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New York State Military
Museum Interview

INTERVIEW OF HAROLD WILEY

June 22, 2005



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2 MR. CLARK: Okay. This is an
3 interview at the New York State Military Museum,
4 Saratoga Springs, New York. 22nd of June 2005.

5 Approximately one fifteen p.m.
6 Interviewers are Wayne Clark and Mike Russert.

7 MR. CLARK: Could you give me
8 your full name, date of birth, and place of birth,
9 please?

10 MR. WILEY: Harold J. Wiley.
11 Born in town of Pittstown, Rensselaer County, New
12 York, March 14th, 1919.

13 Q. Okay. What was your educational
14 background prior to entering service?

15 A. I went to -- I went to -- I went
16 to District school a one room school house until I
17 finished eighth grade and then I went to Whitney's
18 Falls High school, graduated in 1937. And then I
19 stayed home a year.

20 In 1938 I went to -- Morrisville
21 Tech School, auto -- automotive engineering. I
22 graduated there in June of 1940. And worked in
23 Syracuse in a garage until September when I went
24 And I went to Chinook Field and joined the air

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2 force.

3 Q. Now, you enlisted in September
4 1940. Why did you decide to enlist?

5 A. Because the draft was getting
6 close. And I was right for the for the draft.

7 Q. Okay. Now, you -- you chose the
8 Army Air Corp at the time it was called the Air
9 Corp. Why -- why did you make that decision?

10 A. Well, I've always loved
11 airplanes, ever since I was a kid. And -- and
12 basically I admired army pilots, I thought they
13 were the greatest flyers there were, you know, so
14 that was always in the back of my mind as a
15 teenager. To get into flying some place so --.

16 Q. Had you ever flown?

17 A. Just once I guess, at a local
18 airport. I didn't have any experience flying, no.

19 Q. Okay. All right. So when you
20 enlisted in September of 1940, where -- where did
21 you go to enlist and -- and where did you go for
22 basic training and so on?

23 A. Well I was advised by the
24 recruiter in Syracuse to pay my own way to Chinook

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2 Field Illinois, where the Air Corp Had a tech
3 school. And that -- I did that. And I got there
4 later in September I guess it was 1940.

5 And I went through all the school there, all the
6 different types of the airplane engines and
7 dislodge and all that. And graduated from there I
8 guess it must have been the next year. Probably in
9 the early part of '41.

10 Q. Okay. So where were you when you
11 heard about Pearl Harbor?

12 A. Oh, that was in Bangor Maine in
13 the Bomber Group.

14 Q. Now, how did you heard about it?
15 What was your reaction?

16 A. Well, I was stationed in Bangor.
17 And that -- it was on a Sunday. And I had a
18 girlfriend so I was to get my girlfriend that day.
19 And we were riding around in Bangor -- parts of
20 Maine, coast by Bangor and had a portable radio in
21 the car.

22 All of a sudden it came on the
23 radio, that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. And of
24 course the news came right over the radio in the

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2 dark the air base was closed at the time. Put on
3 emergency status.

4 So, that was -- I was off the
5 base actually when it happened.

6 MR. RUSSERT: Now, what type of
7 aircraft were -- were you working on at that time?

8 MR. WILEY: B-18's and B-17's.

9 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

10 MR. WILEY: See, when I get out
11 of the Air Corp mechanic school I was assigned to
12 43rd bomb group in in Langley Field. And they had
13 all B-17's. That was the old B-17 with the small
14 cabs, B-17c.

15 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

16 MR. WILEY: And I worked as a
17 mechanic there for awhile. And then they moved us
18 during the summer of '41, they moved us to Bangor
19 Maine. It was a new air base and we were the first
20 group to move in there.

21 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

22 MR. WILEY: So, that's where I
23 was when Pearl Harbor happened.

24 MR. CLARK: Okay. How long were

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2 you up in Maine?

3 A. Well, not very long after the war
4 started. I -- at that time I was a radio operator
5 on the B-17 or B-18. And the next day they put us
6 right on patrol. Patrolling the Atlantic from
7 Bangor down to Strober Field. And I was acting as a
8 radio operator. We were looking for submarines.

9 And that went on for a few days.
10 And of course everything was so upset at the air
11 base the group -- the group was getting ready to
12 move out and they put me on a cadre, that's a small
13 group and they sent me -- to near Geiger Field in
14 Boise, Colorado with four or five officers maybe a
15 couple dozen mechanics there to -- to start another
16 group.

17 MR. RUSSERT: What rank were you
18 at that point?

19 MR. WILEY: I was Staff Sergeant.
20 And -- and I was assigned to 303rd Mountain Group
21 which was forming then for combat duty. They were
22 getting crews and getting pilots and putting them
23 together there.

24 And I should tell you before,

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2 when I was in Bangor, I took the aviation cadet
3 examination and I flunked it because I fainted.

4 So, I went up to Boise and I was
5 assigned to a B-17 as -- as the engineer on the
6 flight crew. And I kept thinking to myself, oh,
7 this is getting pretty close to combat.

8 So I took the test again and I
9 passed it in Boise.

10 And so that took me right off --
11 off the bomber crew and they sent me home for three
12 weeks to try to get into the training course on the
13 west coast, which I did. And I started in Santa
14 Anna California for the aviation cadet training.

15 MR. RUSSERT: Was that a pilot
16 course you were taking?

17 MR. WILEY: Yes, it was a pilot
18 course, yes.

19 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

20 MR. CLARK: Okay. What -- what
21 was the program like -- what did you do and what
22 did you learn as an aviation cadet?

23 A. Well, we covered nearly
24 everything, of course they started with just the

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2 basics of the sign and then the navigation, and
3 weather and mechanics come into it and hydraulics
4 and everything pertaining to air crafts.

5 Q. Now were you on a B-17 all this
6 time? Is that what you trained on? The B-17?

7 A. Well, I left the B-17 completely,
8 that's out of my picture.

9 Q. Oh, okay.

10 A. Because I'm going to cadet
11 training now.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And that was just a bunch of
14 young guys in cadet training. And so we went to --
15 in Santa Anna and of course there's no airplanes
16 there. It was just a basic course, I'd say.

17 MR. RUSSERT: The ground school?

18 MR. WILEY: Ground school,
19 absolutely. And then when I finished Santa Anna I
20 was sent to Trenary California for primary
21 training -- for flight training. And we had the
22 old PT-17's Stearman at Trenary. Trenary was a
23 civilian school. The army had taken that over for
24 training pilots.

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2 And I got in about sixty hours
3 just flying there.

4 MR. RUSSERT: How did you like
5 the Stearman?

6 MR. WILEY: Beautiful airplane,
7 yeah. You had to be careful of the ground though.
8 But I got through it. And I had to check ride -- a
9 guy -- the instructor said -- or the basic
10 instructor, the head of the instructors said I'm
11 going to check ride you, I said, okay. So, we went
12 out to check ride. Just some maneuvers, you know.
13 He said you're feeling all right? I said yeah, I'm
14 feeling all right. He says you blacked me out.

15 I said you're okay to go ahead,
16 sir. Then on when on to basic -- basic flying
17 school. Bigger airplanes, they were BT 17's. And
18 that was in Lancaster, California.

19 MR. CLARK: Okay. How long were
20 you on them?

21 A. Well, about the same number of
22 hours, I think it was seventy hours of flying.

23 Q. Okay. So, finally how long did
24 it take you before you graduated?

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2 A. There?

3 Q. Yes.

4 A. It's hard to tell a direct number
5 of months but several months. And then you more or
6 less had a little choice if you wanted to go to the
7 fighter planes or if you wanted to go to twin
8 engine or four engine or four engine training. I
9 went to the twin engine school in Roswell, New
10 Mexico. And we flew there in a every thing, Bobcat
11 Cessna it was a twin engine and that's where I
12 completed my training for flying. That was
13 probably another sixty or seven hours I imagine
14 there.

15 And that's where I was received
16 commission as first lieutenant when I graduated
17 from Roswell. Not a first Lieutenant a second
18 Lieutenant.

19 That was a April 12th, 1943.

20 Q. All right. So, you graduated
21 from there and were you assigned to crew or did you
22 go for any additional training?

23 A. No, from there we had a choice --
24 a little choice what we wanted to fly. And I said

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2 gee, I want to fly a B-17 because I knew the B-17
3 being a mechanic on it. And so they sent me Hobbs
4 New Mexico, that was the transition training for
5 the B-17's.

6 I don't have my class with me.

7 Q. What was it like to come from
8 your two engineer craft to the B-17?

9 A. Quite an experience.

10 Q. In what ways?

11 A. Well, to -- to handle things in
12 the first place. Because we had an instructor that
13 had just come back from the Pacific. He'd been
14 flying B-17's over there. And so there were two of
15 us taking the training and another fellow besides
16 myself. So he got the co-pilot seat and I got the
17 pilot seat. The instructor stood between us,
18 showed -- showed us how to taxi this thing and we
19 got out on the runway and we were just kind of
20 sitting there, hesitating and he says, are you
21 going to fly me or not?

22 Well, yes. I didn't four
23 throttles to take care of where he only had two,
24 and I said, how do you steer this thing? He said

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2 well, go to the top of head so he reached in and he
3 shoved those four throttles ahead and away we went.
4 I got off the ground all right. Good training
5 there, wonderful training.

6 Q. Okay. When were you eventually
7 assigned a crew?

8 A. When we finished the combat -- or
9 the B-17 transmission training. We were sent to
10 Spokane Washington to pick up my combat crew, and
11 they came in from different schools, Montgomery
12 School, navigator school, and the Bombardier
13 School, and we all got together there, didn't know
14 each other or anything.

15 Q. Okay. Did you basically stay
16 with that crew the entire war?

17 A. Right.

18 Q. All your missions? Okay.

19 A. We stayed together in the school.
20 A lot of training there. We had night training and
21 we had navigation training and as you get under
22 gunner range up on the desert models of tanks and
23 stuff and we had to fly by and let the gunner shoot
24 at crows, you know, for practice for the gunners.

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2 And then -- a lot of hours there until well, it was
3 late of '43 I guess when I finished the combat
4 training.

5 Q. Now, did you pick a plane up and
6 fly over seas?

7 A. Nope, we were sent by train to
8 Fort Dix, New Jersey. And from there we boarded
9 the Queen Elizabeth and made the trip to England.
10 We were on that ship five days. Traveled alone no
11 escort.

12 Q. Okay. What happened when you
13 reached England? Where did you go?

14 A. Went on to Scotland and then they
15 took us out of Scotland to shore. And to they call
16 it -- some kind of a setting where you're all a
17 bunch of crews were sent under this one big center.

18 MR. RUSSERT: A replacement
19 center?

20 MR. WILEY: A replacement center,
21 right. And recruiters from there would go to
22 different bomb groups.

23 MR. CLARK: The original wing or
24 the whole crew of you didn't go in -- you know,

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2 piecemeal one at a time with other crews?

3 A. No, we stayed together. We were
4 all one family.

5 Q. Uh-huh.

6 A. Very close group. You get that
7 way.

8 Q. Yeah. Yeah.

9 A. And so we were there a few days
10 and we were assigned to 305th armed group in Chelsea
11 England. And because they had a big loss on that
12 Strangeport Bay in August of '43 and we were --
13 must have been September when we joined them to
14 fill in where they lost so many planes.

15 They got eighteen planes that day had only one
16 come home. They I guess tried to scare us.

17 Q. Yeah. Okay. Did you -- when did
18 you do your first mission?

19 A. December 30th, 1943. I flew as a
20 co-pilot with another experienced combat crew.
21 They had every -- new crew do that, the pilot would
22 have at least one radio new crew. Had no problem
23 that day. Southern part of France.

24 Q. Now, when you're with your crew,

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2 did you fly in the same plane all the time or did
3 you --

4 A. Well --.

5 Q. -- use different planes or?

6 A. When we got -- as soon as we got
7 there, they told us they had a new plane for us and
8 we had to fly up to Scotland where they had a big
9 Depot and we picked up a new plane.

10 MR. RUSSERT: Okay. Go ahead.

11 MR. WILEY: So, we picked up a
12 new plane and brought it back to the base and our
13 CO said well, you guys got a new plane, you can
14 name it so they supplied pens so we could write.
15 So we all passed it around and we decided on
16 "Rights Room." That was our air command for our
17 training. And --.

18 Q. Now, how did you pick that name?

19 A. Well, we just bantered around as
20 much as the whole crew. One guy wanted to name it
21 after a beer -- beer outfit, I said no, I don't
22 want to name it after a beer outfit. He said he
23 was from Milwaukee. So we decided on Rights Room
24 and it looked good.

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2 MR. RUSSERT: Did you have
3 something else on there besides the name like any
4 kind of nose art?

5 MR. WILEY: No, that was just
6 it." Rights Room" right on the side of the nose.

7 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

8 MR. WILEY: And the next day on
9 December 31st, it was our first day as a crew. The
10 last day of December '43. And that was an
11 experience for us because see, we had a break
12 formation if you come back home and it's socked in,
13 we had to proceed anyway breaking the formation,
14 flying out so many seconds this way.

15 And then down through it so you
16 wouldn't -- the formation wouldn't be separated.
17 So we did that. We came and got down. I was
18 pretty close to the ground. We were just skimming
19 along side the ground and our fuel was getting low
20 because we'd been -- coming back from the raid.

21 And I said to the co-pilot, I
22 said give us an emergency call. Well an emergency
23 call at that time was darky, darky, darky. So he
24 started calling darky, darky, darky, on the radio

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2 and they had in their airfield, four or five miles
3 out they had the lights so it made the conflict to
4 the airport.

5 So, he looked down and say hey,
6 there's a tunnel I said what? Yeah. He said follow
7 that right in. So we did. Followed that in. And
8 landed and it was a forward reconnaissance base and
9 we parked the airplane all right. And the guys all
10 got out and of course that was New Years Eve. We
11 had a great time.

12 And we all went up they had there
13 own mess there and I guess the men went to their
14 mess and we went to ours. And we started having
15 drinks around. And the old 19th Commander said
16 Lieutenant, he said you're no on a pew. I said I
17 know. You never made it around the pattern.

18 MR. CLARK: Now, what was your
19 target that day?

20 A. I just can't tell you. But I
21 have it written down in my little book over there
22 but -- I think it was down in the southern --I
23 can't think of the place. Well you have a project.

24 Q. You have PFCL you have it written

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2 here.

3 A. Yeah, okay.

4 Q. What -- what was the target?

5 A. Probably the pens -- submarine
6 pens.

7 Q. Oh yeah, that's right. They were
8 there, yes.

9 A. Yes. They had twelve feet of
10 concrete on top of them, you know.

11 Q. Okay. How many missions did you
12 fly?

13 A. Overall twenty-nine. We were
14 flying twenty-nine -- twenty-eight when I got
15 there. But as time went on, Jimmy Doolittle came
16 to ruin his ATA Air Force, raised it to thirty.

17 Q. Did you ever see him?

18 A. No. But I had this -- quite a
19 few raids so I would (indiscernible).

20 Q. Now, could you describe some of
21 your raids? What use -- that stand out more than
22 others or? Are there some that stood out a little
23 more than others?

24 A. Would you hand me my little book?

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2 I've got them all written down.

3 MR. RUSSERT: Now, did your
4 aircraft receive a lot of flack damage?

5 MR. WILEY: Not an awful lot. We
6 lost one engine one day that was the only time.

7 MR. RUSSERT: Any encounters with
8 German fighters?

9 MR. WILEY: Oh yes. We
10 encountered German fires. Now what day was it the
11 first raid?

12 MR. CLARK: Your first raid was
13 December 31st, 1943.

14 A. I think I'm missing one.

15 Q. Now you kept this like a journal
16 while you were over there?

17 A. Yeah. We weren't supposed to but
18 I sneak that in. We had a lot of -- quite a lot of
19 flack but nothing too dangerous. I had a piece
20 come in by foot one day. And a few holes in the
21 airplane but like I said we lost one engine one day
22 but no problem. It didn't windmill or anything.
23 We got back all right.

24 MR. RUSSERT: So, none of your

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2 crew members were ever wounded or?

3 MR. WILEY: Never got hurt but
4 our ball turret gunner he had a problem because a
5 little fellow -- in fact his name was little, but
6 he would lose his oxygen down there once in awhile.
7 And -- and the navigator, he was in charge of
8 personnel. Take every fifteen minutes or even less
9 than that. He would call the intercom, make
10 everybody check in if they're all right.

11 But gunner didn't check in he
12 knew something was wrong so he got a portable
13 oxygen in a bag and you reel that thing around
14 inside so to get him out and they give him oxygen
15 and they try to get back in but it was a dangerous
16 spot but that's about the only trouble we had,
17 physically.

18 MR. CLARK: What was the longest
19 mission you were on, would you think?

20 A. I think it was -- it was ten
21 hours. We -- it was Stetten, Germany.

22 Q. Were you on any raids at all into
23 Berlin?

24 A. Oh yeah, I was there five times.

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2 Q. What was that like? That was
3 supposed to have been -- that was supposed to be
4 terrible?

5 A. That' right. I was on the first
6 raid to Berlin.

7 Q. You were?

8 A. Yeah. Very first raid.

9 Q. Could you talk about that a
10 little bit?

11 A. Well, we got over there and the
12 weather was bad. It socked in on us. And our --
13 our group leader led us right into that -- that --
14 those clouds and you just can't fly formation in
15 clouds. So we kind of broke up right there, that
16 day. And after awhile they dropped -- dropped
17 their bombs but it was B-17's were flying this way.
18 Boy it was scary but we got through it all right.
19 And I think we probably went right back the next
20 day.

21 Q. How did it feel each day getting
22 up and doing that?

23 A. Well, it was kind of hard but
24 they'd wake us up about three o'clock in the

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2 morning and we'd be ready to have our breakfast and
3 briefing that was perfect timing. We all got
4 together in the briefing room and had a great big
5 nap curtain to it. Then you rolled the curtains
6 back and all groan.

7 MR. RUSSERT: All the groaning
8 and complaining.

9 MR. WILEY: Where are we going
10 today?

11 MR. CLARK: Let's see --.

12 MR. RUSSERT: What about when you
13 had time off? Did you go into London or?

14 MR. WILEY: Oh yeah, we went to
15 London. Our group had a hotel reserved there for
16 us, many rooms there. We had a facility for us
17 when we went to London, yeah.

18 MR. CLARK: What were your
19 relationships like with the -- with the English
20 people?

21 A. I never had very much contact.
22 But a lot of guys went to the clubs, you know? But
23 I wasn't much of a drinking man, so I didn't go to
24 the clubs too much. But every -- I mean, they were

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2 all nice to us. I mean in London when you went

3 there they were you know.

4 Q. How would you rate the B-17 as a
5 bomber? How did you feel about the B-17?

6 A. The best. They took a lot of
7 punishment see them come home in tough shape.

8 Q. How would you rate the German
9 88's? The flack guns?

10 A. They were accurate. And then the
11 old big ones had a black burst a hundred and the
12 88's had they gray burst. The other would be a
13 gray burst. And they would go higher. They'd be
14 way up high, they would -- they could reach us
15 then.

16 Q. How would you rate your
17 commanding officers?

18 A. Very super. You mean the combat
19 officers?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. Yeah. We had a colonel he was --
22 he was a great flyer and he would come out and
23 after we got all up to the briefing, okay, guys,
24 today we grind the hunt. And he'd let us go and

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2 then we'd go.

3 Q. What kind of medals and
4 decorations and awards did you receive?

5 A. Well, I got the air medal. I
6 think five clusters and the DFC, Distinguished
7 Flying Cross after I finished my missions. We
8 didn't all finish at the same time because -- well,
9 background mission and somebody would have a cold
10 or something and couldn't go we'd have to get a
11 substitute.

12 And one time my co-pilot, he
13 wanted to fly the lead plane and as a tail gun or
14 two what the formations were. So one time he
15 didn't fly with me. So a few times we didn't all
16 fly together at all times.

17 Q. Did you have an incident that you
18 thought was maybe the funniest or one that was the
19 most inspiring to you at all?

20 A. During the combat?

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. Well, like I said that second
23 raid there that was about the scariest time. I
24 mean getting back to England and getting back on

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2 the ground, you know. But we always had traveling
3 with spreading out our fuel because from the time
4 you used up three quarters of your fuel before you
5 got to the target. On the way back we'd be letting
6 down from high altitude and we didn't use so much
7 fuel.

8 Q. Did you ever get air cover on the
9 way over and back?

10 A. With fighters?

11 Q. Fighters, yes.

12 A. Well, we didn't have fighters,
13 well, of course they couldn't go all the way.

14 Q. Right.

15 A. Until we got the B-51's.

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. And the P-38's. And of course
18 the other fires, were the spit fires and the
19 B-47's -- they'd take us quite a ways into France,
20 you know. And then would have to leave us you know
21 they didn't have the fuel and had to go back. And
22 of course but when the P-38's and the B-51's came
23 on, they would -- they would take us to the target
24 area.

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2 Q. Did you have ever see a German
3 jet?

4 A. Oh yeah. Yeah. Not a German
5 jet, no. They didn't come until after I left.

6 Q. After you left? Okay.

7 A. I see a German F-109 coming right
8 straight at us. There was a cannon firing at us.
9 Big dust coming at you.

10 Q. Were there any persons you --
11 that really impressed you while you were in
12 service? Maybe on your crew or other crews or
13 officers?

14 A. Not particularly, I don't think.
15 I always respected our -- our higher officers, you
16 know. They were always -- and most of them were --
17 well, of course they were all combat men, but the
18 ones that we contacted were pretty much were combat
19 personnel got to stayed together pretty much.

20 Q. When you returned to the states,
21 when -- when did you return?

22 A. Well, after I finished --
23 finished my missions in May 1st, '44 they sent me
24 over to Wales to pick up a war B-17 to fly home,

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2 which I didn't think much of, but what are you
3 going to do? I had a way home. They drove me over
4 there. I had my own B-17. And they had a scouting
5 crew and a co-pilot and a navigator and engineer,
6 that's all I had.

7 And we had to take off in the
8 night. And we had to fly over fifteen hundred
9 miles and then turn south to Africa. And when we
10 got in Africa, we I Marrakesh landed and had a
11 Bombay tank in it. That fell out. So we got that
12 repaired. And from Marrakesh we flew down to Dakar
13 Africa. And that was all right. We didn't have
14 any problem there.

15 I just got ready to take off and
16 this command car come rushing down -- down the
17 runway. And held the airplane for a minute and
18 this guy came out he was a colonel going home. I
19 said, oh no.

20 So, he said can I get a ride
21 home? I said, sure. And he got in with us. When
22 he's on board, he's in command, the colonel is. He
23 was all right. We got along all right. So we flew
24 from Dakar North Africa to Natal Brazil, landed

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2 there. And then the next place was Trinidad. Is
3 there any reason why I can't landed Trinidad and
4 you know the colonel said can I have it? I said,
5 okay.

6 Then we get back into Miami
7 Florida. And then they all left me. They said
8 they all wanted to get home. Except the navigator,
9 he was from New York City. He said, I'll stay with
10 you. They all -- all called me pop. And I said
11 okay.

12 MR. CLARK: Yeah, you must have
13 been the oldest guy in the crew, right?

14 MR. WILEY: Oh yeah.

15 MR. RUSSERT: So, how old were
16 you at that time? About twenty-five?

17 MR. WILEY: Twenty-four.

18 MR. RUSSERT: Twenty-four?

19 MR. WILEY: He and I got in New
20 York was the two of us, flying the B-17. I said,
21 you -- you navigated and I'll fly it. So the men
22 in Georgia can get the fuel. And they fueled up
23 for us and everything and we had operations to get
24 clearance to Oklahoma City. He said what's your

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2 weight and balance on that air plane? I said, what
3 do you mean weight and balance? We don't have any
4 weight.

5 Seems they had all new
6 regulations that had something like a slide rule
7 for how much weight in the tanks. I said, boy I
8 hope you don't call me --.

9 MR. RUSSERT: Okay. Go ahead.

10 MR. WILEY: To navigate and I
11 walked right out of the plane and we left
12 operations with no paperwork or anything. We were
13 just cocky enough that we weren't taking any Buff.
14 So we got in the B-17 and we headed for Oklahoma
15 City. He was navigating, I was flying right down
16 low where we could watch the cities and the
17 railroad tracks. We had a good flight to Oklahoma
18 City and landed there. And turned it over to the
19 people there.

20 We stayed there for one night
21 then they put us on the train for New York City.
22 And got in New York City December 7th, D-Day. A
23 great time.

24 Had a time in New York City that

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2 day for service people.

3 MR. CLARK: So after that where
4 were you assigned after that?

5 A. I had two weeks of rehabilitation
6 down there, then I'm assigned to Buckley Field
7 Colorado as a maintenance crew. And from there
8 they sent me to Ardmore Oklahoma as the maintenance
9 officer for the combat crews. They were getting
10 ready -- training combat crews there. Then I had
11 quite a few missing men had come back from overseas
12 and a couple -- the new officers had never even
13 been there.

14 We got along all right. Except
15 the crews that we were getting at that time were a
16 lot younger of course and they just didn't give a
17 damn. They'd go up to the gun range, and of course
18 you've got to shoot so much ammunition. And they
19 would shoot it up burn the barrels. Missing men
20 had been in combat saw that, oh, they were upset.
21 They wanted to get Court Marshaled but they didn't
22 go that far. They were destroying their guns just
23 for the heck of it. Getting rid of the ammo.

24 Q. Was there ever -- ever any chance

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2 that they were getting you ready to go out to the
3 Pacific or?

4 A. No, I didn't no -- no indication
5 of that.

6 Q. Did you -- what did you -- when
7 you heard about the end of the war in Europe, where
8 were you and how did you feel about that?

9 A. Yeah, well we rejoiced about it.
10 We knew that was done, you know.

11 Q. Do you recall ever -- when you
12 heard about the death of President Roosevelt, how
13 you felt?

14 A. It didn't seem to affect us much
15 at all. I mean I seen Roosevelt he'd been at some
16 of the places where we were training and we had a
17 parade. I never paid too much attention to the
18 political business. Roosevelt, Churchill,
19 Stalin and all that.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. This town and all that. We just
22 weren't interested in it I guess.

23 Q. Okay. When were you finally
24 discharged?

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2 A. In September 1945 up at Camp
3 Chaffee, Arkansas.

4 Q. Now, were any of your brothers in
5 service or?

6 A. Yeah, I had a brother that was in
7 the field artillery. And he was out in the west
8 coast and I met him when I was out there in cadet
9 training one time. He went to Officer's Candidate
10 School. He ended up as a major in artillery in
11 Italy. And he got home and out of the service
12 about the same time I did. And the local business
13 in a small town that we expected. We were farm
14 boys, you know, had cows and we had to grind grain
15 and all that. And they had a grist mill we used to
16 go there.

17 So when we got home, one of the
18 men, there were two pay permit, they approached us
19 would you be interested? I said, well. Well, come
20 and work for us for six months, so my brother and I
21 did. We worked for those guys. They had a coal
22 business and Coal Pak and Grist Mill feed and some
23 or little bit hardware. And we worked for six
24 months then we bought it. That was in 1946.

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2 Q. Did you ever make use of the GI
3 bill?

4 A. Nope. Never did anything with
5 that.

6 Q. How about the 52-20 Club?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Did you join a veterans
9 organizations ever?

10 A. I did join one of them for
11 awhile. I forget which one it was. I guess VFW
12 for awhile after.

13 Q. Did you ever stay in contact with
14 any of the guys that were on your crew?

15 A. Oh yeah. That's one thing we
16 had. My bomb group gets together every year.
17 We've done that now for -- I don't know where they
18 discharged but I've been going probably twenty
19 years to every convention. We get together -- I
20 still have four men left. And some of them have
21 passed away.

22 One time at Washington we had a
23 convention there, I had seven of my crews there at
24 that time. That was the most men we got together.

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2 So this year we go to down to Arlington in October
3 and there will be three of us there again I hope.
4 One guy can't come because his wife had a bad
5 stroke and she can't travel. But --.

6 Q. How --.

7 A. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

8 Q. How do you think your time in the
9 service changed or had an affect on your life?

10 A. Well, it made me realize you
11 know, what life is about. Yeah. And my crew --
12 all of them had felt the same thing that -- that
13 God was with us. Every time we meet together we
14 always have prayer together and -- and they realize
15 that somebody had looked after me.

16 Q. All right. You have a couple
17 things you brought in. I don't know how to --.

18 MR. RUSSERT: Maybe if you set it
19 next to him, it will be easier for me to focus in
20 on him.

21 MR. WILEY: Okay. You see it?

22 MR. RUSSERT: Yeah.

23 MR. WILEY: This is -- one of the
24 guys in -- in the group made up the map for --.

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2 MR. CLARK: So those are all your
3 missions?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Listed on the bottom and then on
6 the top you have?

7 MR. RUSSERT: If -- if he can
8 turn that a little bit. I'm getting a reflection
9 of the lamp that's behind me.

10 MR. CLARK: Okay.

11 MR. RUSSERT: Yeah that's --
12 that's good. I just want to focus in on this here.

13 MR. WILEY: And then around the
14 edges the names of the planes on our field.

15 MR. CLARK: Oh.

16 MR. WILEY: And my crew is on
17 there.

18 MR. CLARK: Okay.

19 A. My brother made this up for me a
20 few years ago.

21 Q. Now, were this -- now, what is
22 this patch up here?

23 A. That's Done Can do. That's for
24 the fifth --.

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2 Q. And this patch?

3 A. That's my squadron, the 365th
4 squadron.

5 Q. Now, you wore that on your
6 jacket?

7 A. I didn't have mine on my jacket.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. The co pilot, those were his.

10 Q. Did you ever have a decorated
11 jacket affiliated or anything like that?

12 A. No I don't.

13 Q. And this is a picture of you
14 here?

15 A. Yeah. That's when I got my wings
16 I think.

17 Q. You have your air medal and your
18 wings.

19 A. TFC.

20 Q. TFC?

21 A. And that's my short snorter.

22 Q. Now, what do you mean by that?

23 A. Well, I went to England on the
24 route that had different guys sign a dollar bill,

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2 we call it short snorter. And I always remember
3 that. And the other money there is what I picked
4 up on the way home. Some of it is in France and
5 some of it was in Brazil.

6 Q. Okay. And you had -- if you
7 could just hold this up, you kept a flight log, a
8 diary?

9 A. Yeah, this is my diary. You have
10 a log book to.

11 Q. Okay.

12 MR. RUSSERT: Want to hold up his
13 hat and his flight jacket. And that's the actual
14 hat you wore on your missions?

15 MR. WILEY: That's right. Yeah.
16 Same one.

17 MR. RUSSERT: It's got that great
18 fifty mission crush look to it.

19 MR. WILEY: Yeah.

20 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

21 MR. CLARK: And could you tell us
22 about those, please?

23 MR. WILEY: That's been hanging
24 around my garage. I cut the thing off because I

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2 was using it for my trimmer. That's my old headset

3 yeah.

4 MR. RUSSERT: Wow.

5 MR. CLARK: You would thin the

6 Wiley Brothers and buying a good headset.

7 A. You've heard of Wiley Brothers?

8 Q. I'm from Cambridge.

9 A. Oh you are?

10 Q. Yes.

11 A. Good for you.

12 Q. We -- we buy at Wiley Brothers.

13 A. That's great.

14 Q. Now, tell us about that. That's

15 your?

16 A. This is my dress -- my dress

17 uniform.

18 MR. RUSSERT: Okay. Now what --

19 what uni patch is that on your left shoulder?

20 MR. WILEY: There?

21 MR. RUSSERT: Yes.

22 MR. CLARK: This patch over here.

23 MR. WILEY: Oh, that's the Second

24 Air Force.

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2 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

3 MR. WILEY: That's the Training
4 Unit Air Force.

5 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

6 MR. WILEY: And of course on this
7 side I have the Eighth Air Force.

8 MR. RUSSERT: The eighth -- the
9 eighth air force? Okay. Good. Well, do you want
10 to flip that around so we can see the Eighth patch.
11 Okay. Got it. Okay.

12 MR. WILEY: That's really beat
13 up.

14 MR. RUSSERT: Okay.

15 MR. WILEY: I can't put it on.

16 MR. RUSSERT: And you wore that
17 jacket on all your missions?

18 MR. WILEY: Pretty much. I think
19 it's is. I don't know whoever made it I guess. A
20 guy offering fifteen hundred for it.

21 MR. RUSSERT: You're kidding?

22 MR. CLARK: Well, thank you very
23 much for your interview.

24 MR. WILEY: Okay.

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2 (The interview concluded)

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2 I hereby certify the foregoing,
3 consisting of pages 1 to 40, inclusive, to be a
4 true and accurate transcription from the audio
5 provided to us, to the best of our skill and
6 ability.

7

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