

1st Lt Earl Montgomery Morrow
U.S. Army Air Corp
Narrator

Wayne Clark
New York State Military Museum
Interviewer

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Wayne Clark – WC

Earl Montgomery Morrow - EM

WC: Today is the 4th of Sept 2009, we're doing a home interview in Granville NY. My name is Wayne Clark, I'm with the NYS Military Museum in Saratoga Springs. Sir for the record would you please state your full name and date and place of birth. Please

EM: My name is Earl Montgomery Morrow, and I lived in 13 Guilders Hollow Rd Granville NY but we're closer to Hartford NY, and I went to school in Hartford NY and I graduated in 1939 as the Valedictorian.

WC: Okay, okay let me just go back a little. When were you born?

EM: June 27th 1921,

WC: And you were born here?

EM: In Westphalen Vermont.

WC: Okay,

EM: After that, I guess sometime after that, Dad was teaching schools so on and so forth, and Dad decided he wanted to be a farmer and that's why we came over to NY.

WC: Okay

WC: And you graduated from HS in 1939?

EM: 1939, it was a small class. I think there was 19 of us or something like that, I stayed around for a year and took postgraduate course and tried to pick up some of my grades a little bit and then I went to IOWA State college studying Mechanical Engineering and I got through the first year there and I started the second year, and Sunday the day that Pearl Harbor was hit, I sat there and listened to that on the

radio and I made up my mind right there that at the end of the semester I'm going home and get'in the service.

WC: um hmm

EM: So as soon as the semester was over I got out on the road and hitchhiked from Iowa State and made it in three days to the farm up here in NY. Back then people would pick you up (light chuckle)

WC: uh huh

EM: An interesting lady and her daughter picked me up, and I drove for them a good, good share of the day, and then they stopped at a motel and got a room, and I got a room for like \$2. And I saw the daughter in the other room and I took the daughter out to a movie! (Big smile)

WC: uh huh

EM: And then the next morning I got up, and we got back and drove and the roughest part was getting through Pennsylvania up into Washington County. But I made it in three days. I got home and told my dad what I was going to do, and my dad informed me that I wasn't going to do that. I was going back to school! And I said I'm going in the service, (fumbles for a little bit looking for the word)

WC: He was the Director of the Selective Service?

EM: Yeah he was the Director of that for Hartford, and he told me he knew the rules and regulations and he informed me that, he would have to sign it, for me to go in the service and he wasn't going to do it. SO I told him I says OKAY...

WC: How old were you at that point?

EM: I was 20. 20

WC: umm hm (encouragingly)

EM: Dad was the kind of man that you didn't do what, well you did what he wanted! Put it that way. And that was the first time I ever told him that I not going back to school. So I went down to Schenectady, and got a job at General Electric as an apprentice machinist and enjoyed it! The instructor I had, he picked me and another guy and we were doing real serious work in the machine shop eventually on the lathe, so the day I was 21 I went down to the Armory in Albany and I had heard about the Aviation Cadet Program, and I went down and applied for it, there were thirty some of us that went in that morning, six of us out of the thirty some got in and the rest of them were rejected. And they told me, be down to the railroad station on Wednesday, this was on a Friday,

WC: um hmm

EC: This was on a Wednesday morning to depart at 0900. I said fine and I went home, and told my family what I had done, and mother was all upset, but I told her, I said look, there was one boy in that group

who was athletic, played every sport that there was, and they found he had a heart that he could drop dead at any minute.

I said: "Look I'm one of the few that got through and I'm healthy and I'm going."

And that made her feel better. Uh, next day I got my orders to report to the draft board, and Dad couldn't do it. I had to go to Granville to their draft board. So I went over there and I told them what I was doing and I showed them the paperwork, and they didn't do anything except tell me Good Luck. Wednesday morning I'm down at the railroad station. Mom and Dad took me down. And one of my little girlfriends went with us. Walked into the station, uhh and a guy in uniform had a pack of manila envelopes and he walked over to me, and he said:

"You have 30 people you need to get down to Fort Dix in New Jersey."

And I looked at him and said: "Why ME?"

He said: "Because you had ROTC in college."

I got them there! But I don't know how! (Big grin, a bit of a chuckle.)

WC: Ha!

EM: We had to change trains down in NYC

WC: uh huh

EM: And we got them down there and delivered the papers. Got all thirty of them there. Delivered the papers to the proper people, and that's the way I entered the service. And we stayed there for a little while, and there were delays with the Cadet Aviation program, and they sent us over to Aviation Field on Long Island, and gave us a 45 automatic, showed us how to use it, and put us on guard duty. Uhhh, I had never fooled around with guns. Dad and I had a little rifle I shot once in a while, but they gave us pretty good instruction on it, on the 45 and we'd go out there at night and you couldn't see your hand in front of your face it was so dark out there. And they said if you hear movement, and anything at all that's not right, you Holler HALT three times, and then shoot. I killed a COP one night..(uneasy sigh, embarrassed expression.)

WC: Ohhh did you? (a little disbelief in voice)

EM: He was just outside the line, but I hollered HALT three times, and he didn't stop so..but uh there were actually some fella's that actually shot people trying to come over the fence, and what they did with them. They were tried, found guilty and charged them a \$1 and shipped out. I made up my mind I'm not going to be shipped out, I'm going to part of this Aviation Cadet program. So I was real real careful, uhh eventually they took us out of there and sent us down to Nashville Tennessee. They took us down there on a train.

WC: This would have been about when, Spring or Winter of 42'?

EM: Uhh no, we're still, no, yeah we're still in 42. And I'm down there and that's where you get classified whether you go as pilot, bombardier or navigator. And everyone wanted to be a pilot of course, including me and I made it. And they shipped us out of there to California. And this was by train, and this was a real enjoyable trip, because the train didn't go straight to California. It would go South, and then it would go North, and then it would go South, and so if the Germans were watching, they wouldn't know that this was a troop train and they wouldn't know exactly where it was going. And it took about 7 days to get out there. So I got to see a whole lot of the US on that trip. And out there we went through preflight where you took courses in Theory of Flight, Weather, Meteorology, and so on and so forth. Then about January 1st, I guess it would have been 43, uhhh I got my first flight. Never been in an airplane before in my life, and this was a single engine, open cockpit and the instructor was sitting in the front seat, and they showed us how to start it.

WC: Was it a Steerman? Was it a Bi-Plane?

EM: No, single, it was a single wing.

WC: Oh okay.

EM: There were Steerman's close by and we used to dogfight with them. They could outturn us, but we could out run them. But second day after I had been up twice, the instructor told me I would never make it. I asked him why?

He said "You're afraid of the airplane."

And I asked him: "Well can't you do something about it?"

He said: "With your permission, we'll make or break you this afternoon."

I said "Fine, let's go!"

Man I've never been afraid of an airplane since. We did everything that an airplane can do in that airplane. We rolled, we looped, we dove, we flew straight up and then let it fall back down, and then he went down and actually landed on a big truck going down the highway! Just touch the wheels down on it long enough to the truck and let it sit there a few minutes, and then we found a farmer down there, and he threw a hammer at us and it went over the top of the airplane, so you know how low we flew! And within two days I soloed on the airplane.

WC: Um hmm

EM: I think I had about six hours total when I soloed. And we had class work and we had flights. We did night flying we did day flying we did short landing and I learned in a hurry first time right after I soloed, I'm out there flying by myself, and here comes a thunderstorm, came right up on me, sitting right there, and I said what do I do now!, and I looked around and I spotted another plane with two people, and that told me that one of them was an instructor, so I got right on his tail and stayed there and we went into another landing field.

And he said "What are you doing following me?"

I said: "Look, I just soloed, I didn't know what to do, I saw two people in the plane, and I figured one was an instructor and I figured he knows what to do follow him".

and he said: "You did the right thing".

I got through the primary training and then we went to Chico California, went to basic training, into bigger airplanes, enclosed cockpit now, the instructor sits behind you and you sit up front, a bigger airplane, it's got more power, it's a fixed gear though, and it's a P-13 and it's a real nice airplane, now you got a little more of formation flying, quite a lot of night flying, and a lot of maneuvering, precision flying, so on and so forth. I got through that. But I couldn't get through Lazy Eight's the way I should be doing them. But the instructor had me out there and we were working, and we were just about to do the lazy eight and smoke started pouring up into the cockpit from underneath the plane and he said Get back to the Field. So I turned around and we flew back to the field and I had a good landing with all the smoke and he said well if you can fly under those conditions you've passed. From there we went down to Martha Texas and got a multi-engine, retractable landing gear and maybe 5 or 6 passenger aircraft. And this is where you're getting you're really learning to fly now, you've got a whole lot more to handle. The day we got down there, we had a hail storm, and all these planes had fabric wings, and they got all tore up, and we asked them to the other bases to give us what they could, so they gave us their junk, they were restricted to 30 degrees of bank, and my last day there a new plane came in, it was really nice to fly around in an airplane you could do things with, and uh, at the end of that, this is at the end of June which is exactly 6 mo's from when I first time I got in an airplane, and I got my wings and a rating as a 2d Lt. They sent us down to Roswell New Mexico and they've got me shooting takeoffs and landings and in a B-17, never even seen one before in my life, and two months there, I'm qualified, and I got real lucky, instead of sending me overseas. They sent me up to Las Vegas to fly gunners in training, which is a real plush deal.

WC: Now at that point where you like a Pilot in Command or a co-pilot.

EM: No, no I'm before you come out of the B-17 training , you're listed as a 1st Pilot. When you get someplace, you have, I guess they do it a whole lot by experience. But I was a 1st Pilot all the way through, but up there, in Las Vegas, there would be times I would be sitting in the co-pilot seat, and we had a lot of fun up there training gunners and you get 10-12 guys on your airplane on Monday morning and they've never been on the airplane before so we just fly around and get them used to the airplane. The next five or six days would be real serious. They would be towing targets behind airplanes, and they had to shoot and hit stuff, and they had cameras so they could tell where they were hitting or not. We had a lot of fun, we would go and fly down in the canyon and go into Death Valley and fly below sea level and let them see what the countryside looked like and so on and so forth. Then all of a sudden they wanted and picked I think they picked five crews to go fly some new B-17s down to Tyndall Field in Florida. So now the only people that I had on the airplane was a co-pilot and a flight engineer. We flew from Las Vegas down somewhere in, uhhh, Virginia or uhh I forget where it was, but anyway we landed on an Army base down there, but my co-pilots home town was over there, and we flew over there, and

before we landed we really dragged it, down below and we go, and we saw people were running out of their houses and falling on their face, because they were wondering what the heck it was to see out there. So that night I go to see his family and we stayed over there. Then we went over to his school where he went to school, and one of his teachers that he knew says yeah I was on the third floor when you went by and I was looking down on you! But then we went down to Tyndall Field and we trained gunners down there for a while. And then uhh, we only had 30 days we were supposed to be down there. So after that we didn't have orders, so we went back up to Las Vegas, and that was the only time I got home, because we saw in the regulations, you didn't have to travel over 200 miles a day if you didn't have Pullman. We couldn't get Pullman, so I eased up there and went up to the farm, and visited my folks and then get up to Vegas. And they asked Where have you been, you're supposed to still be down at Tyndall Field! So yeah okay I'm going out to go get ready to go back down to Tyndall Field, and they say you guys aren't going back to Tyndall Field, you're going overseas.

So now I go to Kansas to get my crew.

WC: A whole new crew?

EM: Whole new crew. Everybody who went over there got new crews, it was people coming right out of school who had just gotten their wings I had gotten my crew, and I was real happy with them. They all seemed like a really great bunch of guys. There were four officers, myself, navigator, co-pilot, and bombardier and everyone else had a SSgt rating and was an enlisted man. I got all my enlisted men off to the side on the first day and I took them off to the side where no one could hear me, and I said:

"I don't ever want one of you guys to salute me, unless there's someone standing over there expecting you to salute me than you do it."

I never once had a problem with discipline, and I think the guys really appreciated me doing that. When my officers found out about it, they fell right in with it, and never had an issue. We started training we did night flying, long distance flying, we did altitude we did a lot of formation flying, we were dropping bombs, and doing navigating flights, and one night we had a hydraulic inst broke on the instrument panel, and hydraulic fluid just came flying out into my lap. The boys had an idea, and we had taken our parachutes and put them up under the pilot and co-pilot seat. Where they could reach them easily but they would be safe. But those parachutes got soaked with hydraulic fluid. So we had a situation where we had a very flammable fluid all over the aircraft and I decided we gotta get this thing on the ground, and they had an emergency field up there right close by, in one of the middle states, but they didn't even have a radio there, so we had to call our home base in Louisiana and they would call on the phone up there to the emergency landing field. There's a flare on each end of the runway, and it's just a field. We come in and it's real low, and we got the flares spotted and just before we were 50 feet off the ground a light turns on just above us in a house! So we gave it full power and we went around, and we went over the house and then we got it down on the ground and uhh, went to a hotel where we could sleep, and they said they would send parts up to us the next day. Then my boys got busy then, because we did some low flying around there during the night and there were small crowds the next day because it was a small town, so everyone came out to see us the and we showed them through the aircraft, but

we covered up the bombsight because that's still SECRET, so that was covered up. but the boys were telling them, you're buying bonds. So that morning another B-17 came in and it was stripped down, there were no guns on it, and it made three passes over the field in daylight before it finally landed. And a Major was flying that and he had been in combat, and he came over and was like

"Who the Hell landed this thing in here and at night!"

So I got ready to leave, and it was probably the best thing that could have happened, because after that the crew had absolutely no concern whether Bill and I could fly that thing or not. Bill William was my co-pilot up there. So they didn't have to worry about whether they had a safe crew or in the front or not. Which helped a lot. Shortly after that we get on a boat, we get all of our equipment and we get in a boat in NY and in a whole fleet of boats go across.

Now when was that, was that 43,

Now that was 44, we're in 44 now. It was about two weeks in the boats going across. And the closer we got over there, I began to get a little uhh nervous about what are we getting into over there. Especially when one of the guys mentioned about submarines being in the area. But it was a really nice trip over there, because we were on what used to be a French luxury liner. But they pulled out all the luxury, and put in all the bunks, but they kept the crew. I've never eaten so well in my life. Three and four course meals, every meal! It was great. (Big chuckle and laugh.)

Anyway we get over there and we get a couple of days of training, and the first mission I went on I sat in the co-pilot's seat and I'm with a crew that had been out there for quite some time. I saw all these little puffs of black smoke and I was wondering what it was. Then I figured it out real quick that people were shooting at me! But we sustained some battle damage to the airplane that day but we got back okay.

WC: And that was your 1st mission?

EM: First mission, the next mission (Interrupted by WC)

WC: And that was to?

EM: I couldn't tell you now, I couldn't tell you, I don't remember, the missions were all lower Germany.

WC: umm huh

EM: The next mission.

WC: And you were with the 8th Air Force?

EM: Uh yeah, 457th Bomb Group, and the Wing, I can't tell you. I was

WC: And whereabouts in England were you based out of?

EM: Little town of Glatton, close to Peterborough, north of London, probably about 40 miles or so.

(Former home to the US Airforce base of the same name, in Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire,

England, UK) So the next mission, I have all of my crew, except I have an experienced co-pilot in the right seat. So we had a little battle damage, but what was bothering the crew was those short runways in England. We were carrying heavy loads, and they told me, before you get all your crew, don't let them sit in the nose, sit in the back. You used every inch of the runway. The bombardier and the navigator stayed down in front, but that was the only mission they stayed down in front on. They moved them back after that. But we got through that mission all right, but the 3rd mission was my whole crew. We always left one man home, because there was a gun in the radio room that they had taken out. So they figured that the radio man could always get out and get on the gun. So we always left one man home, and uhh, I don't remember too much what went on these missions with the exception of three. This one we were going pretty deep into Germany, and on the way in we lost the #1 engine and it must have been a fuel pump or something the way it just went out on us. So we were going in light and feathering it in, on the power because we only had three engines. We were in a formation of probably about 1000 airplanes and were in a squadron of 12 airplanes, and in a group of 36 planes. So we had to keep working on staying in the formation. So you have to use full power just to stay in if you're on the outside, and low power if you're on the inside. So my co-pilot is going to make this bomb run on this day. We came down, and just before we dropped our bombs, we got a direct hit on #3 engine, I go through feathering procedures. Which feathering procedures what I mean by that is, you shut the engine down and then set your blade parallel to your flight, so they're not creating a wind or drag. So I shut everything down and we start wind-milling. So we have to get out of formation, because there's no way we can stay in. But we had gotten rid of our bombs now though.

Then this number 3 engine started to get red hot, the dome of it, and then white hot, and the engine started to break apart, and pieces of it start flying into the aircraft and coming through the skin because it's just a thin skin on the aircraft. So Bill and I decide, let's put it into a dive and then pull up, and try to break the prop free and get it spinning again. So we dove twice and we lost a couple thousand feet, and I said look Bill we can't lose any more altitude we're going to just have to leave it as is. So that engine was still wind milling. So two is running and 4 is running, but 1 is feathered and 3 is out. So we're losing altitude all the way and we have to come across Belgium which is occupied. So they're shooting at us all the way, we were turning every 10 seconds. Our fighters stayed up above us and covered us in. We had a spot about a mile and a half wide to come out of Belgium over the English Channel. There was a swamp or something there, and if you come out over the swamp, there are no guns there. So they said that's where you come out. So my navigator brought me out right over that spot dead center, and we're flying real low now heading for home. WE got get over the cliffs of Dover when we get over there. So just as we got out over the channel we lost Engine Number 4. Unbeknownst to anybody they had flak barges out in the channel. And they knocked out number 4. It feathered. We had one engine running, two feathered, and one wind-milling, and we aren't doing too well. So now we're over the channel and we're throwing everything out to lighten the weight.

WC: Did you throw the guns overboard too?

EM: Yep, we threw the guns out. We all had flak suits and we dumped them, and everything we could throw out. (36:00mins, Cd1) And we finally got over the cliffs of Dover and fields right in front of us there was a field, and a plane was in front of us. I told the engineer and said throw him a flare, and we

threw out a red flare, and he got out of the way. And we got down on the ground, couldn't get it off the runway with one engine, and the guys are running around getting out of the airplane kissing the ground and stuff like that. By the way, my bombardier had professed to be an atheist but he became a good Christian and he was until the day he passed away.

WC: Was anyone injured on that mission?

EM: Noo, I'll get to that. The boys got out and they started counting up the holes in the airplane. And we had well over a 100 holes in the airplane. Most of them were small holes, but one of them was as big as a bushel basket. And there wasn't one of us scratched but the medical people showed up over there to see, and they grounded us right there, and they said you boys are going to a rest camp for a week. So went down to some Southern place in England, I don't know what it was, it was old, but it was a real big place where they had a lot of bedrooms, and the Red Cross people were running it and we stayed down there for a week. You had to come to dinner every night in Class A uniform otherwise you could wear what you want. They had bicycles you could ride out in the country with and so on and so forth. So we go back at the end of the week, and now comes the final mission. And we found out we going to Murseburg GE which is a synthetic oil plant, and it was a rough one. And when you go down to breakfast in the morning and you got fresh eggs you knew it was going to be a rough one. If you got powdered eggs, milk run but I never did get one of those milk runs.

WC: Now which number is this mission?

EM: This is Seventeen, number 17. So we know we're going to Murseburg and we've been there before and we know it's going to be rough. But we take off and we get over there and there clouds and there was some mix-up and I don't think anyone really knows what went on for sure and we dropped our bombs on what we thought was the synthetic oil plant, and for whatever reason after we dropped our bombs, our group is going this way (points towards the right with one hand, points towards the left with the other hand) and the rest of the Air Force starts turning right, so 900 and some airplanes turn right and 36 turn left and the Germans are watching which way everyone is going, which one's do you think their going to hit. They picked us and they pulled our fighters who were supposed to stay and protect us, and they pulled them off in a dogfight, and I told the guys, keep your eyes open, we're going to be hit. And sure enough they came down in groups of 15 behind us and they started pumping 20mm into us. I never saw a fighter at all. After they started to run out of ammunition or whatever they would just roll off and peel off underneath. And they told me my rudder, vertical stabilizer was gone. I could hear the shells exploding in the back of the airplane and you could feel them but we never saw from where we were, I'm flying formation, that's my job and uh, the next group came in and I saw about six or eight feet go off my left wing, and could feel the shells exploding in the back. The third group came sort'va missed us. The fourth group came in and we got two 200mm elevators right in the cockpit and my co-pilot. I didn't know if these hurt real bad or what, but now I'm on fire now (plane), so the top turret gunner he comes down and grabs the extinguisher and he puts the fire out, and we thought it was out but it flares up again, so now the only thing to do is to get out of it. So I rang the bail out signal and I reached out and grabbed William out of his seat, yanked him out. I didn't know whether he was hurt bad or what. But I marched him down.

WC: Now did you have a ball turret gunner too underneath?

EM: Yeah, Yeah he's underneath. I'll get to him in a minute. I got out of my seat and started down. And I felt the airplane climbing, and I thought if this thing stalls out and starts falling down backwards no one is going to get down. So I crawled back up, I didn't get into my seat and just pushed the controls back forward to get the nose down. So I went back down and Bill is sitting down there with his feet hanging out. So I just put my foot in the middle of his back and kicked him out. And then I sat down there and rolled out and just as I dropped clear, it blew. I didn't see it, but I could hear it and I could feel it. Because when you jump out like that your eyes automatically close. You're jumping out and you're moving 160, to 170mph so your eyes aren't going to stay open. So now I'm out there in the clouds and I'm thinking what's going to happen if I rip this cord and I get pulled up into everything with the updrafts in these crowds. We used to ask them if you have to get out, how do we do this with this ripcord, and they said when the time comes you'll be able to do it, don't worry about it. And they were right. So now I'm playing with my hands and I knew when I had the wind on my face, I was looking down, and that's what I wanted so when I broke out of the clouds I could know how far I was above the ground. I figured I was above 10k feet when I broke out, but I was well below that when I did break out. And I broke out of the clouds and I was pretty close, and I ripped my cord (motions across his waist with his hand) and parachute worked perfectly, and I didn't swing over maybe one or two times and I'm on the ground, and almost stayed on my feet, but the chute dragged me and I went over on my behind. And now I'm trying to get out of the chute as fast as I can, because about 30 feet away were three women with pitchforks coming after me and they weren't friendly, so I had to get out of that thing as fast as I could. I had a 45 strapped against me. I didn't take it out, but I unbuckled it, and they backed off. I was real close to a road and I ducked down into this road below me and ran up to the other side and started to cross this field. And they were coming with rifles, so I just sat down and put my hands up.

WC: And they were German soliders?

EM: No, they were civilians,

WC: Civilians (with emphasis)

EM: They said, get under military control if you could. These people that came up to me had rifles and there women and men, and the women were spitting in your face and the little kids were throwin stones at you. And I saw a guy in the distance that I thought looked like he was in uniform and I tried to tell them that was where I wanted to go and I pointed. I couldn't speak German, and I didn't know they could speak English, the little kids could anyway. But uh I got knocked down 3 or 4 times before I convinced them I wanted to get over there. So they finally took me over there and then they took me into a small town and the first person I saw from my airplane and crew was my tail gunner. He was so glad to see someone else from the plane, because you see he came out of his turret way at the back end of the plane.

WC: I was going to ask you about that because you said you lost your tail and your rudder and I was wondering if you had lost the tail gunner too.

EM: No the tail gunner got out. And real late on, he told me that the main door was gone, which told me somebody got out. Now little Joe Salerno was the waist gunner and he was a little 18 year old kid and he was standing there and uh my tail gunner motioned for him to go out, and he shook his head, no, and that's not Joe, Joe wasn't afraid of anything. I figured out real quickly what Joe was doing and he was in the waist gun and Bob Turner was in the ball turret, and they had this agreement that if Bob was in the ball turret, Joe would wait until Bob got out, and Bob didn't get out, and Joe just lost it. And we think possibly because the main door was gone that possibly the radio operator might have gone out. Then while we were on the ground, I was informed by one of the Germans that one of my comrades was bleeding, but they wouldn't let me go to him. And I got the feeling that could have been my radio operator. But those three boys killed in action. They had us in this sort'va a backyard of a house for some time. And then that day the count in our squadron was 12 airplanes and we lost 9 that day. Now that's 81 men, and I only saw 30 somewhat of us alive. So some of the other planes lost a lot more than I did. But out of the group they had rounded up, my co-pilot, I didn't see him for three or four days after it. Two Germans, one apparently on leave or something, or sick leave. They both had rifles. And they took another one of our boys that I had never knew before, and his name was Jerry Silvermen. And they took him and me and put us in a car and we started cross country, we had no idea why or where we were going. I didn't realize that Jerry was Jewish. And they drive about 10 minutes and then the car quit. O they get out, open the hood, pull the wires, clean them out real good, and we go another 10 minutes. Now one of these guys at the next stop turns around and he wanted my wings. And he reached out and started to pet them, and I reached out and slammed his arm down on the seat. And Jerry's sitting over there yelling at me to give them what they want, saying you're going to get us both killed. Just give him anything he wants. Uh but you see what they told us before was if you stand up to the Germans you'll do a lot better than if you cater to them. So I'm just playing the game. That's not the way I am. But I was playing the game so I got away with it. So I slammed his arm down on the back of the seat. So they got out and cleaned their plugs and we went on to the town so their families were there looking in so they could see what they had caught. So that night they took us out and I guess it looked like a one room school house they put us in, and there was a latrine across the road and there were two guards there and there were 13 of us and we were there for two or three days. Now every day one of the guards would take a couple of us and go into town and we had a little kids wagon and we would get food. Well we would argue with the guards, and I might be pulling the wagon, and the other guy would be back there pushing the wagon, and the other guy is arguing with the guard. Meanwhile we're sticking everything we can in our pockets food wise for the other guys that are sick and when we get back up there, someone's gotta go to the bathroom across the road so one guard's gotta go that way and the other guard we get in an argument, I don't think they got to eat anything in the four or five days that we were there because we were manipulating them the whole time so we could get the food for the guys who we had. We had some guys who were really in bad shape. One boy, tail gunner, his back was broken in three places, and one of the other pilots going out of his airplane, his head was so burned, now. You don't know what actually happened to these people who were hurt so badly. But we stayed there about three days, and they brought my co-pilot into me while we were there and he said that a farmer and his daughter had picked him up and hid him for a couple of days. But they got scared and they turned him in. He's not bleeding, but he's in bad shape. So they moved us out of there on a train and I don't know where they took him, but they moved us to Frankfurt to the interrogation center. Now

I think the reason we got away was because of the way we were treating these guards. They didn't fight us or anything. I think they were under orders to make sure we got to interrogation. I think the Germans wanted us over there badly so they could see what was going on. So we ride this train and we get into Frankfurt, and we have to run/walk from one end of Frankfurt to the other side to catch another train to take us out to the interrogation center. Now I never saw a full building standing. Everything was shattered in that town of Frankfurt. And we get over to the other station, and there was a little while before the next train, and there was some gal over there and she was a good looking German gal, and she got a rioting crowd up around in a hurry, and coming after us. And the guards finally locked us down in a room in the basement. They couldn't hold the crowds off.

WC: uh huh

EM: And eventually the train came in and it was just a short ride to the interrogation center. We were there about three days and we give nothing but name, rank, and serial number. About the third day I was in the interrogator said well uh if you won't tell me I'll tell you, and he told me things I didn't think my parents knew. He told me about when I was in fifth grade I was sent to the principal's office and they knew that our bombardier had made Major which we didn't know. They had uh a system and they were working on it a long time, and the only way I can figure that they got this information is we would be sitting up there on the farm and the college kids would come through selling magazines, and mother would invite them in for dinner, and then she'd sit there and talk to them all afternoon and I think those were spies. That's the only way I can figure that they got this information. Uh I didn't think my dad or my mother knew that I had gone to the principal's office. For a little, all I did was I had gone down the slide head first, and I wasn't supposed to do that. But they seemed to know everything, and I just told the guys just don't talk, just name rank serial number and that's it. Third day they pulled us out and put a gun on a train with us head of the camp and we went to the town of Saigan northeast of Berlin, anyways, somewhere up in that area. That one was the one if you saw the movie The Great Escape, that's the camp that took place in. All the time that we were in there we were working on escape deals. But the commanding officer in there, our commanding officer he made rules. We had our own government in there, and if you wanted to escape and you had a plan then you took it to them and told them what it was and then the whole camp would work on it. And they made it a court martial offense to try and escape on your own. And there were two or three escapes that went on when I was in there. And one of them failed because of exactly what I said. We had a deal where we had a tower with search lights, and machine guns on it, and then they had a barbed wire fence and a warning fence inside of that. You didn't go over the warning wire, never. So it was winter, and we had 11 guys dressed up in white sheets, and they were hiding in the latrine, and they knew there was a space right under that tower that he couldn't see. So 11 of them went out that night and got out clean and free, and made it. So two other guys decided they were going to try it, and they got caught. So immediately they were looking for a count knowing that some were gone. So they just had to hold up, and they totally screwed up the deal for the 11 that got out.

WC: So the 11 got captured?

EM: Yeah, what happened to them, we don't know. But all the time we were in there, we were tunneling all the time I was in there. I got in there, and went down in the tunnel once and I would never get in it again. I just couldn't take it. The way we were getting to that tunnel. They had a uh, all the buildings were up on stilts, because we had a habit of going down through the buildings and going out. So they put all the buildings up on stilts. So we couldn't do that. So this was uh, sort'va a place we could go and sit and listen to music and stuff. Like the YMCA had gotten records in and machines, and you could go in there. So you'd go down there, but you couldn't just go in there. They had guards around there and they were watching you. But before you'd go in, they had a big stone in front, you had to walk up on the stone and then you could go into the building. So we all gathered around and moved the stone, and that was the entrance to the tunnel. And you'd go down into the entrance of the tunnel, and they'd slide the stone back and then go in. Then later on they would have the next show and everyone would come out, and they'd gather around and move the stone back out, and you'd get out that way. We'd bring dirt out in stockings down in our britches.

WC: Oh just like the movie.

EM: Yeah. Yeah and uh. But I got down in there once and I wouldn't go again. But the German people, the German soldiers, they couldn't do anything on their own. I guess they weren't supposed to. They hauled a load of potatoes in, a horse drawn load of potatoes in one day and drove over one of our tunnels, and fell in. And they just went and got another wagon, and pulled the potatoes out of that wagon and towed it away. Meanwhile we covered up. We didn't know anything about it. It wasn't our tunnel!

WC: We're going to stop right here, I gotta change tapes.

WC: All right before we continue, I just want to ask you, how accurate was that movie The Great Escape? Was there a lot similarities to what you had gone through.

EM: Uhh very much so. When you first get in there, no one will talk to you, until someone identifies who you are. They figure you might be a mole in there. Uhh and I ran into my roommate from basic training. He okayed me and then I okayed the rest of my crew.

WC: Now where you together officer and enlisted, or strictly officer. These were all officers in the camp I was in. The enlisted men went to another camp somewhere else, and they were staff sergeants and they made them all, so the Germans couldn't make them work. But we were in there and we were in barracks. And my barracks commander was Colonel Gabreski (spelling?) you've probably heard of him. Fighter Ace WWII, and then a jet ace from later wars, he passed away just a short time ago. But every evening they would put you out on the parade ground by the barracks aand the old major commander from the camp would come around and give the Heil Hitler salute and give the accountability, one's in the hospital, so on and so forth. And this was in January and we're hearing guns, the Russians are getting close. So on January 10th, somewhere in that area, we didn't have a calendar and I didn't know exactly what day it was, but one morning they routed us out of there, there were 10,000 of us in that camp, and 1:00 in the morning they routed us out of there and put us out on the road. Running. And they had guns and they had dogs, so when they said Run, you ran. Blizzard, 30 degrees below zero, and you would run

10 minutes and walk 10 minutes and run 10 minutes and at the end of the hour they would give you a five minute break. And this kept up all day, and somewhere down there machine guns started going off and I just dove in the snowbank until things quieted down and I just stayed in there until things quieted down. Never did find out what it was about. Now they put the word out that if you fell out for any reason they would run you thru with the bayonet and then that's it. On the break at 5:30, I had an extra pair of socks. I had a GI Overcoat, and GI shoes, and a GI blanket, and those I hung on to. And as we left the camp they ran us through a warehouse and threw us a red cross parcel that had food in it. Well in 30 below zero we don't have gloves and you can't carry it. So I just busted mine open and stuck everything I could in my pockets. And I drove my hands in there to and proceeded on down the road. Well on that break I had a clean pair of socks in my pocket and I thought it would be a good idea to change them, so I did. And my shoes froze and I couldn't get my feet back in (chuckles) So I had to walk around for a while to heat them up enough till I could get my feet back down in. And then we started walking again, and uh it's now dark and we had two guys, who were up and down that line, one was a Lt Col West Point graduate. And I don't know what the other was, what his rank or position was, but he played football for Penn State. Big guy, Polish guy and we couldn't pronounce his name, we just called him Smitty. Well I got so tired, and I figured if I just sit down I'll fall asleep and that will be it. And I just couldn't go any further. So I sat down. And Smitty got to me. And he's just slapping the daylight out of me and cursing at me, get your blankety blank up and get moving! So I thought to myself I gotta get up and get away from him. So I got up and started moving again. Well then they brought my bombardier Sam, and Sam was completely out of it. He had no idea where he was or who he was, or why, so they wanted somebody who knew him to take him so I got well in a hurry. I'm fine now, now I gotta take care of Sam. And you'd be surprised how well it worked. So I grabbed Sam by the shoulder, and we keep him going down thru there. And Sam slipped up, we stopped for something, and he looks up at me and he says. "I know who you are. You're the best damn pilot in the world!" So I never let him forget that. I told him when you're really down and out the truth really comes out. (Big chuckle).

But uhh, Sam really saved my life! Because up till then I was just bound determined I just couldn't do it. But when you have to, you do. And when you see somebody else who really needs you to help him, it really makes a difference. So anyway, I can't remember the names of the towns, but we got into town and they put us in churches, and they were concrete floors and it was cold. And the next morning the burgher master of this town, whom we heard had a son who was a POW in the US. So he took over from the military. It's the only time I ever saw anyone take over from the military and opened up, they had pottery factories there. And they opened up the drying rooms and put us bunch in there. They were warm. We stayed in there two to three days. And then we marched out of there, not too far to a railroad station, and they put us in these little box cars. Fifty to a car. You couldn't even sit down. And I don't know how long we stayed on that. Uh I still had my blanket, and two or three other guys had their blankets, and there were rings in the tops of the cars and we managed to get five or six hammocks up there, get some of us off the floor and make some room for the other guys. We were in there probably a day and a half, something like that and we pulled into Nuremburg and went into a camp there.

Nuremberg was nasty, filthy, dirty, uh, and you'd walk into your barracks room and you'd see rats come running down the wall and walk across the guys that are sleeping. Food, we got a cup of soup every day,

and if it was bean soup there was a worm in every bean, if it was vegetable soup, I saw my Dad throw stuff out, he wouldn't feed his cows what we got. But you're hungry you'd eat it anyway. We were there for a while. You had to get in a line to get water and all you could get was a tin can of water that was all you could get, and you were probably in line for an hour to get your cup of water and we were there probably a month or two and we were there probably a month or two and I got bitten from head to foot by bugs, and it all settled in my feet and I couldn't walk, I couldn't do anything. And they put me in the barracks they called the hospital, and there was an American soldier in there who was a doctor, and he was running the hospital, So they put a hot water bottle on it over night and the next morning, they sat me up in the chair and he said hang on, and he had someone hold my shoulders, and he cut a hole in my knee and squeezed out a cup of stuff, and he had penicillin tablets and he didn't know what they were because they were new, and he just stuck tablets in there. Done more good if he fed them to me, but he put them in there and tore up a sheet and just wrapped it up. He said now we're going to move out of here in a couple of days and I'll fix it up so you can ride in the train. And I told him no way! We had a radio in there and you could get BBC. And the Germans knew we had the radio but they could never find it. And we had the information now that our boys were shooting everything up even if it had a red cross on it. Because we saw it and we knew why, we saw them load tanks on trains and cover them in sheets with a big red cross so they could move them to the front lines. So our boys had gotten wise to that, so I wasn't going to get on any train at all. I'd rather walk. And afterwards they told me it was the best thing I could have done for my leg anyway. So the first day out we got strafed by our boys. A couple of the boys got knicked, but they went right down the side of us to see what we were and who we were. So we just pulled our clothes off and made a big POW sign and from then on we had a fighter escort all the way down into Bavaria, and this was a four to five, maybe six day trip. By then we were actually bribing the German guards to stay with us. Because there were SS troops in the area. And you didn't want a bunch of Americans just floating around down there because those SS troops would just mow you down. So we were bribing the guards and the civilians then were I saw a bunch of civilian women attack our camp commander, the German camp commander and they knocked him down and were knocking him around pretty good. We finally got down to, before we got there we were in one town somewhere, and you could just walk off if you wanted. I walked into another town and found some kids in the town and I bought some eggs off them with a couple of cigarettes that the Red Cross had gotten into us. And uh, and then one of the home guards came out and followed me to make sure I left the town and didn't stick around. But by then the Germans were screaming and hollering, when are the Americans going to get here, because they wanted the Americans to get there before the Russians did. And I saw one farmer there and we stayed in his hay mound. It was nice and really clean hay. It was a nice place to stay.

WC: Now the war isn't over at this point right?

EM: Now it's still going. The kids are out there playing and you can see the kids ribs. And I told him, "Why don't you kill one of your chickens and feed your kids. " His answer was it's a death penalty to kill that chicken without a government permit. Anyway we finally get down to Mooseburg. I guess all the POWs in Germany were in there. They said there was over a 100K in that camp. So we get down into that camp, and it was a Sunday morning, and we knew Gen Patton was coming. We got the information

on our radio. Matter of fact they had it set up so that if the Germans were going to move us again, we would put sheets on top of the building and signal in a particular place and exactly 10 that Sunday morning, the first tank rolled over the top of the hill and started throwing stuff over the fence. The tank drove right thru the fence they didn't open the gate or nothing, and behind the tank came in a pickup truck, and General Patton was standing up in the back of the pickup truck, pearl handled pistols at his sides and all. (gestures where the pistols were hanging, and chuckles)

And I knew where the group would be, but I was still having a problem getting around, and here comes Patton down the street, and I threw him a salute, and he saluted back, and he pulled off and made a little speech to us, and then he said Seeya gentlemen I have a war to win, and he pulled off and was gone!.

WC: Had the guards taken off when they saw the tanks

EM: No the guards had a choice, they could have taken off if they wanted to or they could stay. And from what I heard, one of the German Commanders in there, didn't make it through the day, there was one just under him, and the word went out, you take care of him. He was the kind that instead of giving the Heil Hitler salute, he gave the Hubba Hubba and came out and helped the POWs out as much as he could without getting himself into trouble. But the one above him, didn't make it through the day, he was the kind that made life miserable for you, and he didn't make it through the day. Of course all the time the fighters were coming down, the fighters would come down, and the guards would scramble to the floor when they saw those fighters coming. Then they pulled spades to see who would come out first. And my commanding officer of this area, pulled out the Ace of Spades, and I came out on the 7th airplane, the C-47s or the DC-3s, were coming in with supplies for Patton, and then they would load them up with POWs and load them up and haul them out to France. So I came out early. I came out, on the 7th airplane out because my commanding officer pulled out the ace of spades. We went over to France and we stopped in Paris to refuel, and while we were there I ate nineteen doughnuts! I was trying to get more, but they wouldn't give me any more. But then we got to, I can't think of it, but anyway it was where they were bringing all the POWs in and they gave us a chemical bath, and you threw all your clothes away, and they gave us enough pants and underwear and clean stuff to get on, and then they ask us, if we would give up our quarters on the ship going home, We figured they would probably put sick and wounded in those quarters and then we would be in other quarters. So we weren't in the best quarters but they pulled out and we were very disappointed, they loaded on a bunch of (British forebrides?) They got the good quarters, but I didn't care then, they could have put a log behind me and I would have ridden that home. (Chuckles)

WC: Uh Huh! (Emphatically)

EM: But we came home, and came into Camp Miles Standish? Up in Boston.

WC: Now when was this?

EM: This would have been May.

WC: I guess the war had ended?

EM: Yep, May of 45', and we got off a boat and got on a train and it went into Camp Miles Standish. There's a whole bunch of German POWs in there, wearing brand new American uniforms with PW on the back of them. We ran after them, they had to get all the MPs after us and round us all up! And then went in the mess hall that night. And I'm right behind that big guy Smitty you know the one that was banging me around that time, and the Germans were serving the food so, we're in line and they put a steak on your tray and you're supposed to move forward and Smitty tells him I want three more steaks, and the German shakes his head no, and the German went flying across the room. And they got the brass in there, and they informed everyone that these guys get anything that they want! And there's a couple of days later we got on a train and went down to Atlanta Georgia, and at that time my ex-wife was living in Nashville.

WC: So you were married at this time?

EM: Yeah I got married before I went over there, BIG MISTAKE. But uh, anyway, from there they put us on, I guess there's 30 day leave. So I got a bus and went up to my home, and shortly came up here and spent some time on the farm, and then I went to Plattsburgh for awhile and went to an Army hospital for a while. Then I came back down here to try and get into the swing of things again. And I came down here and went down to GE again and that was where I was working before I left and went in the service. And I didn't stay there but a couple of weeks. I don't know how we won the war from what I saw going on there, but maybe it wasn't going on during the war, but, there's a woman in there and they took her out of the area and put her on peace work duty, and I was in there putting out the least amount of work possible and I was still putting out more than anyone else in there. And well, that's another story.

So anyway, I got lucky, but even the airlines wouldn't talk to you. They said you guys fly too rough. But eventually they found out maybe that wasn't so bad. So I flew a couple of years for a non-sched airline, which wasn't bad, it was enjoyable but then you were gone all the time. You didn't know where you were going or when you were coming back.

WC: Now where were you living at this point.

EM: I was living in Nashville. So one of the trips out we had a long layover or something in Michigan, so I caught a train into Chicago and talked to American Airlines and they hired me. So I said don't let me get home and tell my boss that I'm leaving. But when I got back, he knew. He had flown for American before I guess, so somebody let him know, so I got with American Airlines and I couldn't have had a better job, loved flying, I never had any big problems with American. I was in the co-pilot seat for 11 years, but that was because it was all based on seniority and right after I got in they quit hiring for quite some time. But then when I was flying out of Nashville and I wanted to get on the bigger airplanes and especially now with the jets coming out. I went up to Washington DC and my wife she didn't want to go up there, so I just finally filed suit, and that was the end of that. But then I got to Chicago and I'm flying co-pilot, but very soon I'm flying Captain. And when you do that, you go back to the old piston airplanes. You fly them for a little while and then you start working your way up on them. And ended up flying on the DC-

10. Which is a 289 passenger airplane jet. I loved it. I stayed about 11 years on a three engine jet. I stayed on them for 11 years so I could be pretty senior.

WC: Is that the 727?

EM: Yeah it was, I'm getting (motions towards his head) so, such that I can't remember these details anymore. But anyway, I loved that 727 it was a nice airplane. But then someone told me for retirement purposes you better get on a bigger airplane, so then I went to the 10 and I really enjoyed it. That 727, you could push the throttles up and roll down the runway make the turn line up and then you'd take off. But the 10, you couldn't do that with, you had to line that thing up because when you pushed the throttles up it was going where it was pointed, and no turning at all! But it would push you back in your seat and I really liked that. And it turned out I had a close call on it. I took a flight from Chicago to Phoenix on a ten and left it there, and took another back to Chicago and went home and went to bed. I got home at about 6 in the morning or something like that. It was a night flight and about noon my wife woke me up and she said, "You gotta get up and watch the TV" and I went in there, and the airplane had crashed on takeoff at O'Hare killed everyone on board. Worst accident they had ever had. And I looked at it, and I said that's the airplane I flew last night to Phoenix! Now I had brought another one back. And shortly after that the phone rang and it was the Chief Pilot, and he said Guess What! I said I know, I flew that airplane last night. He said I just have one question. What kind of landing did you have last night. You see, right off the start they gotta try to nail it to somebody right away. I said you call the co-pilot and ask him. I wouldn't tell him. The co-pilot was a young fella and he had flown with me a lot on the 727 but never on the 10, and we were sitting there talking before we left, and he said he had never had a bad landing in a 10 and they were always smooth. So we were coming in to Phoenix and I sat up and said I better show this young fella something and I touched down and you never even felt the tires touch, you never even heard them, and he looked over and said you can really slick them on too can't ya! So that eliminated that theory! It turned out there were 30 something airplanes with the same problem. The amazing thing is it could have happened on that airplane at any time, and I don't know why it didn't happen when it did. But it makes you wonder if that had happened what would I have done? I think I probably would have done better than they did. I had a really good chief pilot early on in the airline, and he said if you get in trouble, you don't worry about the trouble, fly the airplane. I think that's what happened here, the co-pilot was flying it, and the Captain was rated as one of the best. He was trying to figure out what went wrong, when he should have been making sure the airplane was flying properly. There was no procedure at all for what happened. (30:04, Part II) The engine just broke off and instead of just breaking off and falling to the ground, it broke off under power, and it came up over the leading edge of the wing, and tore off the lift devices, so the left wing quit flying and the right wing was still flying and it went over. But, he also pulled the nose up, and let his airspeed back to what another procedure is if you lose an engine your best flight speed to get out of there, but if he had kept the speed he had already, it wouldn't have gone so quick. He might have pulled it out of there, but that's what experience does for you.

WC: Did you make use of the GI Bill at all?

EM: No.

WC: Okay, did you join any Veterans Organizations?

EM: There aren't any around here. I joined the uh, Ex-POW Group, and spent more time with them of course, the 457th Bomb Group used to go to all their meetings. But it got so that the Brass were trying to take over and they were leaving out the little guy. And to me the little guy and the (flight) engineers those people, I could never say anything against the engineer. I never had an airplane that was bad. We had some that you know we had problems with, but...

WC: That was something I was going to ask you, did you mostly fly the same airplane?

EM: I had my own airplane, but in 17 missions I flew it three times! The rest of the time they were putting it back together!

WC: Now did your airplane have a name? Or was it painted with any nose art?

EM: Yeah, the boys named it SHAD, I had gotten married just before, and I had skinnied down to just a shadow of what I was, so it was short for "Shadow" (Chuckles)

WC: Was there any kind of artwork on it?

EM: I don't think, they just wrote SHAD on the side.

WC: Okay,

EM: It seemed like every time they were putting it back together.

WC: Did you decorate your jacket at all?

EM: I had my wings on it, and every time you'd make a mission you'd put a bomb on.

WC: Okay

EM: But you never wore that when you went over there. And of course I never got the jacket back. As a matter of fact, that morning I put on a light little jacket, it wasn't a military jacket. Which I normally wore, but it was raining that morning when I went out to get on the airplane, so I had it on when I bailed out. I had my bill fold on me too, and of course the Germans confiscated everything, watch, ring, and they did give me back my wedding ring. And that was all. But I had got a receipt I had just gotten paid, \$250 or something like that, and they gave me a receipt for .59 cents and a pocket comb. And that was it.

WC: Um hmm, How do you think your time in the service changed or affected your life?

EM: Smartest move I ever made.

WC: Um hmm

EM: Before, I don't know, When I got into that thing, college to be frank with you I was flunking out. I gotta see wheels turn, and this thing opened up and I didn't figure I would ever make it, but I applied for

it, and I made it. Like I said there were thirty something of us that went in and I made it. I couldn't have had a better job after I got back home. It's just never...when you're flying, airplanes, I had a little motto. "If I don't learn something today, I'm going to quit flying" And I never had to quit flying, you always learned something. And it's always a contest, it's get that airplane off and land it as smoothly as you can, and you always let the co-pilot have it. I always let the co-pilot have the first leg. That way he doesn't know what I want. And he's going to fly it the way it should be. What the American Airlines wants and what the FAA wants. So I would always let my co-pilot fly the first leg, and he hasn't got the slightest idea of what I want. Now when you're flying co-pilot and you didn't fly it the way some of those Captains wanted it, you were in trouble. So just some of the little things that went on that made life easier. I had one Captain that nobody wanted to fly with. So I'm junior now and every once in awhile I would get him. And uh we were going up from Knoxville up to Roanoake and it was rough, this was a two engine prop. So I was flying it, and he say's well take it down through those clouds, it'd be smoother down there. I said there's mountains down there, we'd be below our minimum altitude. He said that don't make a difference, go on down. I said I'm not going to, and he tried to take it away from me. I said, you're not going down there! And I wouldn't let him take it away from me. And we got up to Roanoke, and he looks over at me and he say's "You deliberately disobeyed me." And I said "Yes sir! And I'll do it again under similar circumstances!" And we were still hemin and hawin, and we left out to go to Washington DC, and he said "When we get back I think we're going to have to go in and see the Chief Pilot." His name was Harry Winston. I said: "Harry, that's the smartest thing you've said all day!" He raised his hand to hit me, and I said: "Harry, you hit me and I'll be the last person you ever hit!" We got to be good friends after that. But he was just one of those guys, he had to be "it", and his way. And it got so that nobody would fly with him. Matter of fact they had to run him out of the base at Nashville and he went out to Forth Worth, and he hadn't been out there a month and he got beaten up in the parking lot, by a couple of flight engineers! (Chuckles, laughing)

WC: All right, well thank you very much for your interview!

EM: Well I enjoyed doing it!

WC: It was very enlightening and it was excellent! Thank you!

EM: Wasn't too long was it? Wife says' I talk too much!

WC: Oh no! I'm going to just take a look at your memorabilia wall here. This one picture here at the bottom, that was when you were commissioned, when you graduated from flight school?

EM: Yep, I got my wings, that's the only way I can tell.

WC: And this picture right above it, is that your crew? Which one's you?

EM: Yep, (points to lower left hand of picture, first person on left in the front row and say's co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, then points to top row first person on left and states "This guy stayed in the service and retired as a Brigadier General."

WC: Really?! Was he an enlisted man there?

EM: Yes, and these three little boys here I lost. Points to the men in positions 2-4 from the left side of the picture. He points to the next guy and says he's still alive and this guy here is the tail gunner.

WC: Is he alive now, the tail gunner?

EM: Yeah, but I think he passed away January of this year.

WC: Okay, camera pans around, "And that photo of you over there, that's you as a cadet?"

EM: Yep, Aviation Cadet, points to the insignia on top of the Wheel Cap. Camera pans down below the picture to another picture with EM wearing headphones and a flight cap. EM states, "I guess this one is too, I got the insignia on that also."

WC: And that's your id that you had when you were a POW?

EM: Yeah,

Camera pans across some medals. Which are Prisoner of War Medal, Air Medal (for combat) and what looks like a NYS Conspicuous Service Cross Medal. (Given for his time as a POW, is my guess)

WC: Camera pans across a plaque from American Airlines, 1952-1981. "This picture here is when you worked for American Airlines?"

EM: Yep

WC: Camera pans up to a small shadow box for service. It contains an Air Medal for combat, a WWII Campaign Medal (Representing service during WWII) and the dates of service with the 457th Bomb Group Aug 18 1942 – Dec 1, 1945. One medal is missing before the Air Medal which is most likely the POW medal displayed in the other wall frame.

So you have some more photographs, if you just want to sit right here and show them?

EM: Can you get a better one of this?

WC: Yeah I think I did get a pretty good one of it on the wall, but yeah show that one to me again. If I'm too close it gets kinda blurry so...it's all right if you keep it in the book. EM has a bigger version of the picture of his crew which shows more of the aircraft in the background. Just hold it against your chest and I can zoom right in against it.

EM: Must be a good camera!

WC: Is that the airplane you flew the most of 2847?

EM: No, they just lined people up in front of that one and took the pictures.

WC: Okay, All right do you have some more photos?

EM: There's a picture that was taken the same day I was shot down, it's not me, but you can see. Picture shows a (B-17?) plane missing an entire wing, and two engines on a wing below it, that probably came from the plane. That's some of the things that went on.

WC: Okay, what's that a picture of?

EM: This one here? That one's from a magazine.

WC: No, this one here, points to the photo previous to the plane picture.

EM: That's a picture of me and my mother before I went overseas.

WC: Okay I want to get a shot of your B-17 cockpit!

EM: Oh okay

WC: And again thank you for your interview.