didn't bring them, a mall pair of wings like this. They said, "after your 5<sup>th</sup> mission you can put on the little wings". So.....they're good guys.

**Q:** You stayed with the same crew from then on?

**DW:** I bounced around with a couple of crews and then I was assigned to one crew. Even with the one crew we generally flew 'My baby' which was the name of the plane, but sometimes 'My Baby' was laid up and there was another crew not flying at that time, we would take other ships. My crew went up in another ship.....what was it.....Jesus it slipped my mind right now.....'Dusty Rusty'. Anyway, they were assigned to another plane, and I couldn't fly because I had gone to London and I was a big shot, I got a shave by a barber over there, and I got like the 7-year itch they call it. My face was all meat, I couldn't wear an oxygen mask. I went on sick call, and all they done for me, they said they couldn't do much, they painted my face all black it looked like [points around his face] everything was just black, wherever he shaved me. Oh, did that hurt. Anyway, so I couldn't fly the mission, and they went up and they got hit by flak and the crew blew up. Only 2 guys survived. Baldwin and I never knew the other guy that survived. I didn't learn that anyone survived until after the war because we thought that they were all dead. The Army doesn't tell you who survived and who doesn't, but after the war I found that Baldwin was alive, now what had happened is when the plane blew up, they had back packs on, we wore parachutes that you clip on, but they had back packs on, they were both in the nose, the navigator and the bombardier. But at the time, I didn't know this. After the war I found out what happened. Everybody was killed, but the navigator and bombardier were blown out, and they back packs with parachutes, but when the plane lows up you don't have time to open up the chute, you just go, if you've ever seen them blow up you just go, and apparently, they bailed out and became prisoners of war. I knew about Baldwin and the other guy I can't think of his name because this was about a month and a half ago, his son got in touch with me, and that's how I found out the other guy's name. I have a picture of his father. He lives in Illinois and his father lives in Michigan. Then I found out who the navigator was, and I mailed him the picture, I didn't think it was him and apparently not, he may have taken somebody's place too. But the rest of the guys I know, and I sent over the picture with the crew and he's not on it because his son told me that he never took a picture, they never took a crew picture. So apparently, he must have been.....maybe a third mission or something like that, [unclear].

**Q:** How many missions did you fly?

**DW:** Originally, I was supposed to fly 25, and what happened was around my 18<sup>th</sup> or somewhere around there, I was taken off the crew and the radio man was taken off the

crew, a pilot and copilot were also taken off. This was before the invasion, they needed big shots and we had quite a few of them come down, if they wanted to go anywhere we were the crew that took them, which was a terrific deal. We went to Scotland, went to Southern England, I don't remember all the places we went to. So, we didn't fly combat and we were always broke as you know, guys especially that fly because they spend their money because if they go down they wanna have a good time. I think I flew my CO, he got married over there. Flew him up to Scotland, though he was a pilot, but he was with his wife. The pilot, copilot, myself and the radioman flew him up there. We were up there for about 3-4 days. He got out of the plane and he said "Well, I'm gonna tell you this, I want you back here at this time", and we said, "yeah we'll be back", he said, "I know you're broke" and he went into his pocket and he gave the radioman and myself a nice lot of money, because we were in Scotland. And we enjoyed it, we had a good time. And we did come back. I flew Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, I flew them to Southern England, we went to look at troops, we were only there for about a day, maybe 2 days, something like that. Then the radioman and myself were ordered to go to the plane, we were gonna go somewhere. We go there, no pilot or copilot. Anyway, a General comes over with his Aid and gets into the ship, the General is gonna be the pilot and his Aid who, I think was a Lieutenant Colonel, is gonna be his copilot. I get into my position behind them.....I better not mention his name, he's dead anyway. So....well he's dead so it shouldn't matter.

**Q:** You can name his name then. Can you tell us who it was?

[voice in the background, most likely David's wife, asks about unnamed soldier's family]

**DW:** That's what I'm thinking, that's why. He must have had family. Anyway, he starts the engines, revs up, and we get on to take off, and I tell him "Sir you gotta turn the generators on, you gotta prime the hydraulics system", he gets a call from the tower that he can take off, and he's gotta do other things, you can't take off, you gotta lower the engine, you gotta to all of it, and I tell him that because he wasn't doing it. So, I made the mistake, he says to me "whose flying this airplane, you or me?" I said, "you are Sir, but apparently you don't know the plane". And we're taking off and his copilot, the Lieutenant Colonel is just sitting there, the first thing you do is bring up your landing gear, because that's a drag, he doesn't know, and you can't tell him because there's so many switches what were we gonna tell him? So, I pushed him on the side and I hit the switch to bring up the landing gear. What happened was we went, it was some place in Southern England, and we came back, the next morning the radioman and myself were back on combat. Apparently, he turned us in, so we were back in combat, we went back to air crew. But that was a sweet deal.

**Q:** Were those ever counted in your missions?

**DW:** No, they're not counted as missions. But I didn't care, it was a good deal, I went all over.

**Q:** How long did you do that?

**DW:** I don't know, must have been about a month. Something like that, close to it. Anyway, about a week and half, 2 weeks later, the General took up the plane, took up a P-51, he went up, he was circling, and he dove right into the ground, he made like a 12-foot hole in the ground, they never even found him.

**Q:** This was the same guy?

**DW:** Yeah, well the same name. The guy definitely didn't know the plane. I guess he got a kick out of taking up the different planes and trying them, and the last he took up was not.....

**Q:** What were some of your combat missions you remember the most?

**DW:** I gotta list of them over here. Well, Marsberg. November.....fourth I think it was. That was a tough mission. I went to Berlin on the first or second mission, that was a tough one. In the beginning we were only going to France, and.....you got hit occasionally, you know flak you always got, but you got hit occasionally by fighters, and some of the ships went down. And then when we started going to Germany, incidentally we were supposed to fly 25 missions, I had about 18 at that time, 18 or 19, when I went back on combat, they changed to 35 missions, and I was supposed to get the DFC honor butt when they changed it, they didn't give the DFC. So, I spoke to an officer and because I had just completed my missions which was 34 missions, I don't know maybe at that time it was 33 or 32, and he told me that he's gonna look into it, because you know I really, I had most of my missions in already, and when I finished my, he says either way "I'll give you credit for one mission". So, I flew 34, I did not do the route of flight 35. And I had to wait around until they found out, they asked me for [unclear], "I said I quit the medal I want to go home", and I shipped out and never got it. I think I have the paper calling me up for it. I think I brought too.

**Q:** Were your planes ever heavily damaged, any of the planes you were on?

**DW:** Not really. Well once we crash landed, but that was in, to this day I don't know where, it was either Belgium, Luxemburg, somewhere around there. But nobody was hurt, the copilot cut his head. Then the infantry came by and they gave us a truck and it took us about 5 days, we went into Brussels, we couldn't go into [ponders] what's the name of it, I can't think of it right now, where we wanted to go because it was closer, but they told us it was being bombed all the time and we didn't have any money, so we sold some stuff, you know, what you were wearing, we did have escape kits that we carried. In the escape kits, I got some of it here, we had maps, we had a little compass about this big you could fit it in your ear, and we had a book which I have here, it's not even a book it's a pamphlet which translated "I am an American" then next to it in German "I am an America" in Belgian "I am an American" in French and in Spanish. I have it here I didn't know if you wanted to see it.

**Q:** Did you choose to crash land instead of bailing out?

**DW:** Yes, we chose to, because no one wants to bail out, nobody likes to bail out unless it's a necessity. Another time we took a vote to try to make it back to England, you know

the engine was set and as flight engineer I went up to the nose of the ship to see where we were throwing the oil and that time he had disconnected from the intercom and the navigator or bombardier told me, he says “we might bail out now, so you better get back. I was looking out the window and I looked down, I always figured I wanted to bail that once, I tried it. But it’s funny when it comes up, you don’t want to [laughs]. We could’ve gone to Switzerland because we had gone to Munich that day and that engine was safe for storing oil and while I was looking at that one, the other one was sputtering and that’s why they were talking about that, either trying to get to Switzerland or trying to get back home or bail out which was like a vote, and we said, “let’s try to make it back”. Nobody wants to be a prisoner of war, and Switzerland was a good deal, but some guys went there because they wanted to go there because it was a good deal, they treated you well, and some didn’t want to go, some of the guys were close to the end of their missions and they wanted to make it back, they wanted to go home. And we did make it back.

**Q:** Did you ever wear your flak suit

**DW:** I couldn’t wear the flak suit. . . . .No, I never wore one. I was too confined.

**Q:** Did you put it under you?

**DW:** Well the [unclear] piece yes, it protected the important parts.

**Q:** [ponders as he tries to remember question he wanted to ask] Did you ever get frostbite?

**DW:** No. I never got frostbite. A lot of guys did. There was a story, a ball turret gunner got so excited he dribbled in his pants, they were under attack and he didn’t even know it, your adrenaline is gone when that happens, and he froze [taps what seems to be his bottom] his back side froze. That was the tail gunner. The tail gunner got hit and he was frozen. They went back there you know after the attack, they went back there, and the guy was frozen, they couldn’t pull him out. When [unclear], that’s when they got him out. But these are different stories that I didn’t. . . . .

**Q:** When you completed your missions and went back to the states, did you become an instructor?

**DW:** No, when I got back to the states, I went to Schiller Field Illinois where I went to propeller school and they wanted to put me on B-29s, a flight engineer on B-29s. If I had went there I would’ve gotten a commission because at that time B-29 flight engineers became second lieutenant, but I didn’t want to fly at that time anymore, so I got out of it.

**Q:** What was your reaction to the death of President Roosevelt?

**DW:** Well it was a shock, it did come as a shock, I understand that people back here knew that he looked bad, but as I said, it was a shock and we all talked about it.

**Q:** What was your reaction to the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan?

**DW:** I was out of service at that time. I thought it was a good thing, rather they lose their lives than our guys.



**Q:** Did you make use of the GI bill?

**DW:** I went to school. Television school, and that became my profession.

**Q:** Do you use the 52-20 club at all?

**DW:** Yes, I did.

**Q:** Did you max it out?

**DW:** Yes, just about [laughter], it helped.

**Q:** Did you keep in contact with anyone you were in service with?

**DW:** Yes, there's one guy I'm pretty good friends with, we call each other quite often, he lives in Florida.

**Q:** Do you belong to any Veteran Organizations?

**DW:** Yeah, I belong to the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, we have our own unit and that's quite active, they have reunions and things like that.

**Q:** 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force?

**DW:** Yeah. And then the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force is down in Georgia, and the Republic over here, I don't go there too much, they have like a museum, and I go there occasionally, but I am signed up in that.

**Q:** You've been to reunions?

**DW:** I've been to one, it was very nice, it was down in Orlando Florida [clarifies that with his wife], it was very nice, they made you feel really good.

**Q:** You said you have some things to show us. How about showing us your jacket first.

**DW:** You want me to put it on?

**Q:** Yeah, you can put it on and then point to the different insignia.

[David stands up and puts on the jacket]

**DW:** [points to patch for his plane 'My Baby' on the upper right side of the jacket] This is 'My Baby', and this is original. [points to wings on the upper left side of the jacket] These wings up here were the original that I wore on my uniform. [points to patch for the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group right below it] This is not, this is the 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Emblem. I don't have the...I didn't put it on, the 322<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Squadron, I didn't put that on. [looks for, finds, and points to patch for the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force on left arm] This is...no I don't think this is original, the only thing that I think is original is this [points to the 'My Baby' patch] but it looks good [chuckles]

**Q:** Now did you paint that or did a friend of yours?

**DW:** No, they painted that on in England. My other jacket, the one that they stole, that was all original.

**Q:** And what do you have in here?

**DW:** Okay, this should be interesting to you. This one of the guys gave me for luck, he completed his missions, [pulls out British Air Force flight helmet on a head mannequin] this is a British helmet. They made much better suits than we did. If you look at this-

**Q:** Now did you actually wear that helmet?

**DW:** Yeah, I wore this. They give it to you for luck, you wear it. If you look at how this is made, it's like a chamois inside. The American helmet was like a...what do they call it, like the fur they put inside jackets, and the leather would crack. All the British stuff was much better.

**Q:** What mission did you receive that on?

**DW:** I must have received this on....maybe about my 15<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, I'm not sure. He completed 25. These goggles, that's our goggles. And what we could do, because the sun was so strong, we changed the lenses over here. But these lenses were no good, they would fog up on you and you can't see anything. So, it's very seldom that you put them down, unless you were in combat and if it fogged up [unclear]. The goggles that I think they use today, some guys you know use the big goggles that goes around. [puts helmet away and takes out framed picture with 91<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group insignias] That's each squadron. This is the 322<sup>nd</sup>, I don't know if you can make that out, and that's the 324<sup>th</sup>, there's the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force emblem, here's the [unclear] squadron

**Q:** And that's the 324<sup>th</sup> on the bottom?

**DW:** Yeah, and that's the 401<sup>st</sup>, and that's the 323<sup>rd</sup>.

[David holds the frame with all the insignias, so the cameraman can get a shot of it]

[David puts the frame away and pulls out another frame with a photo of himself and 2 smaller photos (one of himself and one of another soldier) attached in the frame outside the glass]

**DW:** This is not me [removes photo of the other soldier from frame], This is me.

**Q:** Now is that wearing this helmet? [referring to the one just shown]

**DW:** I think so

**Q:** Yeah it looks like it.

**DW:** Yeah, that is that helmet. I think I have another picture with the old helmet. The reason I cut this out is to show what the parachute [unclear]. Okay?

[David puts away photo and takes out another framed photo, this one of his crew posing in front of their plane 'My Baby']

**Q:** There's 'My Baby'.

**DW:** This is my crew. [points to one of the men in the photo] This guy Bolen, that's the guy I was telling you about, he was the bombardier who survived, [points to another man in the photo and gives details, but the crinkling of paper in the background makes it very difficult to hear].

**Q:** Now can you hold that up?

**DW:** Yeah [holds photo up]

**Q:** Okay, now where about are you in that picture?

**DW:** I'm right here [points to himself in the picture], this is me.....Boy was I young.

**Q:** How old were you at that point?

**DW:** Uhm 19? Well let's figure it out. I'm gonna be 80 next week. So, this had to be in '44.

[interviewer hands him 50 caliber]

**DW:** This is a 50 caliber. This is what we fired.

[cameraman gets close up of 50 caliber]

[interviewer hands him paper]

**DW:** Now this is something that just cut out of [unclear]. That's the memorial that we've-... and that's our memorial up in the Passing Point, that's our Air Base.

**Q:** That is very impressive.

**DW:** [pulls out form] This is my discharge, you don't want that do you?

**Q:** If you don't mind, we'll take some of these things down stairs and they'll copy them for us to put in a folder if you don't mind.

**DW:** Sure.

**Q:** These look interesting [hands over glasses that went on the helmet]

**DW:** Oh, these are the glasses that fit into the helmet, you don't need these, they change colors.

**Q:** Yeah, if you could show them up though, I don't think we've ever seen the different colors.

**DW:** Well I took two different colors. You had clear. All the color ones are plastic, and the clear ones are glass. But as I told you they're not too good. I had the experience, I had my glasses up, at the time we were under attack and I was firing and there was an enemy 109 coming in, and I hear a pop and I can't see anymore. Like I said, I had my glasses up and I thought I was hit, I started feeling my face and I really couldn't feel it. So, I hit the intercom and the bombardier navigated, came up, and took my position, and I dropped down on the floor, got my feet all [unclear] because the turret was turning because he was firing. Nobody was paying attention to me, and I was there for a while, and I started to drift off like I didn't [unclear] it was like floating, and the copilot turned around and he had seen that my oxygen was disconnected, so when he went up he hooked in his oxygen and I wasn't hooked into oxygen, I didn't think of it. And what had happened was that a shell went through the turret and the plexiglass shattered through you know, it didn't hurt me, it was just the blast from the cold air and the plexiglass- my eyes, I couldn't see, that's why I thought I was- like I said I didn't feel good, its 50-60 degrees below zero. But I was alright.

**Q:** Now is that a piece of flak that your holding up?

**DW:** Yes, that's a piece of flak.

[David holds up piece of flak as cameraman gets a shot of it]

[interviewer hands David a map]

**DW:** This is the escape map, this one happens to be of Spain [holds up map] when you went into enemy territory, you used this.

**Q:** Now is that made out of silk or rayon or something?

**DW:** It's made out of something, you can feel it, maybe you can tell better than me.

**Q:** I wouldn't know. It looks like silk.

**DW:** Have you ever seen one of these before?

**Q:** Well someone else brought in one of these and he had a couple of them, but I guess they were popular with the girls that they used them for scarves he said.

**DW:** Oh yeah, this was popular over here, not in Europe because this was supposed to be returned. I took it out of that pack, because there were a number of maps in there.

[David takes out pamphlet and ponders trying to remember what it was]

**DW:** Oh yeah, this was from a mission, it was December of '44 and it was Christmas, 25 December and we were so socked in with snow that we couldn't land at our own base, we had to land at another base, and it was a fight to who could land first there. That was the most difficult part of the whole thing, was landing because everyone was trying to get in, they were short on gas, Newfield, they didn't have room for us. [takes out another

pamphlet] And this is.....what is this.....oh yeah, this is when I got the marksman medal for a carbine.....the only thing is I don't know why they got a carbine there.

**Q:** Now did you ever see a jet? I know you have a picture of one.

**DW:** Yes, I've seen this jet and I fired on it, it came down so fast and he went right between the group. And this is not a jet, this is a rocket plane and when we got back to base, we were told that you don't fire on them you don't pay any attention to them because he doesn't have guns, he's just there to distract you. [takes out another pamphlet] Oh this is the map- uh not the map, the dictionary that I told you about, let me just see what's in here [opens and looks at pamphlet], oh this is when I joined the Reserves.

**Q:** [referring to photographs in collection] Now are these photographs you took?

**DW:** No, somebody else took them. [takes out another pamphlet] This is when you went down in enemy territory, they have [points across different language sections] English here, French here, English again, French again.

**Q:** I think that's what they referred to as a pointy talkie

**DW:** I don't know. And you got Dutch over here and you got Spanish. [takes out another pamphlet] This is also the same idea [reads off of pamphlet] "I am an American Airmen, if you please, thank you, my friend is hurt, can you bring the doctor, can you help me, can you hide me" You have basic idea of what it is, you've seen them before

**Q:** Uh, actually yes, but I haven't seen one that complete.

**DW:** [takes out one more pamphlet] And this is the maintenance of a 50-caliber. I don't know if you want that. That was given to me later.

**Q:** Well thank you very much.

**DW:** You're very welcome.